COVENANT THEOLOGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TWO PURITANS

By

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ABSTRACT
COVENANT THEOLOGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TWO PURITANS
RENFRED ERROL ZEPP

Sinclair Ferguson’s course on John Owen and J.I. Packer’s course on the Puritans aroused in me a tremendous hunger to do research on the Puritans and their relationship to Covenant theology. In the process of writing about the two Puritans it was critical that I define the terms that are very misunderstood in the Christian world. Chapter 3 introduces what Puritans and Puritanism is and is not and provides the backdrop for the history of Covenant Theology which became a crucial ingredient in Reform Theology. The Puritans brought Covenant Theology to the forefront of the Puritan (Calvinistic) theology and greatly refined and expanded on how important it is for the Christian Church to learn about the covenants made by God for his people.

For the Puritans the Covenantal Theology provided a framework in drawing together the old argument of God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. The contention within the Puritan ranks involved how much of man’s responsibility affected the covenant God had established with his elect. Antinomians insisted that man does not have any responsibility to remain in the covenant.

This thesis examines two Puritans who were deeply convicted of the dangers that Antinomianism brought to Covenant Theology. Their writings reveal their love for God’s
moral law which was given for all humans, non elect and elect to follow, meaning there has
never been a time since the creation of man that man has not been under God’s laws.

The first of the two Puritans in the thesis was a Westminster Divine, Anthony
Burgess. His major work on God’s law under the Covenants is titled, Vindicie Legis: or A
Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants. Burgess masterfully lays out for his readers
the Covenant with Adam and the Covenant with Moses.

The second Puritan, Peter Bulkeley, was forced to emigrate to New England. There
he wrote a treatise on the Covenant titled The Gospel Covenant; Or the Covenant of Grace
Opened. Half of this thesis is about the five divisions into which Bulkeley divides the
covenant. He also has to fight the Antinomian threat that came from England to New England.
To
my loving and faithful wife,
Birgitta
and to our three children
Kristina, Kristopher,
and Krystle
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Dr. Derek Thomas, my advisor for his excellent advice on what writings would help to gain a greater understanding of the Puritan scholars. I am challenged by his knowledge of the Puritans and making sure I defined theological terms correctly.

Charles and Dee Lansford are dear friends who have never stopped encouraging me in the pursuit of this degree.

Mike Kotecki, a fellow sailor that God used to lead me to the saving knowledge of the Savior in March 1969 during the Vietnam War. He not only was instrumental in revealing the Gospel but started following me up in discipleship.

Alice Hathaway, executive assistant /registrar for the seminary, was always an encouragement when I called the seminary for help and guidance.

My wife Birgitta has done nothing but encouraged me through the tough courses. God has truly given me a Proverbs 31 wife.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about two men who are products of the Reformation of the Church of England. These two men’s writings highly influenced Christians in England and New England. They were members of a group of Protestants known as Puritans whose history and characteristics will be briefly discussed to lay the groundwork for the environment of which these two men were part. Anthony Burgess and Peter Bulkeley emphasize the relationship between law and grace within God’s covenant because they both are faced with a common enemy: Antinomianism.

Burgess, a member of the Westminster Assembly, in his first major treatise \textit{Vindiciae Legis or a Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants} (1646), attacks the “errors of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more, especially Antinomians” arguing that without law there is no covenant. Moreover he contends in the history of the Church of God there was no period where the moral law, the foundation for the ceremonial and judicial laws of Israel did not exist. The moral law finds focus in the Ten Commandments. They represent God’s covenant and are the only law allowed in the Ark of the Covenant since the ceremonial and judicial laws were not permitted. All people are born into the Covenant of Works but enter into the Covenant of Grace only by God’s election. Although the Covenant of Grace supersedes the Covenant of Works it does not abolish the moral law which has abiding value for believers.
Peter Bulkeley, forced to emigrate to New England in 1635, wrote *Gospel Covenant or the Covenant of Grace Opened* (1651) to explain in great detail what comprises a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Grace. Chapters on the different administrations, benefits, blessings, conditions and properties of a covenant finish out the volume. One author calls his work “the most massive and brilliant treatise of the century on the covenant of grace” (Sacvan Berovitch).

Bulkeley wants the colonist to understand that the Covenant is the foundation of all godliness and holy living, it challenged them to walk worthy of the Lord. The church in New England must carefully walk in Covenant with God so that it will not be damaged as the Jewish nation for forsaking the Covenant.

Bulkeley and Burgess have strong convictions concerning the moral law that clarify the theological discussions on the gospel/law relationship under the New Covenant. Their writings complement each other.
Anthony Burgess’ work *Vindicie Legis: or A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants* is written in old English with some of the pages smeared and unreadable but not enough to lose the emphasis.\(^1\) It has 271 pages plus a small index. The book is made up of twenty-nine lectures instead of chapters. These are lectures that Burgess preached at Laurence-Jury, London. It is not hard to read once one becomes familiar with the Puritan style of composition. Burgess presents a well thought out defense of law under the Covenant of Grace. His explanation of Natural Law and Positive Law at first is hard to grasp but easier than Thomas Aquinas’ work on Natural Law. The strength of the book is his understanding of what the Moral Law consists and its everlasting importance to all the elect.

Peter Bulkeley’s second edition of his work, *Gospel Covenant Or The Covenant of Grace Opened*, is a masterpiece on the Covenant of Works and Grace. It is a long book written in Old English, consisting of 432 pages plus a small index. It is not a book one can gloss over. It is almost like a John Owen in his style of going deeper and deeper on one subject. Bulkeley uses a vast quantity of Scripture verses for his arguments. This book, like Burgess’ book, destroys any Antinomian arguments whether it concerns justification before

faith or the idea that the elect are not under any law while under the covenant of grace. For those who do not believe in such a thing as a covenant Bulkeley writes expertly on why God’s relationship to man has always been covenental. The fourth division titled “Concerning the Condition of the Covenant,” has caused no small discussion among historians and theologians. Many believe Bulkeley walks a fine line explaining the work of faith under the covenant of grace.

Samuel Petto’s work titled *The Great Mystery of The Covenant of Grace*, is another Puritan writing on the Covenant. He too writes against Antinomians but from a different camp then Burgess and Bulkeley. He is representative of those Puritans who separate Sinai from the covenant of grace. “He affirms that the moral law given at Sinai, if it is understood as a covenant or testament, does not continue since Christ perfectly satisfied . . . the moral law.”

William Ames is given credit for helping to promote the Covenant Theology among the Puritans. His work titled *The Marrow of Theology* was translated from Latin and the newer edition contains a long introduction by the translator, John Dykstra Eusden. On page fifty-two, Ames is said to have laid the groundwork for Bulkeley but in the footnote they accuse Bulkeley of having legalism in his covenant thought. The translator makes sure the reader understands what a tremendous impact Ames had on Puritanism.

Thomas Boston (1676-1732), a Scottish ‘Puritan,” wrote, *A View of The Covenant of Works From The Sacred Records*. This work was first published in 1767. He covers a vast area of subjects concerning this covenant. He states that the natural law (p. 191) is the law of the Ten Commandments and that when Adam broke the positive commandment he managed to break all Ten Commandments (p. 194-195).

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Joel Beeke and Randall Pederson have done a great job in introducing the Puritans and their literature in *Meet the Puritans*. This book supplied great information on Anthony Burgess but Peter Bulkeley and John Ball were not included in this book, which was a disappointment.

*The Puritan Experiment* by Francis J. Bremer surveys Puritanism from the 1534 Act of Supremacy to the death of Jonathan Edwards. The Chronology in the beginning of the book is an excellent visual tool. All the key issues are listed under the years starting with 1534-1758. The book also contains pictures of influential Puritan magistrates, key women, ministers, and maps of New England. As a special bonus there are pictures of Plimoth (Plymouth) Plantation, a re-creation of the Pilgrim village and people dressed in colonial garb. It is a great source concerning the migration over from England to New England.

*Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition* by Peter Golding is an excellent introduction to Covenant Theology. One can tell at times his view especially concerning the Mosaic Covenant where he sides with M. Karlberg and disagrees with John Ball. The last chapter covers the latest studies on Covenant Theology with appraisals and assessments given which are very helpful to students outside of the academic world of professors in universities and seminaries.

Author David Hall has authored and edited many books on New England and the Puritans. His book titled *Puritans in the New World* presents the Puritans in their own words. Reverend Peter Bulkeley is presented here in counseling on assurance of salvation to some of his church members. The strength of the book is the collection of texts that shows the experiences of being a Puritan in New England from the pillars of the church to the dissenters.
Hall’s other book is titled *The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638*. This book is not easy reading for anyone who does not understand the difference between justification and sanctification and Arminianism and Calvinism. The editor does a great job presenting the court documents concerning most of what was said during the many hearings. He acknowledges that some documents were unreadable and some lost. Bulkeley is presented as one of the judges facing Ann Hutchinson and John Cotton. The impression one receives when reading the defense and hearing the judges is that an excellent knowledge of Reformed Theology was required.

Another excellent book on Puritans was written by Erroll Hulse titled *Who Are The Puritans?* This small book is a condensed history through three generations of Puritans. It is very informative and a delight to read. The “popular chart of English Monarchs 1509-1702” is very helpful for anyone not familiar with English Royalty and the English Reformation.

*The Grace of Law: A Study of Puritan Theology* by Ernest F. Kevan is an excellent resource for understanding the place of the Law under Grace. There were about eighty-one references to Anthony Burgess’s four writings including *Vindiciæ Legis*. Bulkeley was not included which might have been due to inaccessibility to his work in 1976.

Dr. D. M. Lloyd Jones’ book titled *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* is a collection of his addresses delivered at the Puritan and Westminster Conferences 1959-1978. This book contains the best definition of Puritanism offered by any author. His grasp of the whole movement is remarkable with great attention to detail.

Dr. Michael McGiffert has spent a great deal of his time on Puritan studies. He is one of the very few Puritan historians who has written on Peter Bulkeley. He edits the book titled *Puritanism and The American experience* in which he takes key passages out of
Bulkeley’s work and places these under chapter three titled “A Willing and Voluntary Subjection.” McGiffert is very appreciative of the work of Samuel Eliot Morison and Perry Miller for replacing the comic-book caricatures of the Puritans manufactured by Menckenesque journalists of the 1920’s . . .” (p.11).

*The Christ of the Covenants* by O. Palmer Robertson should be the first book anyone reads to get a beginning knowledge of Covenant Theology. He does not refer to the two Covenants as Works and Grace but uses the terminology of Covenant of Creation and Covenant of Redemption.

*A Quest For Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* written by J.I. Packer helped to convince this student that he must do a thesis on the Puritans. It is a fantastic introduction to the Puritan’s zeal to please God and to become more Christ like. Packer dwells on mostly English Puritans with the last chapter about American Puritan Jonathan Edwards and revival.

Leland Ryken’s book titled *Worldly Saints: Puritans As They Really Were* covers every area of life and how the Puritans lived it. Peter Bulkeley is mentioned three times in describing the emphasis placed on obeying God’s commands under the covenant as the world observes them living out their convictions. This book is a tremendous resource for Puritanism with large collections from Puritan worthies.

Carl R. Trueman has written a very informative book on, as most students of Puritans would acclaim, the most brilliant Puritan that ever lived, titled *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man*. Trueman accuses Bulkeley of developing a sub-Trinitarian foundation by paying exclusive attention to the Father-Son relationship in his writing on the Covenant. There may be some truth to his accusation but by not mentioning the Holy Spirit’s
work as much as Trueman wants does not take away from Bulkeley’s fine defense of the moral law under the Covenant of Grace. The strength of Trueman’s book is his teaching the reader how to properly read Puritans by understanding the environment they came out of. For example, some self-proclaimed critics of Reformed theologians who themselves are Reformed like to criticize Puritans for using Aristotelian language such as “first mover” etc. He reminds the reader this was the teaching at Oxford and Cambridge and in no way is a sign of a “commitment to Aristotle as an equal source of theological authority to scripture (p. 8).”

The most expensive book listed here is John von Rohr’s book titled The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought. The book is now selling used for $1,800-$2,222.00 on Amazon. This is the book one reads after Palmers book on Covenants. This is a true master piece of work on the Covenant in Puritan teaching. He references Bulkeley and Burgess’ work many times. The real bonus is the seventeen-page bibliography.

Early New England: A Covenanted Society by David A. Weir was awarded the “Outstanding Academic Title Choice.” This is a must read in order to understand the role covenants played in the founding of New England from the local civil covenants to the church covenants. This book helps one to understand why Bulkeley was so insistent on establishing a church covenant when he arrived in New England. If anyone doubts that this nation was founded on Christian principles they need to read this book.

Author Susan Hardman Moore writes about a little known fact concerning the Great Migration of Puritans to New England in her book titled Pilgrims: New World Settlers & The Call Home. Although in the beginning of the book she details what part of England the Puritans came from and what social levels they were in, most of the book dwells on the many Puritans who left New England to return home to England. This is very good book to round
out one’s studies of the Great Migration from England. This migration was bi-directional as Moore shows in the many ship manifests leaving New England for England.

The book titled *Five Views On Law and Gospel* edited by Stanley Gundry presents five contemporary views of the dialogue concerning the relationship between gospel and law. It provides one with a great summary of the battle among theologians concerning the law and the gospel.

David Parnham’s article in the *Huntington Library Quarterly* titled “Soul’s Trial and Spirit’s Voice: Sir Henry Vane against the “Orthodox,”” uses Bulkeley’s *Gospel Covenant* as the example of the orthodox view of grace and law. Van takes issue with the Puritans who teach that the covenant of grace has conditions. He never uses Bulkeley’s name but he knows Bulkeley from when he was governor of Massachusetts. Parnham does a fair job in analyzing Bulkeley’s work. This article is very informative concerning the battle between Bulkeley and Antinomian views.

“Henry Hammond and covenant theology” by Michael McGiffert found in *Church History* is a very good article on an Anglican priest who reformulated the Covenant of Grace by framing it in Arminianism and Universalism. Michael McGiffert is an excellent historian of Puritans both in England and in New England.

Another article by Michael McGiffert found in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* titled “Herbert Thorndike and the covenant of grace” shows students of Covenant Theology yet another twist. Thorndike, an Anglican priest, brings into the equation a Jesuit teaching of middle knowledge. This basically is another way to get rid of God’s sovereignty so man can have greater responsibility in his salvation in the Covenant of Grace. The article
was very enlightening and caused this student to do more research on the scholastic epistemology of middle knowledge.
CHAPTER 3
INTRODUCTION TO PURITANISM, REFORMED AND COVENANT THEOLOGY

The official church of England is the Anglican Church. The name “Anglican” means “of England.” The Synod of Whitby in 664, led by the two Archbishops of Canterbury and York, is seen traditionally as the start of the English Church. Until the Reformation, the Church of England acknowledged the authority of the Pope.

The English people were discontent with the corruption within the English Catholic Church and a very pervasive anti-clerical attitude prevailed. This allowed Henry VIII to face down papal authority when he obtained an annulment in 1533 of his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Then in 1534 the Act of Supremacy transferred papal supremacy over the English Church to the crown. Under Henry VIII’s son, Edward VI, (1547-1553) the Anglican Church became Protestant in doctrine and ritual. For a brief time under Mary I (1553-1558), England was forced to return to Roman Catholicism. The burning of over 330 Protestants, of whom some were very prominent citizens, had adverse affects for the population. The English began to associate persecution and Spanish domination with Roman Catholicism. Under Elizabeth I a moderate form of Protestantism was restored (1558-1603).

The Protestant movement in England was gradual until around 1600 whereby it rapidly grew. At the time Henry VIII and the English Parliament separated the Church of England from Rome (1536), England was officially Roman Catholic. By 1642, less than two
per cent were Catholics not counting the nobles of who consisted of ten per cent with allegiance to Rome.1

WHO ARE THE PURITANS

The term Puritan originated in 16th century England as “a satirical smear word implying peevishness, censoriousness, conceit . . . hypocrisy . . . and religiously motivated discontent with . . . the Church of England.”2 The term was not always used in satirical ways. There were many Anabaptists congregations in London “who called themselves Puritans or the unspotted lambs of the Lord.”3 Later on the term came to mean those who were not nominal but godly who sought to spread to Gospel.4 “The term lasted until the early 1640’s when Puritans began to be called Presbyterians. The civil war had started and the parliamentary cause had come to be identified with Presbyterian reformation of the Church of England.”5

Puritanism began as a church movement that did not think the Reformation in England went far enough to rid the church of elements of Catholicism. Puritanism is hard to define because of the overabundance of books that have been published on the different approaches on this subject. There are also differences among the Puritans and they add to the

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3 Hulse, 31.
4 Ibid.
complexity by changing their positions through the years.\textsuperscript{6} Added to the complexity of what Puritan and Puritanism represents is the disdain for this group of people over the last three centuries \textsuperscript{8} and especially the twentieth century.

Genuine hatred and cultural bias over the centuries have to be dealt with before defining what a Puritan is. The great English writer G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936) wrote that “Puritans were killjoys who had a certain unbalance of temperament which destroyed their sense of proportion and a total inability to appreciate the goodness of created things.”\textsuperscript{7} H. L. Mencken (1880-1956), regarded as one of the most influential American writers and prose stylists of the first half of the 20th century, said “Puritanism is the haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy.”\textsuperscript{8} Puritans, we are told in books and schools across America, were against sex, fun, fashionable clothing, sports and recreation, education, and the arts. They were “greedy workaholics,” “overly emotional and denigrated reason,” “intolerant toward people who disagreed with them,” “overly strict (often true),” “repressed normal human feelings in the name of religion,” “were legalistic moralists who judged people by their external behavior only,” and “indulged in too much self-loathing.” They also were “repelled by the human body and the physical world.”\textsuperscript{9} These descriptions of Puritans were all false. This was the typical stereotype of Puritans in the English-speaking world until the face of

\footnotetext{6}{D. M. Lloyd-Jones, \textit{The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors} (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, reprinted 2002), 238.}

\footnotetext{7}{J. I. Packer, \textit{English Puritan Theology}, Lesson 1.}

\footnotetext{8}{Leland Ryken, \textit{Worldly Saints: The Puritans As They Really Were} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986; first paperback edition 1990), 1.}

\footnotetext{9}{Ibid., 2-7.}
Puritan studies was changed in the years 1938-39. Four historians went back to the sources and projected what the Puritans were really like.  

Historians are not in agreement over the definition of what defines a Puritan. Professor Basil Hall of Cambridge says that Puritans “were those Anglicans who did not leave the Church of England but who held to Puritan doctrine.” This is known as the Anglican view that has Puritanism starting in the 1570’s and 1580’s with Richard Greenham and Richard Rodgers continued on by William Perkins. These men taught what is known as pastoral theology and how to live the Christian life with its tribulations. Others minimize the differences between Puritans and other Anglicans saying that doctrine is not the issue but matters of indifference and nothing significant. J. F. H. New in his book, Anglican and Puritan argues that the fundamental difference between Anglican and Puritan are in the key Christian Doctrines.  

Dr. Lloyd-Jones says historians are missing the point. One has to start with the beginning of Anglicanism and Puritanism at the start of the English Reformation. Lloyd-Jones agrees with Knappen in his Tudor Puritanism, that Puritanism began in William Tyndale in 1524. Puritanism is a mind-set that spurs one on to two critical actions that were exemplified in Tyndale. The first is the desire that everyone should have access to and be able to read the

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10 The four historians were: William Haller, The Rise of Puritanism; Marshall Knappen, Tudor Puritanism; Perry Miller, The New England Mind I: The Seventeenth Century; A.S. P. Woodhouse, Puritanism and Liberty. Many scholars are appreciative of Perry Miller’s work but “he was not a reliable interpreter of the Puritans” (quoted by G. Thomas, 1972), found in Peter Golding, Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition (Geanies House, Ross-Shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2004), 66.

11 Lloyd-Jones, 239.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 240.

Scriptures. This conviction brought about a translation of the Bible that was not granted permission by the bishops. This was “the first shot fired by Puritanism.” The second involves the attitude toward authority. The Puritans placed truth before the authority of the church with its traditions of men and insisted on being able to serve God in the true way dictated by Scripture.

As this attitude continued to manifest itself in England, Henry VIII’s capricious actions, which ended up bringing back Roman Catholicism, spurned another attitude that helps to complete the definition of Puritanism. The greatest characteristic of Puritanism was the feeling that the Reformation had not been completed. It was not enough to correct the doctrine. Now the ceremonies and dress that were relics of Catholicism had to be done away with. The Puritans objected to the Book of Common Prayer, the use of the wedding ring, kneeling to receive the sacrament at the Lord’s table, ministers wearing the surplice, and placing the mark of the cross on the forehead of those baptized. All of these were reminders of Roman Catholicism that Puritans believed was the church of the Anti-Christ.

As a result of the Puritans stand against anything that faintly resembled Roman Catholicism, they were a persecuted minority. They were subjected to persecution most of the time except during the time they became the ruling party in the government and the church. To go to prison as a Puritan became a badge of honor for Puritan leaders and laypeople that held religious meetings in their homes. When there is a great difference between two ideas of how a church should be run then the side that is controlled by the state has the greater

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15 Lloyd-Jones, 241.
16 Ibid.
17 Ryken, 13.
advantage. The Anglican Church was the Church of England and the powers did not want further reformation.

The differences between Anglican and Puritan are summarized below:

1. Puritans desired a fully reformed church with the Bible central to everything.
2. Puritans had an international outlook verses Anglicans having a national outlook.
3. Puritans base all their teachings on Scripture verses Anglican tradition, customs, continuity, and reason.
4. Puritans emphasize the spirituality of worship verses Anglican emphasizing the formal aspects of worship.
5. Puritans are more interested in fellowship verses Anglicans being more individualistic.
6. Puritans believe in rigid church discipline verses Anglicans being content with an outward conformity.

Puritanism began with the concern for a pure church, a truly Reformed Church. “If we fail to place the doctrine of the church in a central position,” Dr. Lloyd Jones writes, “we are departing from the true Puritan spirit, Puritan attitude, Puritan outlook, and Puritan understanding.” 19 There never was a period in Puritan history where they were ever satisfied with the reformation of the Church. 20

REFORMED THEOLOGY

Despite the different labels applied to the Puritans such as Non-Conformist and Conformist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Independent, and Congregationalist, they were unified around Reformed Theology. This is the theology of the reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin going back to St Augustine’s writings. This is the theology of the early church following the Apostles and Jesus. The Puritans of the early 16th century had to rediscover the

18 Lloyd-Jones, 256-257.
19 Ibid., 259.
20 Ibid., 56.
Scriptures and then write to give guidance for the new Protestant Church. Martin Luther was of the Augustinian order, The Black Cloister, and consequently he was trained in St. Augustine’s writings. He realized that the common man in Germany needed the Scriptures and so he developed what has become known as the Lutheran Catechisms. Luther, like Augustine did not write a form of Systematic Theology. This was lacking for Protestants until John Calvin published his first edition of the Institutes in 1536.  

Another name for Reformed Theology became Calvinistic Theology because of Calvin’s systematic approach to the Doctrines of Grace. For the Puritans this teaching of the Sovereignty of God, election of the saints unconditionally, total depravity of man, Christ dying only for the elect, the irresistible grace of God, and the perseverance of Saints were standard axioms. Protestants and Puritans now had a systematic approach to Biblical doctrine and Biblical Theology all anchored in the infallible Word of God.

The Reformation with its new emphasis on knowing God through propositional revelation drove men to pursue sophisticated linguistic and exegesis studies of the Bible. But the Puritans added to the pursuit of knowledge the importance of application of Scripture to everyday life. It was not enough to know Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in studying the Bible. One must learn to make application of the knowledge. The seventeenth-century world of elaborate polemics also demanded scholarship to the highest degree. To go up against Roman Catholic, Arminian, and Socinian scholars the Puritan theologian had to produce a precise thesis in response. The Puritans excelled in defense of the Protestant faith making their

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21 "Thomas Aquinas’ work *Summa Theological* was an attempt to catalogue Christian doctrine using Aristotle’s method in the 13 century (1225-1274).

enemies unable to respond with any coherency. One example would be John Owen’s work, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, whereby Owen destroys free will and universalism.

**COVENANT THEOLOGY**

It was during the years of the Reformation and the Puritan era that the Doctrine of the Covenants began to appear as a crucial ingredient in Reform Theology. This was not a new teaching but had been hid for centuries during the Medieval Age. Covenantal Theology or Federal Theology started in the Old Testament and was brought to attention by Jesus in the New Testament. Church fathers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus in the second century and later Augustine (354-430) taught the importance of understanding the covenant.²³ Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in his work, *Refutation of the Tricks of the Anabaptist*, emphasizes the terms of the single covenant of grace. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75) expands Zwingli’s thought in the first Reformed treatise on Covenant Theology titled *Of the One and Eternal Testament of Covenant of God.*²⁴ The covenant was important in John Calvin’s (1509-64) writings on salvation, especially in his 200 sermons on Deuteronomy.²⁵ It is generally agreed that two German Reformed Theologians, Zachary Ursius (1534-83) and Caspar Olevianus (1536-87) at Heidelberg University, “gave the covenant scheme its fullest formation.”²⁶ William Tyndale (1484-1536), mentioned in this thesis as the first Puritan, wrote of “of an everlasting covenant made unto the children of God, through faith in Christ, upon the

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²⁴ Ibid., 21.
²⁵ Ibid., 24.
²⁶ Ibid., 26.
deserving’s of Christ; where eternal life is promised to all that believe.”

“Puritan thought…utilized increasingly the concept of “covenant” as a means of comprehending the human relationship with God.” There was never a time in God’s plan of redemption that God’s people were not included in God’s covenantal plan for them.

O. Palmer Robertson defines a covenant as a “bond in blood sovereignly administered.” In the case of Biblical covenants, God sovereignly dictates the terms of his covenant. It involves commitment with life and death consequences. There is no casual informal relationship between God and the human creature. The greatest example is Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the violations of man against the covenant. This covenant would be the Covenant of Works established with Adam. After the Fall God established the Covenant of Grace for the elect or his children of which he died for on the cross. All the covenants recorded in Scripture in the Old Testament, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic were all under the Covenant of Grace. Not all Puritans accepted the teaching that Adam was under the Covenant of Works but most believed that it was the best description of the covenant God made with Adam even though the term covenant does not appear until Genesis 6:18 concerning Noah entering the Ark. The divine covenants begin with the creation of the world and ends when time ceases. The Puritans brought Covenant Theology to the forefront of the Puritan (Calvinistic) theology and greatly refined and expanded on how

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27 Ibid., 30.


important it is for the Christian Church to learn about the covenants made by God for his people.\textsuperscript{30}

The Puritans go beyond the historical covenant of grace to the source of the covenant. The source would be the prior covenant between God the Father and Christ the Son designated theologically as the Covenant of Redemption. Said William Strong, “It is one of the greatest grounds of faith . . . that Christ is engaged by covenant, unto God, as well as unto us: and therefore he being the Son will be faithful to his Father: And also that God is ingaged unto Christ as well as unto us, and therefore will be faithful to him also, and will not break with the Son.”\textsuperscript{31} The whole Trinity is engaged, writes Peter Bulkeley, “with the Father’s and Son’s promises in the Covenant of Redemption augmented now by those of the Spirit to apply what the Father hath purposed . . . and the Son hath purchased . . .”\textsuperscript{32}

For the Puritans the Covenantal Theology provided a framework in drawing together the old argument of God’s sovereignty and human responsibility. Here in the covenant one saw how God’s decrees determined man’s future unconditionally. God was absolutely sovereign but man had responsibility. Man’s responsibility was faith and obedience to God’s Word. The covenant also provided the Puritans with personal assurance of salvation that was a great issue in New England Puritanism as some of the Puritan leaders attempted to limit membership to only those who had assurance of salvation.

The contention within the Puritan ranks involved how much of man’s responsibility affected the covenant God had established with his elect. Antinomians insisted that man does

\textsuperscript{30} The concept of dividing the two Covenants into those of works and grace was introduced to the English by Dudley Fenner in 1585, source is Rohr, 28.

\textsuperscript{31} Quoted in Rohr, 45.

\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 47.
not have any responsibility to remain in the covenant. The other extreme were the Arminians who put the emphasis of faith on the act of will. This means that one comes to an understanding about the gospel and having approved it, one commits self to Jesus. Most of the Puritans taught that God chooses who will be in the covenant but also provide the elect with saving faith and the desire to obey and thus persevere in the covenant. This thesis will show the battles both Burgess and Bulkeley had with both extremes of the covenant teaching that was prevalent not only in their era but especially in today’s churches.
CHAPTER 4

ANTHONY BURGESS (d. 1664)

Anthony Burgess was born to a schoolmaster at Watford, Hertfordshire, England. He earned a Master of Arts degree from Emmanuel College in 1630. It was at this time he tutored John Wallis, a future Westminster Assembly Divine. Wallis described his tutor as “a pious, learned, and able scholar, a good disputant, a good tutor, an eminent preacher, a sound and orthodox divine.”¹ From 1635 to 1662 he served as vicar of Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire. During the Civil War he fled to Coventry from the King’s soldiers and became a chaplain to the parliamentary garrisons. From Coventry, Burgess became a member of the Westminster Assembly. Most of the men who were asked to participate were known as the Westminster Divines. He returned to Sutton Coldfield after the work of the Westminster Assembly was finished. Burgess was known for his detailed preaching and writings with a special disgust for antinomian errors. He wrote at least a dozen books. His magnum opus is the two-volume work titled Spiritual Refining (1652-54). This thesis will concentrate on his first major treatise, Vindiciae Legis (1646), based on twenty-nine lectures given at Lawrence Jewry. This is a strong polemic emphasis vindicating the Puritan view of the moral law and

¹ Joel Beeke, Puritan Reformed Spirituality (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 172.
the covenants of works and grace in opposition to Socinians, Arminians, Roman Catholics, and especially Antinomians.²

DEFINITION OF FOUR RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN OPPOSITION TO BURGESS

These terms will now be defined as the Puritans defined them to prevent misunderstanding when these terms are used in the thesis. Socinians are followers of Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) who was among the first to use rational criticism to interpret Scripture. This opened the door for all kinds of heresy. According to Socinus, Jesus had a human nature and did not become God until after his resurrection when the Father delegated some of his divine power to the risen Jesus. Socinus did not believe in original sin, the incarnation, Christ’s atonement, predestination, and resurrection of the body except for a select few. Forgiveness from God was earned by good works thus turning the Christ into nothing but an inspired teacher. Basically the Socinian movement was the beginning for the later Unitarian movement that is an anti-Trinitarian religion.³ It is to be noted that the left wing of Arminianism can easily lead to Socinianism.

The Arminians are followers of James Arminius (1560-1609) who was born in the Netherlands. While a pastor and college professor he started to write against the Calvinist teaching that was dominating in Protestantism at this time. He writes in his Declaration of Sentiments of 1608 of four decrees of God that one can sum up with his basing of predestination upon the foreknowledge of God knowing who would choose him. Later on at the Council of Dort in 1619 the Arminians presented their arguments against Calvinism titled

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The Five Articles of Remonstrance. The first article is that Christ will save those who believe on his name (a very ambiguous predestination definition). The second article affirms that Christ died for all men but only believers receive salvation. The third article was to combat accusations of Pelagianism, and so stated that man can do nothing good on their own and thus need to be born again through Christ. One can resist the Holy Spirit as mentioned in the fourth article. The fifth article makes it obvious that the Arminians were not sure if one could ever get back to the faith if they depart from it. They stated that they needed a more exact inquiry in the Holy Scriptures. “The basic thrust of the Arminian movement was to reduce the potential exclusiveness which orthodoxy posited in God’s decrees and correspondingly to give to the human person a freer and stronger voice in the determination of salvation.”

To this camp of Arminianism, Herbert Thorndike (1598-1672), a priest of the English Church gave a new twist to Covenant Theology. He attacked the doctrine of Predestination as taught by Calvinists. Under the Covenant of Grace man is chosen by God’s foreknowledge of who was going to choose him thus allowing man’s will to be involved. Thorndike incorporates the scholastic epistemology of God’s middle knowledge “so called because it is conceived as intervening between God’s foreknowledge of possibilities and his knowledge of actualities.” Simply his goal was to explain God’s plan of salvation under the Covenant of Grace based on “contingent accountability to the human side” using the

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4 Pelagianism is a late fourth century teaching stressing man’s ability to obtain salvation by his own efforts because man was born without original sin.


philosophy of God’s middle knowledge which was “propagated in the late sixteenth century by Jesuits, Molina and Fonseca.”

It is important to note that Arminianism taken to the extreme produces strange bedfellows. Another one of the heresies that rose up at this time was Universalism. Anglican priest, Henry Hammond (1605-60) reformulated the Covenant of Grace by framing it in Arminianism and including universal redemption. John Owen (1616-1683), one of the greatest of the Puritans, rose up to the challenge of these two heresies (Arminianism and Universalism) writing two masterpieces titled *A Display of Arminianism* and *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Owen brilliantly destroys the Arminian and Universalist argument involving their belief system of how God plans salvation for man.

The **Roman Catholic** doctrines that the Puritans detested the most were the Apostolic Succession of the Pope, Sanctification being switched for Justification, praying to Mary and image worship, the Mass, and the Priesthood. To most of the Reformers and the Puritans the Roman Catholic Church was the “Great Whore of Babylon” or the “Church of the Anti-Christ”. Burgess writes “Because the Jews and Papists do abuse the Law, and the works of it to justification, shall it not therefore have its proper place and dignity?” This is

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8 Ibid.

9 Universalism is the belief that denies eternal punishment and thus everyone is released from the penalties of sin and lives with God in the fullness of time.


12 Papists is an offensive term for a member of the Roman Catholic Church. The term Papacy is used for the office of the pope who is the head of the Roman Catholic Church.

13 Anthony Burgess, *Vindiciae Legis: or A Vindication of the Morall Law and The Covenants, From the Errous of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially, Antinomians*. (London, 1646), 144.
an example of Burgess rebuking Roman Catholics for confusing justification with
sanctification because of their emphasis on the Grace of God plus works to earn salvation. He
states elsewhere that Papists and Socinians say that “Christ came to give us more exact
precepts than Moses, delivered to the Jews, and therefore that Christ was not here an
Interpreter, but a Reformer.” Burgess is attempting to prove that the above mentioned
groups destroy the dignity of the Moral Law by saying Christ reformed it which leads to the
last group to be defined and the one which Burgess writes against the most.

**Antinomianism** the term was coined by Martin Luther when he was “in a
theological struggle with his former student, Johann Agricola.” It means against (anti) law
(nomos). This belief teaches that the moral law does not need to be preached or obeyed by
Christians because it is irrelevant to the individual living under grace. During the Puritan era
there were several antinomian outbreaks. One of the most famous involved Reverend Peter
Bulkeley in New England in the trial of accused antinomian Anne Hutchinson and her two
clerical supporters, John Cotton and John Wheelwright.

Burgess attacks the Antinomians with great vigor in his *Vindiciae Legis*. He places
the Pharisees and Papists in the camp of Antinomianism. The Pharisees voided the law by
making only external acts sin. “The Church of Rome, who, by the multitude and necessity of
observation of their Church precepts and constitutions, make men to break the plain

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14 Ibid., 176.
15 Elwell, 58.
16 Pharisees were Jesus’ greatest antagonists who added men’s traditions to God’s Levitical laws in the Old Testament.
commandment of God.” Burgess broadens the definition of Antinomianism by implying, when God’s laws are replaced by man’s law, this is an abrogation of God’s moral law.

The Antinomians liked to refer to sin or “their shortcomings as a disease or infirmity.” “Robert Towne, for example, says, ‘Thus whilst God useth as a tender father the rod . . . the cause hath not properly with his the nature of sinne, which is an offence to divine justice; but it is now considered as a disease troubling his childe. (Assertion of Grace, p. 113).’” For most Puritans this was a gross misunderstanding of the definition of sin. Sin as defined in Scripture is an abomination to God thus causing his wrath to come upon all sin with eternal punishment unless the sin is propitiated (Matthew 25:41; Romans 3:23-25; 6:23; 1 John 3:4).

One of the first things on the agenda of the Westminster Assembly, of which Burgess was asked to participate, was to appoint a committee to investigate the dangers of Antinomianism. During controversies it was the norm for the day to attack each other with differing views. For example, antinomian Robert Towne wrote the above-mentioned Assertion of Grace (1644) responding to two authors exposing antinomianism, Thomas Taylor (Regula Vitae, 1631) and John Sedgwick (Antinomianisme Anatomized, 1643). Burgess responded with the subject of this thesis, the Vindiciae Legis and was later attacked

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17 Burgess, 265.


19 Ibid., n. 103.


21 Kevan, 32.
by Towne’s *A Re-assertion of Grace* (1654) saying to Burgess “You are better skilled in tying knots, than in unloosing any.”

**IMPORTANCE OF GOD’S LAW AS NATURAL AND POSITIVE**

Burgess does not bring out the covenant until his lecture XI in the *Vindiciae Legis*. Up to this time he is writing about the importance of God’s Law defending the position of most Puritans against Towne’s antinomian writings. He wants to establish the foundation for the covenant by emphasizing the importance of God’s law for all believers. Referring to Genesis 2:17, “but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” Burgess writes that “the law God gave Adam was to be considered two ways: First, as a Law, secondly, as a Covenant.” He divides the Law into natural Law and positive Law.

The Law of Nature, Burgess defines earlier in Lecture VI. He uses Romans 2:14-15, “For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.” The verse is talking about the Gentiles who do not observe the Laws of Moses but in the larger scope the Apostle Paul is making the charge upon both Jew and Gentile that all are naturally in sin and God will destroy both for disobedience. Paul writes this to show that though the Gentiles did not have the Law delivered to them like the Jew,

22 Ibid., 33-35.

23 Unless otherwise indicated all Bible references in this thesis are to the New American Standard Bible (NASB) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1977).

they still are guilty of disobedience since they have a law written within them. 25 By natural it is the “natural light of conscience, where by they judged and performed some external acts, though these were done by the help of God.” 26 “The Law of Nature consists in the common notions which are ingraffed in all men’s hearts . . .” 27 Burgess masterfully uses a quote of John Chrysostom (347-407) to help with the understanding of the difference between natural and positive law. The quote states: “that God forbidding murder, and other sins, giveth no reason of it, because its naturall: but, speaking of the seventh day, why that in particular was to be observed, he giveth a reason, because on the seventh day the Lord rested, not be that the seventh day is morall but because its not morall naturall, only morall positive.” 28

The difference between Adam and us was that Adam had the perfect natural law implanted in his heart where we have only bits and pieces. Despite the whole Law of Nature being given to Adam, God still gave him “a positive law to try his obedience.” 29 This is where Adam failed and thus distorted natural law for all of his descendants. The natural law God has instilled in all of his human creatures can never be abrogated because it is immutable from an immutable God. Cain murdered his brother and was found guilty when as yet there was no moral law. Man’s conscience is darkened because of the sin nature but the natural law tries to shine forth in a state of corruption and man is never free from its rule. “Now the people of God, sensible in their sin, find nothing harder: for, it’s in the law of Nature they should not

25 Ibid., 57.
26 Ibid., 58.
27 Ibid., 60.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 61.
lye, or steale, but that they should believe in Christ for pardon, when labouring under their offences, here nature doth not help at all.”

This law of nature that the Gentiles have written in their hearts (Roman 2:14), Burgess divides into two elements; the light of Nature and of the power of Nature and attempts to show the necessity and insufficiency of both. The light of Nature has three characteristics summarized as follows: “It is a remnant of God’s image,” “it is corrupted by sin thus an enemy to God and goodness” and when “informed by the Word of God is an excellent help.”

Burgess addresses that which is linked “to the ability and power of Nature by attacking two extreme errors: one of the Pelagian, Papist, and Arminian, with other, who lift up this power too high; and the other of the Antinomians, who seem to deny all the preparatory workes upon the heart of a man . . .” To prove the human inability to do any good thing by the power of Natural Law, Burgess presents ten propositions:

1. Natural power of free-will left in us but this must not be extended to grace.
2. That which is left in us is not able to performe naturall actions, without the generall help of God.
3. It is wholly unable to work any good thing.
4. It cannot prepare or dispose it selfe of the grace of justification or sanctification.
5. We may hold truly some antecedaneous workes upon the heart, before those graces be bestowed on us.
6. All determination to one doth not take away that naturall liberty.
7. Nor doth it take away that willingness or delight in sin, which we are inevitabley carried out unto.
8. A man may acknowledge grace and give much to it and yet not give the totall efficacy unto it.
9. Men may naturally performe the outward act of a commandment.
10. All that they do is sin before God.

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30 Ibid., 64.
31 Ibid., 65-81.
32 Ibid., 82.
33 Ibid., 82-91.
Burgess ends his writing on natural law by reminding his readers that the inability of man to observe God’s precepts does not void the precepts simply because it is man’s fault. Man is held accountable for the natural law that God has instilled in all human creatures. There would have been no condemnation if there were no original ability to obey the Law written in the heart of man. The Puritans are in agreement that “the Law of Nature was Adam’s highest joy and good.”

The question of the purpose of God’s positive law is dealt with after explaining God’s natural law where again Burgess reminds his readers that both make up the covenant. The covenant will be explained later but first the term positive law is to be examined. Burgess does not come out and define it as it may be found in a theological dictionary. Earnest F. Kevan writes “In distinction from natural or moral Law, positive Law provides a conspicuous instance of the absoluteness of the Divine right to command. It is not necessarily connected with things that are essentially right or wrong, but is given independently.”

Simply the positive law is the command by God given to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.” This first appearance of the positive law is also called a *symbolical precept*, “because the obedience unto it was a . . . outward testimony of our homage and service to God.”

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34 Kevin, 61.

35 Ibid. “Arminius considered that obedience to positive Law was ‘far inferior’ to other obedience, but to Calvinists it was the ‘highest virtue’. William Ames sees some evidence of God’s grace here and considers that the additions of positive Law are because of man’s weakness, and in order to provide him with ‘outward Symboles, and Sacraments.’” (n. 41).
There are two reasons given for God giving Adam the positive law with the natural law. The first is “that hereby God’s dominion and power over man might be more acknowledged: for to obey the natural law might be a necessary condition and not an act of the will.” The second reason is “so Adam’s obedience might be tried and be manifested to be obedience.”

God did not give Adam the law to make him fall. Adam had the power within him to sin or not to sin. Adam chose to disobey God and thus passed on the sin and curse of death to all his posterity as stated in Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” This positive command was universal.

GOD’S COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH ADAM

Burgess writes that this will be easier to understand when he shows that this is a covenant and not merely a law. Without a covenant it would make no sense that Adam’s sin would be passed down to his posterity. Along with the disobedience of Adam, sin, death, diseases, and pains come with the “dissolution of soul and body.”

Before Adam’s sin, Adam was immortal in body and soul. After the Fall Adam became mortal in the flesh but remained immortal in the soul or spirit.

In lecture XII, Burgess continues to build upon the foundation for proving that God was working in a covenantal relationship with Adam. He explains man being created in God’s image using Genesis 1:26a, “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” “The image of God in Adam consisted in the several perfections and

36 Burgess, 103.
37 Ibid., 105.
38 Ibid., 106.
qualifications in his soule.”\footnote{Ibid., 111.} These perfections were “exact knowledge of divine and natural things.”\footnote{Ibid., 112.} In greater detail this meant that Adam had “immediate knowledge, the light of faith, which the regenerate have, and the light of glory, which the saints in heaven have.”\footnote{Ibid.} Adam’s “will was wonderfully good, and furnished with many habits of goodness.”\footnote{Ibid., 113.} His affections were under the control of holiness with the moral law written on his heart free from all misery and danger.\footnote{Ibid., 114-115.} Adam had “sovereignty and dominion over all the other creatures.”\footnote{Ibid., 115.}

Burgess presents five characteristics of the righteousness and holiness that Adam received by being made in the image of God. The righteousness and holiness was original not added later on. It was universal because the soul and body, head to foot, were perfect. Third it was harmonious, meaning there was “no rebellion . . . between inferior appetite and the understanding.”\footnote{Ibid., 116.} Fourth it was perfect righteousness and holiness because of the purpose God had for Adam. Lastly, “this was to be a propagated righteousness; for, as it is to be proven later, God did all this in a way of covenant with Adam.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Because Adam had the ability to sin he needed God to help him be obedient despite his sinless life. His obedience was not for merit but was an act of humble obedience. He was not confirmed in a state of perfection and immutability as the angels and the future saints are in their resurrected bodies.

\footnote{Ibid., 116.}
In Lecture XIII, Burgess is now ready to present his case for the covenant of God with Adam. Adam had received the natural law and than upon receiving the positive law (Genesis 2:17), he disobeyed thus throwing the created world into turmoil. Upon looking at the text, (“for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”), it can be determined that this is “part of a Covenant that God had made with Adam and his posterity.” God as the sovereign and omnipotent Lord over Adam had issued the law with expected obedience to follow. The covenant was made for man out of the goodness, love, and mercy of God to communicate with Adam and his posterity. This covenant that God made with Adam in his innocence is not so obvious as the one he made after the Fall commonly referred to as the Covenant of Grace.

Burgess at first calls the covenant the covenant made with Adam, covenant of nature, and finally a covenant of works. The Puritans were not in total agreement with the designated title of “Covenant of Works.” The various titles given by the Puritans were, a “Covenant of Innocency” (Richard Baxter), a “Covenant of Friendship” (William Strong), a “Bounty of Goodness” (John Ball and Nehemiah Cox), and a “Covenant of Creation” (Nehemiah Cox). The Reformers (Luther and Calvin) did not write on two covenants. They only considered the one covenant, the Covenant of Grace. William Perkins is given credit to introducing the concept of a Covenant of Works.

47 Ibid., 119.

48 The designation, “covenant of nature”, was introduced from the continent, into the English Covenant Theology by Robert Rollock and John Cameron in the early 17th century. This designation was not used in American Puritanism. “The Edenic Covenant was broadly affirmed on both sides of the Atlantic as the covenant of works calling for obedience and promising life” (Rohr, 39).

49 Kevan, 111.
For one to understand that both parties (God and Adam) had entered into a covenant one is called upon to use rational thinking due to the absence of the word covenant. There are “proofs that God dealt with Adam in these commandments by way of Covenant.”\(^{50}\)

In the text (Genesis 2:17), evil is threatened and the good promised. If it was just a law it would not necessarily be a covenant but when further promises and threatenings are issued, that makes it a covenant. The death that was threatened was eternal death not just physical death.\(^{51}\) As a result of Adam’s disobedience, his posterity is also guilty of sin and due the same punishment dealt out to Adam.

A second reason to understand this arrangement with Adam as a covenant is that “a covenant implies God’s decree, will, or promise to be concerning his creatures, whether rationall, or irrationall.”\(^{52}\) A law and a testament are different than a covenant because there is no requirement of consent for the parties under them. A covenant does require consent between the parties involved such as man to man. If the covenant is with God and a righteous man such as Adam, some consider this the Covenant of Friendship and if it is between God and sinful man, some consider this a Covenant of Reconciliation.\(^{53}\) Now the caution to all of this is that a Covenant between God and Adam was not dependent on Adam’s acceptance for Adam was bound to obey. It was not valid that Adam consent in that he knew he was the representative of the human race and that he was bound to accept what was required because it would not only affect him but all of his posterity. This made his sin the more odious, for in breaking the covenant and ruining his life he brought the curse of God down upon him and his

\(^{50}\) Burgess, 120.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 120.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 121.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.
posterity as God had promised. Adam had the perfect knowledge of what is good because of the natural law God had given him in creation.\(^{54}\)

God had entered into Covenant with Adam by mercifully condescending and revealing himself. Through this God never loses his dominion or majesty. He cannot deny himself.\(^{55}\)

Fourthly, God did not work with Adam in a “mere absolute supreme way” but by way of covenant.\(^{56}\) The reasons for this are because he endeared himself to Adam and incited Adam to a more “willing and free obedience.”\(^{57}\)

Fifthly, God established the covenant of works for Adam. It was not a covenant of saving or justifying faith or one of merit. Adam was not told to believe and have eternal life but to obey with perfect and entire obedience. Adam, even on his own could not come up with the happiness God would bestow on him and neither could he obey without God’s help.\(^{58}\)

Sixth, God did not come into the covenant as a reconciling Father but was already pleased with Adam. There was no need for a mediator because Adam was not terrified with any sin. Adam was familiar and in communion with God. The Trinity was involved in the covenant because the second person of the Godhead yet to be incarnated was with the Father and the third person, the Holy Spirit in causing Adam to be righteous.\(^{59}\)

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., 123.

\(^{55}\) Ibid.

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 124.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., 125.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 125-126.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 126.
Lastly the covenant supposed Adam had the power to keep the covenant. That which is impossible for us to keep, Adam had the possibility to persevere. God did not take away Adams’ gifts but gave to him abundantly even though God knew Adam would not keep the covenant.  

Burgess answers the Arminians who wonder why God would command us to do that for which we cannot possibly do. The answer is that Adam once had the power to do everything commanded. But Adam sinned away that power from himself to us. God is not bound to give everyone the power to believe and obey. Adam had the ability naturally to believe and obey but his sin destroyed this for his posterity.

COVENANT OF GRACE GIVEN TO MOSES ON SINAI

Burgess moves on from the Law given to Adam to the Law given by God to Moses. He again repeats himself that the Law was given “absolutely as it is a Law and relatively as a Covenant.” He divides the whole body of laws into three categories, Ceremonial, Judicial, and Moral. The Ten Commandments were the Moral Law and given greater preeminence since they were written twice on two tablets of stone.

The Moral Law given to Moses differed from the Law of Nature given to Adam. The Law of Nature is fragmented in humans because of sin but is still binding to all. The Moral Law did not bind the Gentiles (i.e. Sabbath), it is a greater sin to breach the Moral Law, and there are more particulars in it such as justifying faith and repentance. The Moral Law

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60 Ibid., 126-127.
61 Ibid., 127.
62 Ibid., 137.
63 Ibid., 139.
was given in the wilderness to the Hebrews because of their exposure to Egyptian paganism and gross morality. They needed to hear from a Holy God who demanded holiness, gave directions on how to worship him, and classified all sin to be an abomination to the Holy God. Only an infinite merciful God would deliver this to his people. These laws were to be the guidelines to help in the “restoration of covenant faithfulness and also to prepare for the future coming of Christ.”

Burgess refers to God’s people as the Church of God that started with Adam and continues through the Apostles. There never, according to Burgess, was a time in the Church of God where the Law never existed (Genesis 4:26b, “Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.”). “The Decalogue is Adams, and Abrahams, and Noahs, and Christs, and the Apostles, as well as Moses.” Granted there were special times where in the history of the church the law was promulgated, such as Sinai, but the “law was perpetually found in the Church ever since it was a Church.” “So that men who speak against the use of the Law and the preaching of it, do oppose the universal way of the Church of God in the Old and New Testaments.” “The Law of Moses is a perfect rule.” The Law contained everything necessary for man to understand what his duty was concerning the worship of God and what was sin. As a result, we are to be careful not to “vilify or condemn this Law of God either

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64 Rohr, 50.  
65 Burgess, 142.  
66 Ibid., 142.  
67 Ibid., 143.  
68 Ibid., 144.  
69 Ibid.
doctrinally or practically.” Burgess adds that “the Gospel and the Law is not to be severed . . . they mutually put a fresh relish and taste upon each other.” The Moral Law is most excellent in that that is the foundation for the ceremonial and judicial law, it abides forever, it was the first to be written by God, and the only law commanded to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant.

From explaining the Moral Law, (in typical Puritan detail), as a rule for all human beings to follow, Burgess now classifies it as God did, a Covenant. He proceeds to prove this by referencing the following verses: Deuteronomy 4:13, “So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone;” 17:2, “If there is found in your midst . . . a man or a woman . . . transgressing His covenant;” 2 Kings 18:12, “because they did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant, even all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded;” 2 Chronicles 6:11, “And there I have set the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD, which He made with the sons of Israel.”

There are four characteristics of what makes up a covenant found in the words of Exodus 24:3-9. First, God is willing to be their God if they agree to the commandments given to them. Second, the people are in agreement to keep the commandments. Third, the precepts of a covenant need to be recorded and Moses does that. Fourth, this has to be established by an outward manifestation such as the killing of animals and offering them up as sacrifice so

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70 Ibid., 145.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 147.
73 Ibid., 220.
that half of the blood would be sprinkled, in this case on the altar, and the other half on the people “to show their voluntary covenanting.”

The Law was given as a covenant, but was it given as another covenant of works or is it a covenant of grace? Burgess gives six proofs that the law given on Sinai is a covenant of grace and that it would be impossible to refer to it as a covenant of works.

1. Under a covenant of works, God would not be their God because of their sin.
2. Under a covenant of works, there is no mercy or pardon.
3. Under a covenant of works, the people had to keep the law without blemish and that is impossible.
4. Under a covenant of works, there would not be ceremonial law regarding sacrifices for sin.
5. Under a covenant of works, there is no mediator such as Moses or Christ.
6. Under a covenant of works, God would have broken his promise to Abraham and his seed (Deuteronomy 7:12).

Anthony Burgess has a very powerful and logical defense of his position if one understands the characteristics of a covenant of works set up by God. There is no mediator required because there is no forgiveness of sins under the covenant of works. One either obeys or else the covenant is broken and death results. These characteristics are not present under the covenant of grace. There is a mediator for the forgiveness of sins under the Covenant of Grace and that is Jesus Christ.

The Puritans theologians differed to some degree on why God had the Sinai covenant at the time he ordained it. The Antinomians viewed it as a continuation of the covenant of works. John Goodwin, who is considered almost Arminian, and orthodox William Pemble, an Arminian, supported the Antinomian view. Another group that included Peter Bulkeley, “saw the Mosaic Law as a covenant for Israel subservient to the covenant of

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74 Ibid., 221.
75 Ibid., 224-227.
grace.” Puritan Samuel Petto interpreted the nature of the Mount Sinai Covenant different than most Puritans. For him the Sinai Covenant was designed to be a covenant of works for Jesus Christ to accomplish. This was not a covenant of works for Israel.

John Owen is convinced that there are four covenants: Covenant of works, Covenant of grace, Covenant of redemption, and the Covenant of Sinai. Owen is very concerned with the command, “Do this and live.” While other Puritans believed that it was a command for sanctification not justification, hisexegetical work on Hebrews of which he believed Paul was the author, and the language of Paul in Romans 10:5 convinced him that there was a prescribed righteousness by law in the Sinai Covenant. “It is a repetition of the covenant in Eden set in context of the Covenant of grace.” Dr. Ferguson quotes Owen here, “Sinai is a particular, temporary covenant . . . and not a mere dispensation of the covenant of grace.”

Later on the majority of Puritans came around to agreeing that the Mosaic Covenant was a Covenant of Grace as written in the Confession of Faith. Burgess makes it clear that works under the covenant of grace at Sinai does not in any way justify anyone. Salvation is by faith given by the grace of God. The Covenant of Grace given at Sinai is different from the Covenant of Grace called the New Testament by administrations. “The righteous Jews did not rest in the Sacrifices, or Sacraments, but by faith did really enjoy

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76 Rohr, 50.

77 Samuel Petto, The Great Mystery of The Covenant of Grace: or the Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained (Stoke-on-Trent Staffs, UK: Tentmaker Publications, 2007), 113.

78 Sinclair B. Ferguson, The Theology of John Owen, Lesson 3 (Charlotte: Reformed Theological Seminary; Virtual Campus, 2003), 18.


80 Westminster Confession of Faith VII, 5,6.
Christ in them, as well as we in ours.⁸¹ “For although the incarnation had not taken place yet, the fruit and benefit of this incarnation was then communicated, because of the decree and promise of God (1 Peter 1:20).”⁸² The switch from the Old to the New can be summed up in 2 Peter 1:19, “And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.”

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⁸¹ Burgess, 241.

⁸² Ibid., 242.
CHAPTER 5
PETER BULKELEY (1583-1659)

MIGRATION OF PURITANS TO NEW ENGLAND

There were a number of elements that came together to begin the movement that became known as the Great Migration from Old England to New England. Most of these elements have been mentioned in the introduction of this thesis. They can be summarized as major disagreements between the Puritans and the Anglican Church and its practices or the Puritans against the anti-Calvinists. This migration was mostly a religious one with the objective of being able to practice Christianity as the Puritans believed it should be practiced. This was not a search for a country that would tolerate all religious beliefs. That would be a serious misunderstanding about the Puritan mindset. They wanted freedom to practice Reformed and Covenant theology of which make up Calvinism. There was no room for Jews, Roman Catholics, and Arminians and Antinomians among the Protestants.¹ This new country would be an example to others back in England of how a Christian colony of Puritans would look like free from persecution. This does not mean that most Puritans left England for the New World. Quite the contrary, most Puritans stayed in England and out of those who

migrated to New England it has been estimated that one out of three clergy returned and one out of four settlers returned.²

The most famous ship involved in the beginning of the migrations of Puritans (Pilgrims), the Mayflower, set sail for the New World 6 September 1620 with 102 passengers.³ Its destination was the territory known as Virginia but the Mayflower ended up at Plymouth harbor in what was to become the state of Massachusetts. Since the Pilgrims landed in New England instead of the Virginia territory granted to the Virginia Company of London, they had no legal rights to settle there. As the result of this new predicament a political covenant was drawn up known as the ‘Mayflower Compact.’ The forty-one free adult male passengers who signed the pact on 11 November 1620 agreed to “covenant and combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic . . .”⁴ This early covenant (one of the first) in New England is brought to attention because there were no established civil or ecclesiastical institutions. The New Englanders found they were on their own and forced to draw up their own civil and church covenants.

The migration of the Puritans started at a slow pace until 1634. Most of the Puritans came over to New England during the years of 1634 to 1639 with 1638 being the height of the Great Migration.⁵ These settlers were not like those going to the southern colonies like


³ ‘Pilgrims’, was the name given by Mayflower passenger and future Governor of Plymouth Plantation, William Bradford. This term is from “Hebrews 11:13, where the patriarchs of Israel were said to have thought of themselves as ‘strangers and pilgrims’ on the earth,” quoted from Moore, 148.


⁵ “By the best estimates, somewhere between 13,000 and 21,000 people sailed over . . .” stated in Moore, 1.
Virginia. Those going to the southern colonies were “usually males aged between fifteen and twenty-four, single, unskilled, from the lower classes—mostly indentured servants.”\textsuperscript{6} The migration to New England was the “most family-centered in America’s history” coming from the highly literate middle class. They were landowners, craftsmen, and lawyers. These emigrants came from large cities and small market towns in which they had a long family history. Early in the 1630’s the local upper class (gentry) had recruited everybody they could in the neighborhood. The thousands who set off on board the seventeen ships of Winthrop’s Fleet were neighbors, relatives, and members of the local parish.\textsuperscript{7}

The majority of migrant preachers were leaving their parishes where they had deep roots. These were not radicals or malcontents (only two were separatist). The migrant preachers’ conscious would not let them stay as ministers of God under William Laud’s era as Bishop of London (1628-1633) nor when he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. Any cleric that did not agree with Bishop Laud, from the diocese of London, “would be suspended, deprived of his living, and excommunicated.”\textsuperscript{8} There was a great cost involved for leaving the security of the local parish and sailing to a new world not knowing what awaits. Peter Bulkeley was one of these clerics who fled to New England with his family.

**COVENANT THINKING IN NEW ENGLAND**

The New England Puritans as well as the Old England Puritans were very familiar with the Old Testament that accounted for their knowledge of the relationship between covenant and law as was displayed in Burgess’ *Vindicaiæ Legis*. During the formulation of the

\textsuperscript{6} Moore, 21.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 24.
legal codes in the seventeenth century New England, the Levitical statutes were drawn upon. This was “because the new world was a ‘tabula rasa,’ and because civil institutions were well-established in the old world, there were few patterns for civil covenanting found in Europe, especially England.” Consequently each town was on its own to come up with its pact or civil covenant. The leaders “knew how to gather a church by church covenant, and for this reason they adapted the practice of church covenanting to the establishment of civil authority, thus generating a series of civil covenants that paralleled the church covenants.” The church covenants served as a model for the civil covenants because of the emphasis on relationships within the communities. To clarify what exactly a church covenant is one must look at what it is not. Covenants within the Christian church are not creeds or confessions. “Creeds are brief statements of belief, organized and codified so that the faithful can recite them easily. Confessions expound the dogma of a particular denomination of the church.” Church covenants were brief and presented the vision for the church or if it was a civil covenant then the vision for the community was brought forth.

The early church covenants were covenants and not contracts: they reflected a relationship of grace with God and not a contractual arrangement, whereby human beings could bargain with God. The content of the church covenants bestowed dignity to, yet remembered the fallibility of, human beings. Within a divine-human relationship that was hierarchical and not egalitarian the church covenants spoke of a God who reaches down to human beings in their lostness and bondage to sin. The covenant was made not only with the founding generation, but the covenant obligations and responsibilities were passed on to the descending generations.

9 Weir, 4.
10 Ibid., 8.
11 Ibid., 6.
12 Ibid., 171.
In Reformed theology, the marks of the true church were the preaching of the Word, the administration of the sacraments, and the implementation of church discipline. Along with these requirements, Puritans, both in Old England and New England stressed the importance of the church being the home of saints elected by God for salvation and placed under the Covenant of Grace instead of the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Grace was emphasized in the construction of the church covenant. This “document was signed by the charter members of the congregational church in a day-long ceremony that took much time, effort, and preparation.”\textsuperscript{13} This church covenant was to be signed by any new member as they joined the church.

PERSONAL HISTORY OF PETER BULKELEY

Bulkeley was born at Odell, Bedfordshire, England on January 31, 1583. He started attending Cambridge University at the age of sixteen and finishing with several degrees with a mastery of Latin. He took over as rector of Odell, 1610-1635. It was during this time that he lost his first wife, Jane Allen, in 1626. They had nine children together. During his time as a non-conformist there were numerous complaints about his Puritan teaching until he was silenced and ejected from the parish by Archbishop William Laud. Within a year from the time of his ejection he and his second wife Grace Chetwode and sons from the first marriage, John, Benjamin, and Daniel, left for New England on the Susan and Ellen in 1635. The second marriage was blessed with four more children. In April 1637 he was ordained at Cambridge, Massachusetts and became the first minister of Concord. One of the first books to

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 137.
be printed in New England was his collection of sermons titled *The Gospel Covenant; Or the Covenant of Grace Opened*, published in London in 1646.

By the time Bulkeley had “published *The Gospel Covenant* the Puritan Experiment could be counted a success.”\(^{14}\) Compared to Old England, New England was a success. Gone were Indian uprisings, threats from England, economic hardships, deviationists such as Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. Bulkeley had to issue a warning against complacency that if the people failed to fulfill the articles of the covenant, God would turn his favor into a curse. Cotton Mather called Bulkeley’s admonition of 1646 “the dying charge of a Moses to an Israel in the wilderness.”\(^{15}\)

John Winthrop had preached (*Modell of Christian Charity*) on the ship coming over from England in 1630 that all eyes of the world would be upon them because New England is the “city upon the hill.”\(^{16}\) Those on the continent of Europe and the British Isles were watching to see if the Puritan experiment would work. Winthrop in his famous speech warns them that they must not forsake the “articles of our Covenant with him”\(^{17}\) but practice the two greatest commandments and God would bless them in the land where they go to possess.\(^{18}\)

This is the mission upon which the Puritans set out from Old England. Here in New England they have the opportunity to set up a Kingdom of God on Earth by obedience to God.


\(^{15}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 32.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 33.

under his Covenant of Grace. Bulkeley reminds New England that they have been “exalted in privileges of the Gospel above many other people and they are to consider the great things that the Lord has done for them.”

Along with the blessings under the Covenant of Grace he gives them warnings:

. . . not to count our condition then a state of liberty, as if we might then walk after our own desires and wayes, as if there were none to command us and rule over us . . . but there is a subjection required to the Lord. We must not look onely after gifts, mercies, kindnesses, pardon, and . . . pledges of grace, but looke also for this, to be under God, and to set up him on high to be a God and Lord over us; And let us not count this our misery, but our blessednesse, that we are brought under his gracious government. Herein the Lord sheweth his marvelous kindnesse, that he will take care of us.

_Gospel Covenant; or The Covenant of Grace Opened_

These sermons of Bulkeley give the reader the strong impression that he wants his readers to understand everything about Covenant Theology. It is apparent that he makes an excellent attempt to explain the purpose of God’s covenants and all aspects of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. His emphasis is strong on man’s responsibility as the benefactor of the covenant that has led to misunderstanding by Antinomians, Arminians, and secular scholars. This will be discussed later on in the thesis.

He uses Zechariah’s prophecy to begin his work on the importance of understanding the covenant. The passage is 9:11 “As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.” In the context of this verse, Zechariah is prophesying to the captive Jews in Babylon. Bulkeley comes up with three types of bondage resembling the present situation of man. The first is applied to all men being

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20 Ibid.
in bondage because of sin, not just the Jew. The second application is the Church in bondage to Western Babylon or the Antichrist of Rome. The third application is the present condition specifically of the Jews being cast off because of their rejection of Christ.  

This bondage or “waterless pit” offers no comfort to refresh the souls. It is impossible to find refreshment so the condition is utter misery. The only way out of the pit is by God transcending and freeing the soul from spiritual captivity by the blood of the covenant. “All deliverances and salvation, which the Lord communicates to his people, he doth it by vertue of, and according to his covenant.”

Bulkeley believes that the only way that God communicates his salvation to man is through his covenant and provides four reasons why God uses the covenant. The first is to reveal his faithfulness and truth in keeping the covenant relationship. In Revelation 19:11, Christ is called Faithful and True. We are not alone, is the second reason, because it delights God to bind himself to us, (Jeremiah 13:11). For the reassure of his people is the third, as they go through life’s challenges, (Hebrews 6:17-18). The last is that God has given his people honor, dignity, beauty, royalty, and glory, (Deuteronomy 26:18,19).

Following the systematic theology approach of Covenantal Theology, Bulkeley first proves that the covenant started within the Godhead. The Father’s part consisted of appointing Christ as Mediator and commanding the Son to obey his commands. He promises the Son that he will give him the Spirit abundantly, to assist him in the redemptive work, all his work will

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21 Ibid., 2-3.

22 Ibid., 27.

23 Ibid., 29-30.
be successful and not in vain, he will receive sovereign rule and dominion, and he is promised glory forever along with his chosen people.\textsuperscript{24}

The Son’s part is to accept the office of Mediator, to trust the Father’s promises, to submit to the Father’s will, and expect all to be accomplished between the Father and Christ. “Hence it is that God is called the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (Ephesians 1:3) which is by reason of the Covenant between them.”\textsuperscript{25}

Since there is a covenant between God and his son then there must be a covenant between God and Man. Bulkeley gives evidence of the covenant between God and man in ten paragraphs.

1. Look at all the Scripture references that express God’s covenantal relationship with the people of Israel.
2. Look at all the Scripture references that express God’s covenantal relationship with certain saints.
3. God makes the covenant with us through Christ.
4. Look at all the Scripture that refers to keeping the covenant.
5. Consider that the Covenant made with Christ concerning us was made from everlasting.
6. The Covenant of which Christ is the Testator, has to be a covenant with us.
7. God made a covenant of works with Adam, and that being broken, he comes and makes him a new covenant of grace through Christ.
8. From the end and use of the Sacraments, which is to confirm the covenant of grace, as being seals of it.
9. If there be no covenant made to us, then infidelity and unbelief would not be sin.
10. The covenant tends to bind us to God in obedience. To say there is no covenant between God and us opens us to all kinds of sin and if there is no covenant, man cannot be charged with unfaithfulness.\textsuperscript{26}

Bulkeley tackles the objective that is in Galatians 3:16, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but

\begin{footnotes}
\item[24] Ibid., 31-32.
\item[25] Ibid., 33-34.
\item[26] Ibid., 34-36.
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rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ,” that the promise is only to Christ thus no covenant is made to us. First, Abraham is the father of many nations, or of all who believe in Christ. As Adam was the federal head of the human race, Abraham is the spiritual head or father of all the faithful. He is not the father of the carnal seed but the spiritual seed. Christ does not have the promise from Abraham but the other way around. “The name Christ is taken in Scripture two ways; personally and mystically.” To use the name Christ personally is used for Christ’ person (1 Timothy 2:5, “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”). To use Christ mystically is not for Christ’ person alone but for the whole body of believers (1 Corinthians 12:12, “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.”). It is to be understood that the Apostle Paul who is the author of this letter to the Galatians is correcting false thinking about being justified by works instead of by faith in Jesus the Christ. It is important for the recipient of the letter to understand that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by faith and the object is Christ.

Bulkeley moves on to clarify the similarity and differences between the two covenants of which are mentioned in Scripture; the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace. The similarities are:

1. They have the same author: God.
2. They are between the same parties: God and man.
3. They have a common end: God’s glory.
4. They promise life and blessedness.
5. They require a condition.
6. They are immutable.

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27 Ibid., 37.
28 Ibid., 40.
29 Ibid., 37-45.
7. They require perfect obedience.\textsuperscript{30}

The differences between the two covenants are:

1. The conditions of the two covenants.
2. One was without a mediator, the other made by a mediator.
3. In the Covenant of works Gods acceptance begins with the work; in the Covenant of grace it begins with the person.
4. In the Covenant of works man is left to himself, not so in the Covenant of grace.
5. The Covenant of works is to glorify God’s justice, the other is to glorify grace.
6. In the Covenant of works God has no respect of persons, but grace puts a difference between such.
7. One sin breaks the Covenant of works, but not the Covenant of grace
8. Covenant of works leaves man boasting in himself while the Covenant of grace gives glory to God.
9. Covenant of works leaves the heart in suspense while the Covenant of grace brings peace.
10. There is help for those who break the Covenant of works but not for those who break the Covenant of grace.
11. Covenant of works is impossible for one to fulfill in the present state of corruption, but the Covenant of grace is possible to fulfill.
12. Covenant of works was made before the Fall; the other of grace after the Fall.
13. Covenant of works is revealed by the light of nature, but the Covenant of grace is revealed by a supernatural light.
14. The Covenant of works was made for all men but the Covenant of grace was made only for the elect.
15. One under the Covenant of works may come to be under the Covenant of grace but he that is once under the covenant of grace, can never be brought back under the covenant of works any more.\textsuperscript{31}

Like so many Puritan writers who write on the Covenant, Bulkeley wants to clarify the difference between the two covenants so people see that there was only one Covenant of Works, and that was the first covenant made with Adam. The misunderstanding occurs because of the ignorance of how the Covenant of Grace has progressed through different administrations that were taught by William Ames (1576-1633) who greatly influenced

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 55-56.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., 57-167.
Bulkeley.\textsuperscript{32} “The substance of the covenant was ever in all ages of the Church the same as it is now . . . Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to David, and so on, from David to Christ, and from Christ to the end of the world.”\textsuperscript{33} The covenant that God made with the Gentiles was nothing new but the same one he made with Abraham. The difference is that now the Gentiles are enlightened (Ephesians 2).\textsuperscript{34}

Bulkeley divides the Covenant of Grace into the Old and New.\textsuperscript{35} Bulkeley writes that both Testaments are like the two Cherubims that were beaten from the same piece of gold and faced each other on the Ark of the Covenant. Both Testaments look towards Christ because they “contain the same matter and substance of doctrine which is to lead us to faith and to the obedience of Christ.”\textsuperscript{36} The similarities are:

1. Both spring from the same fountain of Grace.
2. Both propound the same blessings and privileges.
3. Both lead to one Mediator
4. Both have the same condition; Faith.
5. Both communicate the same spirit of Grace
6. Both give the same laws and rules of life to walk by and direction by one Spirit.
7. Both have the same end and salvation.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 112-113. This sentence about the six dispensations in Bulkeley’s work was mistaken as a summation of his work that misleads any readers on the subject of Covenant found in: A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature, gen. ed. David Lyle Jeffrey (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 166.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 113.

\textsuperscript{35} This student was taken by surprise by the sudden division of the Covenant of Grace into the Old and New Covenants. Bulkeley does not use the word testament very much so it catches the modern reader by surprise. This was apparent when reading a Ph. D dissertation about Bulkeley and discovered the writer mistook the Old Covenant as the Covenant of Works (James Williams Jones III, The Beginnings of American Theology: John Cotton, Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard and Peter Bulkeley (D. Phil. Dissertation, Brown University, 1970), 255.

\textsuperscript{36} Bulkeley, 142.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 115.
The sixth similarity is the one this half of the thesis is concerned with. What place does the Law have under the New Covenant according to Bulkeley? In New England as well as Old England the Puritans had Antinomians within their ranks. This category of belief, that consisted of saying that we Christians are not under any law but just grace, was not welcome among most of New England Puritans. This was also a point of contention that reached into what qualified a person to be a member of a church. Bulkeley is one of the Puritans who is very strong in preaching that sanctification in a person’s life is really the only way one can tell if the person is truly converted. In other words, does the person’s life exhibit signs of new birth (2 Corinthians 5:17). The Antinomians were strongly against any conditions put upon a person who was saved by the grace of God. One just had to take a person’s word that they had become a Christian. This was not good enough for the New England Puritans such as Bulkeley. This questioning in great detail about a person’s testimony was a strong characteristic of New England Puritanism that was not as prevalent back in Old England. The Puritans wanted the visible church to be as the invisible church and that would mean all members had received the Holy Spirit which is the sign of being of the elect of God or a child of God. The Puritans did not want pagans disguised as Christians, or ones who thought they were Christian because of some emotional experience or because they partook of the two sacraments, to be in the church. The church was for the Christians not non-believers. This qualification was not accepted by all but Bulkeley appears to be in the forefront of wanting believers to live the Christian life externally not just internally.

Due to his deep convictions on the importance of obeying the law in the process of sanctification, he is emphatic that Christians understand the relationship of the Law with the
Gospel. He starts with Jesus and then goes on to the Apostle Paul and James’ teaching on the importance of the Law in a believer’s life.

Bulkeley presents his conviction with the question; “What did Christ meane in telling us that hee came not to destroy the Law, Matthew 5:17.” Christ wanted to expose the corrupt teachings of the Pharisees regarding their oral traditions of the rabbis whereby they had distorted the law to suit their legalized system. Christ wanted to make clear the correct interpretation for all believers because the Law was “the rule of life left by Christ for his disciples to walk by.”

Christ models his own teaching when he is tempted in the wilderness by the Devil. He repelled the fiery darts by quoting the commandments of the law: “MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD; YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST; YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.” (Matthew 4:4,7,10). Here is Christ who made use of the Law as his rule of life, filled with the Spirit beyond measure, anointed with the oil of grace above all his fellows and he is here repealing the darts of Satan with the Law. “Are we more spiritual than Christ? Do we have a greater measure of grace or do we have more of the Holy Spirit than Christ?”

The objection that Christ has done everything for our justification and so we do not have to do anything else because we have perfect righteousness needs to be corrected. Using this logic then Christians should not have to go through any suffering because Christ has suffered for us. We should also be free from loving our neighbor and loving God since Christ

38 Bulkeley, 123.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
did all of that for us. What is to be done with some of Christ’s examples that we are to follow, found in John 13:14-15; Philippians 2:5,7; Ephesians 5:2; 1 Peter 2:23?\(^{41}\)

Under the old covenant there was a difference between the holy and profane, clean and unclean (Ezekiel 44:23-24 “Moreover, they shall teach My people \textit{the difference} between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in a dispute they shall take their stand to judge; they shall judge it according to My ordinances. They shall also keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed feasts, and sanctify My sabbaths.”). Under the new covenant the law states basically the same (Romans 12:9, “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”). If the Law is taken away than there is no difference between holy and profane or good and evil.\(^{42}\)

In I Corinthians 9, Paul states he is “under the law of Christ” and it is implied that he is not under the Civic and Ceremonial Jewish laws. Paul subjected himself to the moral law and he does not apply for an exemption from it. The thought of him not being under the direction or obedience of the law probably never entered his mind. He writes in Galatians 6:2b to “fulfill the law of Christ.” Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans makes it clear that he “joyfully concurs with the law of God in the inner man” and in verse 25 he is “serving the law of God with his mind.” He tells the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 7: 19) that Circumcision and Uncircumcision are not what matters. “What matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.”\(^{43}\)

All these verses mentioned previously are for the new covenant. “It is not therefore the change of times, or of the state of the Church, which causeth the law now to be cast aside,

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 124.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid.  
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 124-125.
but the change is in the spirits of men; They were then according to the mind of Christ; but now we are risen up on the other side against Christ.”

Since Christ is a king he must have a kingdom. With a kingdom come laws to govern by. There can be no government without laws to rule the kingdom. “To abolish law would in effect pull down Christ from his kingly power and dignity and to undermine the foundation of his throne” Antinomians place themselves in the same category as the citizens in the Luke 19:14 parable who said, “We will not have this man to reign over us.”

James writes that the law is a royal law (James 2:8). This description would make the law one that has the power given to it of a sovereign. It has power over all consciences of God’s people. If the law was a base law or one that was not a rule to live by then it would not be labeled a royal law by James. “But the law is a royal, kingly law . . . and therefore must have a power to command and rule in the consciences and lives of God’s people.”

The Apostle Paul frequently commands believers in his letters to obey God based on the authority of the Law. For example Ephesians 6:2 commands children to obey their parents because this is the “first commandment with a promise” (Ephesians 6:3). Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 9:8-9) and to Timothy (1 Timothy 5:18) quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4, “You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,” to apply the principle of the law to Christians supporting their ministers financially. To the Galatian church he advises them to “fulfill the law of Christ” by bearing each other’s burdens (Galatians 6:2). Bulkeley adds a warning to those who say that what is meant here is the law

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44 Ibid., 126.
45 Ibid., 125.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 126.
of love and not the moral law of God. The moral law is the law of love. Without God’s love one cannot obey his commandments and without His commandments we cannot love God.\textsuperscript{48}

In his defense before governor Felix, Paul states, “he served God in accordance with the Law and in the prophets” (Acts 24:10). If, Christ had abolished the law, on what grounds could he have pleaded about his observation of the law. Instead of a justification, it would have been a lie. But Paul justifies his position because he observes the law. Paul here was testifying against those who were strictly observing the Ceremonial and Judicial law who had wrongfully accused him of forsaking the law.

As Paul justifies his practice by the authority of the law, so does James commend those who fulfill the law (James 2:8), and blames and reproves those who speak against and judge the law (4:14). But now, if the Law were abolished, then how can one be accused of fulfilling the law, speaking against, and judging the law. By these verses written by Paul and James it is apparent the law was not abolished by Christ.\textsuperscript{49}

The Apostle Paul characterizes the law as good, spiritual, holy, and just (1 Timothy 1:8; Romans 7:14). So, how can the Law offend those that are good, spiritual, holy, and just? In Paul’s mind he serves the Law of God (Romans 7:25).\textsuperscript{50}

If there is no Law then why does Paul call the ‘son of destruction’ the ‘man of lawlessness’ in his second letter to the Thessalonians. This is a man of apostasy who is unrestrained or without law. Luke records Peter’s words in Acts 2:23 calling the men who nailed Jesus, lawless or godless men. When a lawless spirit is in operation the result is the

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 127.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
example of lawless men “crucifying the Son of God by exposing him to contempt among men as if he had come into the world to make a lawless and licentious people.”

This spirit of lawlessness is due, as the Apostle points out in Romans 8:7, to the carnality of man. It is the carnal mind that will not be in subjection to the Law of God. One translation states that it is the wisdom of the flesh instead of the wisdom of the spirit.

Bulkeley answers those who say that they do not walk by the Laws written in Scripture but by the Laws on their heart. It is impossible to walk by the laws written on a person’s heart because Jeremiah 17:9 states that “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?” The Law is imperfectly written on our hearts because of the dwelling of sin in our flesh. Plus, we are to walk by a perfect rule so we can know the perfect and good will of God (Romans 12:2). That can only be if we have the perfect word of God revealed to us from the written word of God. Our obedience will be imperfect but the Law has to be perfect of which we receive directions or the rules of life. Even though David could say that the law was written in his heart (Psalm 40:8), yet he also looked to what was written. Just as those who have the Holy Spirit in them will have the Law in their heart because of what they have learned from the Scriptures. Bulkeley is saying here that there is no osmosis of Scripture that miraculously places all sixty-six books of the Bible into their spirit. There has to be a physical intake of the Word of God or the Law of God such as through the processes of hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating.

It may appear that Bulkeley contradicts himself later on in the section titled, ‘Concerning the benefits and blessings of the Covenant’ where he says the Holy Spirit

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51 Ibid., 128.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., 128-129.
testifies of the covenant with us by putting God’s laws upon the hearts and minds of those under the covenant (Hebrews 10:15-16).\textsuperscript{54} But there is no contradiction because the human perspective can be distorted by our sin nature. Those under the covenant that have the law written on their hearts need to continue to be renewed by the Scriptures (2 Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 4:23; Colossians 3:10).

Assuming that Bulkeley is warning his parishioners not to go the direction of the Roman Catholic Church, he wants to clarify that the law opposes the gospel in the doctrine of justification.\textsuperscript{55} The law is abolished in this regard because there is no law to follow to be justified before God. Justification occurs without law because it is based on faith that God gives to his elect through the process of regeneration. The doctrine of sanctification is another story. The Law continues in this doctrine of sanctification. The law is a guide and rule for those who believe.\textsuperscript{56} Sanctification is a never-ending process of growth in obedience to God. For the Antinomians, the question is, to what are they referencing their lives on that they may grow in obedience.

The importance of the Law under the New Covenant or as Bulkeley formulated it earlier as the sixth similarity of the two Covenants ends in this conclusion of his:

Thus then it is cleare, that those under the Old Testament, and we under the New have the same rules of life to walke by. Ceremonialls, and some part of their judiciaall lawes, were but for a time, and during that time were peculiar to the Jewes, not pertaining to us. But the morall law belongs no lesse to us then to them, it being that eternall will of God, which all flesh are to be guided by, never to be abrogated, so long as heaven and earth shall endure. And this is the sixt thing wherein the old and new Covenant doe

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 189.

\textsuperscript{55} This would not only apply to the Papacy that gets justification and sanctification confused but also the Arminians who want to add their participation in the process of salvation.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 129.
agree, namely in having the same rules of life for the people of both covenants to walke by.\textsuperscript{57}

Under the topic of law under the New Covenant or the New Testament, Bulkeley’s fourth part of his treatise is one that is easily misunderstood. It is titled “Concerning the Condition of the Covenant.” Bulkeley masterfully explains in great detail the conditions that God has laid out for those under the Covenant. These consist of the responsibilities of those elected to be in God’s Covenant and God’s sovereignty over the Covenant.\textsuperscript{58}

Before these are examined it is best to point out that there are four properties Bulkeley presents that he calls “The Properties of the Covenant.”\textsuperscript{59} First, the Covenant is free, meaning that there is nothing in the human creature that would move God to take us into his Covenant with him. It is all based on his free grace. “He looks for no benefits by us in his Covenant with us, but onely to communicate good unto us: . . .”\textsuperscript{60} Second the Covenant will not fail. It is not a lie and will accomplish everything God has planned.\textsuperscript{61} Third the Covenant is everlasting because of the promise Christ made to us before the foundation of the world, (Titus 1:2).\textsuperscript{62} Last it is a holy Covenant because of the contracting of holy parties and they being the Holy Trinity and the holy Saints. God is the God of the Holy made holy by the work of the Son.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{58} This fourth part of Bulkeley’s treatise is the one most attacked by Antinomians such as Sir Henry Vane, who collided theologically with Bulkeley during the Antinomian Controversy (1636-38).

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 398.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 399.

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 407.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 415.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 421.
The opposite is the Devil’s Covenant. Every human being is in a covenant with either God or the Devil. The Devil’s covenant is pleasing unto the flesh fulfilling the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-16). It consists of the unjustified, unsanctified, and the unholy who are described by Jesus in Matthew 7: 20-23.\(^\text{64}\)

Understanding the four basic properties of the Covenant of Grace will help to alleviate the misunderstanding that Bulkeley is promoting a works Covenant under the disguise of a Covenant of Grace. He does no such thing. It is all God’s work and he gives his holy ones the power to fulfill the conditions of the covenant as will be shown.

Referring back to the fourth part of his treatise, Bulkeley makes it clear that there is a condition of the Covenant:

The Lord doth not absolutely promise life unto any; he doth not say to any soul, I will save you and bring you to life, though you continue impenitent and unbelieving; but commands and works us to repent and believe, and then promises that in the way of faith and repentance, he will save us. He prescribes a way of life for us to walk in, that so wee may obtaine the salvation which he hath promised; he brings us first through the door of faith, Acts 14. And then carries us on in the way of faith, till he bring us to the end of our faith the salvation of our soules.\(^\text{65}\)

By definition of a covenant, there has to be conditions except for a special occasion in Scripture such as God making his covenant with Noah and every living creature in Genesis 9:9. Bulkeley writes that this is not really a covenant because there is no mutual agreement of the two parties to one another with a condition. The reason God called it a covenant was to demonstrate the immutability of his mercy to us as if we had bound him to the covenant by some prior work performed by us. But this is not typical of a covenant.\(^\text{66}\)

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 427.

\(^{65}\) Ibid., 313.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., 314.
Scripture uses two words to describe the covenant made between God and us: Covenant promised (Deuteronomy 7:12 and Covenant commanded (Joshua 7:11). This does not mean that there are two covenants but two parts of the covenant. One is the promise of God to us and the other is our duty to God or the condition. If the condition is taken away than the Covenant commanded must also be taken away.\(^{67}\)

Ezekiel 20:37 records God uses the expression “I shall bring you into the bond of the covenant.” Why would God use the word “bond” if there were no condition of the covenant? God makes with his elect a Covenant of Grace but does not leave us autonomous. Paraphrasing Jeremiah 13:11, God made Israel and Judah cling to him as a waistband. God’s people were bound to God in the bond of the Covenant. Paul writes in Romans 6:20 that those who are not in the covenant (slaves of sin) are free from righteousness. But now those who are in the covenant are Christ’s slave in 1 Corinthians 7:22. They are “bound to him by the bond of the Covenant.”\(^{68}\)

Genesis 17: 7 is about God promising the covenant with Abraham and verse 9 is about the command to keep the covenant which in this case is the circumcising of all males to be a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham. Circumcision is the duty that satisfies the condition of this covenant.\(^{69}\)

An objection is raised that there are some absolute promises of the Covenant that do not have any condition on our part such as the promise of grace to the elect that God will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them (Ezekiel 11:19). Bulkeley answers the objection by implying a misunderstanding of the covenant in that we are just concerned with

\(^{67}\) Ibid., 315.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 316.
our persons. When addressing the covenant it is not to be just existential but going back to the beginning of the promise of grace to us by the Father through Christ. Christ received the promise of grace for us but under the condition that he lay down his life for the elect. This is not an absolute promise but a conditional promise. “The first grace is conditional, though without conditions on our part.”

Concerning the end of the covenant made with us it is called a covenant of life and peace (Malachi 2:5) upon the condition of obedience and faith. It is not a covenant of life and peace with the unbelieving and blasphemous (Romans 10:9-10, 8:13; Matthew 5:3-10). Both the beginning of the covenant and the end of the covenant is conditional.

The salvific order that God uses to bring us into covenant with him:

First the Lord comes and takes away from us the heart of stone, that evil heart of unbelief, and gives us a spirit of faith, and renewing Grace, and then draweth the soule into a Covenant with him, to walk with him in a way of faith; depending upon him by faith, and obeying him by faith: so looking for the promise of eternall life; Thus it was with Abraham . . .

The objection is raised that saying the covenant of grace has conditions confuses it with the covenant of works. Bulkeley answers that all covenants have conditions but different covenants have different conditions. God does require conditions under the covenant of grace and Jesus set the example for us explained in his prayer in John 17. He glorified the Father and we are to bring glory to the Father by obeying him and living righteously. This power of the Spirit that God has given to his elect to obey and follow him gives them comfort and peace with the desire to please God. They have the power to stop the mouths of the wicked

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70 Ibid., 318.
71 Ibid., 318-319.
72 Ibid., 319.
and unrighteous by God carrying them through faith, patience, submission, and obedience of his will.\textsuperscript{73}

"Faith is the condition of the covenant" from which all other graces flow from it such as poor in heart, merciful, upright and others. “In the covenant of grace God puts into us the habit of faith and then requires of us the acts of faith; to lay hold of the promise, and to receive the grace which is offered in the Covenant.”\textsuperscript{74} “He is the first mover who begins with us.” We never begin the process.\textsuperscript{75} Faith brings nothing to God of our owne, it offers nothing to stand in exchange for his mercy offered; it receives a gift, but giveth no price. The Lord holds out, and offers the free grace of the Covenant: faith receives it, and makes it our owne.\textsuperscript{76}

Today the term habit of faith would be discarded for the terminology of saving faith or the faith that only God can give one who is of the elect. This is the faith that leads to justification and this leads to acts of faith that make up the process of sanctification.\textsuperscript{77} “God’s rule calls for the active exercise of the new quality of life given.”\textsuperscript{78} Bulkeley said that giving evidence of justification by sanctification is not declaring a covenant of works. He would not

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 320-321.

\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 322, 333.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 334. The phrase ‘first mover’ is borrowed from Aristotle. The Puritans were trained in Aristotelian philosophy as it was part of the university curriculum. This is not to say they made Aristotle a theological authority, source is Trueman, 8. Bulkeley is accused of using Aristotle’s four classes of causes in explaining the active role of faith but the accusers never give a reference (Jeffrey M. Kahl, “The Antinomian Controversy and the Puritan Vision: A Historical Perspective on Christian Leadership.”), \textit{Quodlibet Journal} Vol. 6 No 3 (July-September 2004). It is hard to see where Bulkeley uses this in his treatise.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 337.

\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Westminster Confession of Faith: Together with The Larger Catechism and The Shorter Catechism with the Scripture Proofs}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Atlanta: Committee for Christian Education & Publications, PCA Bookstore, 1990), XIV. 2.

concede to the Antinomian way and especially to Anne Hutchinson and John Cotton about this crucial matter.\textsuperscript{79} Bulkeley writes “it is a warrantable and safe way for a man by and from his sanctification to take an evidence of his justification and of his estate in Grace before God.”\textsuperscript{80} “Moreover, our sanctification,” said Bulkeley, “is more manifest to us then our justification. It is easier discerned.”\textsuperscript{81} This process of sanctification in a believer’s life can be a witness to the new life of a justified person. As it had been in England, this was the established view in New England Puritanism. Antinomians rebelled against this crying out that it was a covenant of works and those who were promoting this teaching were legal preachers.\textsuperscript{82}

Bulkeley never goes against the Protestant doctrine of Justification in emphasizing the value of works under the Covenant of Grace. His writing can be very challenging as he goes very deep into the way God prepares the heart for faith in the process of regeneration. He lets the reader know that it is all God’s responsibility in the process of salvation including the works that God has ordained his elect to do after regeneration. His emphasis on obeying God because we are living under the commandments of Christ irritate and provoke various responses from the Antinomian crowd. Bulkeley is putting out a warning not to be complacent in the Christian walk. All Christians are obligated to serve God in holiness. Everything is to be done for the glory of God. The way we eat, play, work, and all our relationships are to

\textsuperscript{79} Bulkeley was one of the chief ministers who tried Anne Hutchinson for Antinomian heresy, source is David D. Hall., ed. \textit{The Antinomian Controversy 1636-1638: A Documented History}, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 212, 362-363.

\textsuperscript{80} Bulkeley, 252.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., 263.

\textsuperscript{82} Hall, ed. \textit{The Antinomian Controversy}, 17.
visibly godly acts. He is not spiritualizing but letting church members know that the sanctification process is a visible one as well as an invisible one to prove our justification.
These two masterpieces of polemic literature are written in typical Puritan style. The authors attempt to leave nothing for their antagonists to bring up as an omission. Bulkeley’s last two divisions are a challenge because of the great depths he goes to bring out his belief in the conditions of the Covenant of Grace.\textsuperscript{1} His writing requires a thorough knowledge of the Covenant, John Calvin’s writings, and the doctrine of Regeneration, Saving Faith, Justification and Sanctification.

The history of the Puritan settlers and the importance they put on establishing church and civil covenants in New England is a prerequisite to understanding why Bulkeley’s only writing that exists is so passionate. This was the way the Puritans would organize the new “Promised Land” which they called the “city on the hill” for all England to see how a Christian nation is to look.

Bulkeley follows right in the footsteps of “such English legates of Geneva as William Perkins, William Ames, and Richard Sibbes.”\textsuperscript{2} The Puritan historian, Michael McGiffert, likes to refer to the relationship between the absoluteness of the covenant and the

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\textsuperscript{1} Ferguson states that whenever the expression ‘condition’ was mentioned it “proved to be highly problematic in reformed theology. Response, responsibility, or even obligation would have been safer expressions.” Found in Sinclair B. Ferguson, \textit{John Owen on the Christian Life} (Edinburgh, Scotland and Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987; reprinted, 2001), 31.
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condition of the covenant as a “tension.” This tension is really the Sovereignty of God and human responsibility. Bulkeley lays out the absolute sovereignty of God and points out that under God’s Sovereignty man is guided by God’s providence in keeping the conditions of the covenant. This treatise of Bulkeley is in harmony with Reformed Theology and should be a requirement for studying in understanding Covenant Theology.

Burgess wrote his treatise before Bulkeley’s yet there is harmony between the two. It is possible that Burgess would not disagree with anything that Bulkeley wrote about the Covenant and vice versa.

Burgess’ treatise is of a different emphasis than Bulkeley because Burgess remains in England and is busy fighting the heresy of Antinomians, Arminians, Socinians, and the Papal authority. Where Bulkeley wants to explain every angle of Covenant theology to help in establishing a Christian nation, Burgess wants to emphasize the difference between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace along with understanding what the moral law is and the importance of it for all men.

Most of Burgess’ work is about God’s Law. He is passionate about Christians understanding the purpose of it for unbelievers and believers. He shows his anger concerning anyone who belittles God’s Law and especially is disturbed by Rome and its flagrant disregard for the Scriptures and the elevation of their saints’ writings above the Word of God. He does not write about the covenant until Lecture XI beginning on page 101. For 100 pages, Burgess is building his case for the relevance of God’s Law for every human being before introducing the covenant he made with Adam. He does not use scripture as frequently as Peter Bulkeley but there is no lack of proof texts.

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Burgess is skilled in the use of logic that cannot go unnoticed by the reader. He explains the difference between Natural Law and Positive Law in great detail whereby he surpasses St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas in his understanding of Natural Law and the Light of Nature. Burgess is very systematic in this treatise and every lecture is built upon the previous one.

His grasp of how God’s Law is to be understood is of great depths but his writings are not hard to understand where Bulkeley is hard at places to grasp what he wants the reader to understand. Burgess is much easier to follow. It is not as necessary to have a thorough knowledge of all of Reformed Theology when reading Burgess as is demanded as a prerequisite for Bulkeley’s writing.

Burgess is writing his lectures as a purely theological appeal for Christians to value the Moral Law or the Ten Commandments. These were not done away with by the fulfilling of Christ under the Covenant of Works whereby Christ never sinned but was in constant obedience to his Father.

Burgess has a thorough understanding of the doctrines of the Image of God, Original Sin and the Total Depravity of Man otherwise his treatise would have been heresy from the beginning. He would not have been able to make sense of Adam’s predicament. Burgess is very thorough in explaining everything about Adam’s relationship with God under the Covenant of Works and what lead to Adam’s sin.

Burgess and Bulkeley approach the word ‘testament’ differently. Burgess writes that we are not to take it strictly as we do when referring to mans’ last will and testament (122). Bulkeley states that the word ‘testament’ is used to show the immutability of God’s covenant using Galatians chapter three, “Whiles men live, they may alter their Wills or
Testaments, as oft as they please; but when they are dead, it is unalterable. Christ hath dyed to confirme his testament, its therefore now unchangeable . . . (317).”

Burgess has four lectures on the giving of the Law at Sinai. From there he goes right to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:21-22). Then he makes sure all understand Christ’s interpretation of the Law of Moses and the rest of the treatise is about Christians living under the Covenant of Grace that means not abrogating God’s Moral Law.

Burgess and Bulkeley give their readers (Reformed Theologians) greater confidence in their understanding of the place of law under grace and the purpose of God having a covenant. The most memorable comment of Burgess was that the Moral Law was the only law placed in the Ark of the Covenant and it is the same law that Adam had as well as the rest of humanity. That statement is powerful and worthy of meditation. Bulkeley’s work can be summed up, by stating, that every human being will always be under a covenant with God; a covenant of works or a covenant of grace. No Homo sapiens, once they understand, would want to be under the covenant of works, because there is no mediator and no mercy, just the wrath of God.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

APPLICATION FOR THE CHURCH OF THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

The church is eternally grateful to the reformers and the Puritans for uncovering and bringing Covenant Theology to the attention of the Christian church. J.I. Packer states, “In modern Christendom, Covenant Theology has been unjustly forgotten.”\(^1\) Packer goes on to say that the Gospel of God, the Word of God, and the reality of God are not properly understood until it is viewed within a covenantal form.\(^2\) The whole Bible is the book of the covenant and the history of the church is “precisely the story of the covenant going on in space and time.”\(^3\) Until the Covenant of Redemption (covenantal agreement between the Father and the Son) is understood one cannot adequately know God and how he works.\(^4\)

These are provocative statements made by a distinguished Reformed theologian to awaken the church to the importance of this doctrine. It is difficult in the 21st century church of America where individuality and lack of commitment are the norm, for Christians to understand the “corporate or ecclesiastical identity of a covenant.”\(^5\)

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2 Ibid., 187-188.

3 Ibid., 188.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., 191.
It cannot be said that it is unnatural for humans to believe in a covenant since God instilled in Adam the knowledge of God and the immediate understanding of a covenantal relationship. Sin would be the culprit that infects and distorts man’s understanding and willingness to seek a covenantal relationship with the creator. Burgess and Bulkeley remind us of the immutability of God and his covenant of grace versus the sinfulness of man who naturally rejects God’s covenant.

Discipleship programs that instill the basic knowledge of God’s covenant with his people throughout Biblical history would be a wonderful way for the 21st century church to get the message out. For example, there are discipleship programs specifically for church discipleship such as the Navigator’s 2:7 series and the CDM (Church Discipleship Ministry) to name a few. If these programs that reach across interdenominational lines would implement some beginning Bible studies on the covenant it would reach many outside the Reformed paradigm.

The Puritans and Puritanism are more readily recognized today than Covenant Theology but not necessarily with a correct understanding of who and what they really represent. This thesis has summarized some of the prejudices, provided corrections, and brought to the attention of the reader the vast knowledge of theology these men have brought to the church. The Puritans must be read by every Christian! Why would a Christian who wants to grow in their Christian walk not want to read material that has come from one of the greatest outpouring of intellectual Christian writing since the Apostles? The church today must get excited from the leadership down. This would cause the congregation to investigate why their elders are becoming deeper in their devotional life and in personal relationships.

6 Navpress P.O. Box 35001, Colorado Springs, CO 80935.
There is a rediscovery of Christianity and a challenge offered by reading these great works that are being published for us in the 21st century.

These two Puritans Burgess and Bulkeley were fervent in their writings for the truth. Both challenged their readers not to throw away the commandments of God (moral law) in the name of freedom under grace. They wanted Antinomianism buried along with legalism. Man was created to glorify God and enjoy him forever and that does not come from disobedience. These two Puritans wanted to see fellow believers get the most out of the Christian life and that only comes from obedience to God’s moral laws.

Every machine comes with an operator’s manual. Every human created by God has an operator’s manual and it is the Word of God written down and known as the Holy Scriptures. To throw away the Ten Commandments is to eliminate the manual written by God for optimum performance of his human creature. Without the moral law of God, Christians are “children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;” (Ephesians 4:14).

The other argument that was not presented, because of limits, is the argument for elimination of the ceremonial (sacrificial) laws and the civic (judicial) laws. Anthony Burgess presents a strong argument that all humans are under the moral law written down as the Ten Commandments which is the natural law given to Adam. The Ten Commandments were the only laws put into the Ark of the Covenant. The ceremonial and the civic were not placed in the Ark. The Ten Commandments are the laws for all humans to obey. They are the law for all those who are not the elect and for those who are the elect. They are the laws under the Covenant of Works and they are the laws under the Covenant of Grace.
There has been and will continue to be great discussion on the place of law under grace. There are volumes of literature concerning this subject. Gundry’s book on the five views of the place of law under the gospel, introduce to the student of theology some of the arguments within the Christian community. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. writes a fitting conclusion:

The current evangelical generation has been raised almost devoid of any teaching on the place and use of the law in the life of the believer. This has resulted in a full (or perhaps semi-) antinomian approach to life. Is it any wonder that the unbelieving society around us is so lawless, if those who should have been light and salt to the same society were themselves not always sure what it was that they should be doing?

It is time for the dispute to come to an end; instead, let a good share of the energies be focused on discerning, by the work of the Holy Spirit, how that law of God can be further interpreted and applied to the whole of life in a way that is both honoring to Scripture and to the grace of God that brought us so great a salvation.7

Peter Bulkeley’s work amplifies Burgess’ work because of his detailed descriptions of the differences between the Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Works, the different administrations of the Covenant before and since Christ, the benefits and blessings of the covenant, the conditions of the Covenant, and the properties of the Covenant. These two Puritans compliment each other very well. Where Burgess is strong on building the historical/salvation approach to the law and covenants, Bulkeley goes into detail concerning covenants. Both works are masterpieces and should be required reading concerning the four subjects covered in this thesis: Covenant theology, Reformed theology, Puritans, and Law under Grace.

FINIS

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