

The connection between the Old and the New Testament

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THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

By J. Jocz, Toronto

In an article published in *Judaica*, March, 1956, under the title: *Das exegetische Problem und die Judenmission*, the present writer reviewed the exegetical problem presented by the messianic prophecies as deployed in the N. T. Some Jewish writers misunderstood the author's position giving the impression that he was denying validity to the messianic interpretation of O. T. texts. This is not the case as can be seen from Lou H. Silberman's impartial report on the article in *Judaism*, Spring 1957, pp. 171 ff.

What we have tried to do was to place the messianic texts of the O. T. in the N. T. perspective from where they assume quite a different aspect. Our main contention was that the N. T. writers did not use these texts in order to authenticate Jesus as Messiah. They first believed in Jesus before they related him to the O. T. This reversal of order carries important theological missionary implications. From a theological point of view it means that faith in Jesus Christ is prior to Scriptural proof: men do believe in him for what he is and only on reflection relate him to the O. T.

Again, from the point of view of missionary endeavour, specially in relation to Jews, an O. T. background (these days a rarity) does not necessarily facilitate the discovery of the Messiah. It means that even a Jew grounded in O. T. Scripture has first to encounter the Messiah and that he cannot authenticate him with the help of Messianic prediction.

It is in the context of these two facts that we have to raise the question as to the connecting link between the Old and the New Testament.

1. Typological exegesis

The *Enchiridium Patristicum* compiled by the Jesuit Father Rouet de Journell (Freiburg, 1920) lists the following entry in the Index under *Persona Christi*:

“Jesus Christus eiusque opus divinum in vetere testamento praedictum.” Such reference to the O. T. with regard to the person and work of the Messiah is within the ancient and authentic tradition of the Church. It goes back to the N. T. itself and beyond it to the primitive Church upon Jewish soil. Ludwig Diestel in his great work, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der christlichen Kirche*, Jena, 1869, stresses the new feature in messianic exegesis on the part of the early Church. This is characterized by an hermeneutic freedom which was only possible because as yet there was no fixed messianic exegetical tradition in the Synagogue¹.

But even the freedom in exegetical interpretation which the early Church enjoyed proved insufficient for the task. The range of christological *theologoumena* was such that it required the application of the typological method to cover the needs of the Church. Typology was near at hand, for it was a method widely used in rabbinic schools. Philo² employed it with great effect and so did the pagan philosophers in interpreting mythological texts³. From the Pauline use of the method we conclude that this was the fashion of the day.

If Philo is able to connect the *manna* of the wilderness with the eternal Logos, Paul connects the crossing of the Red Sea with Christian baptism, manna with the spiritual food, and the Rock with the Messiah (cf. 1 Cor. 10, 1–5)⁴.

Typologie and allegory, two closely related and difficult to distinguish methods, dominate N. T. exegesis of the O. T. The Church Father's inherited the tradition and elaborated upon it. Origen, as is well known, was no mean expert in allegorical dexterity. Not only does he known to divide the sense of Scripture

¹ Cf. Diestel, op. cit. 12f.

² Cf. Carl Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria als Ausleger des Alten Testaments*, Jena 1875, pp. 168ff. Though Siegfried speaks of the allegorical method, typology is always implied, specially in Philo's use of symbols; cf. ib. pp. 180—186. For the tradition of exegetical rules in the Synagogue, see Singer's Prayer Book, p. 13.

Cf. de Faye, *Origène, sa Vie, son Oeuvre, sa Pensée*, Paris 1923.

⁴ The wandering «Rock» accompanying the Hebrews in the wilderness is within rabbinic tradition; cf. Strack-Billerbeck, III, 406f.

in *reton*, *psychikon* and *pneumatikon*, but he also has up his sleeve the hidden sense (*mysterion*) which he deploys at will⁵. It is only natural that so diverse a method in dealing with the text opens an unlimited field of theological speculation.

John Chrysostom is perhaps more restrained in his use of the typological method which helps him to relate the story of the O. T. heroes to the life of the Messiah. He regards this method as the key to the O. T. The temptation to use some of the great themes in the O. T. typologically must have been overwhelming. The "binding of Isaac" (akedat Yitzhak) is such a theme. The subject was introduced by Barnabas (7. 3) and is frequently used by the Fathers as a type for the Messiah. That St. Paul omits to refer to the "binding of Isaac" is indeed surprising seeing the importance the Synagogue attached to this event⁶.

By the 4th century there is already a well established exegetical tradition in regard to the O. T. John Chrysostom is acquainted with the metaphorical, topological, analogical, methods of interpretation. Like Origen, he also knows of the more esoteric sense proceeding on the assumption that the prophets purposely obscured the text for fear of persecution⁷.

The typological approach to the O. T. has dominated Christian exegesis to this day. Viewed theologically it is related to the concept of *analogia entis* which is founded upon the idea of correspondence between the physical and the spiritual world. Behind it is the Platonic assumption that the world of being reflects the world of ideas. There is thus a correspondence which can be likened to the connection between the coin and the die, the impress and the seal. John Henry Blunt, the editor of the *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology* (1872) explains the meaning of *type*: "It is the expression in a lower form of a higher perfection; shadows in time of eternal verities. . ."

On this assumption he can maintain that there is an analogy

⁵ Cf. R. P. C. Hanson, *Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, London 1954, pp. 29f.; 35f.

⁶ Cf. H. J. Schoeps, *Aus frühchristlicher Zeit*, Tübingen 1950, 231f.

⁷ Cf. Diestel, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

between the laws of nature and the laws of the spiritual realm. He points to Ex. 25. 40, where Moses is told to make all things according to the pattern which was shown him on the Mountain. He also refers to Hebr. 9. 11 where the earthly tabernacle is only a type of the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. The question arises whether these and similar texts can support a philosophical theory which in every other respect is outside the biblical perspective? Much of the argument in Hebrews is *argumentum ad hominem* and it would be a daring undertaking to found upon it a carefully worked out typological theory. That the writer to the Hebrews is himself undecided can be seen from his handling of the problem of the sacrifices: on the one hand he denies their efficacy; on the other hand, he regards them as "copies" of heavenly things.

This raises the fundamental question whether typology can be employed legitimately as the link between the Testaments? When Blunt tells us that "the whole of the Mosaic religion, in its typical rites and ordinances, was a rough cast of a higher futurity", he strips the O. T. of all reality and disrupts the unity of historic revelation. The idea of an hierarchical order ascending from the mere visible to the highly spiritual is a Manichæan point of view and foreign to the Bible. The fact that typology leads to the conclusion that "history reproduces itself" makes it already suspicious.

We have already remarked that typology is closely related to allegory which is a necessary mode of reasoning. Man thinks by comparisons, proceeding step by step from a particular to a more general concept and *vice versa*. An example of allegorical reasoning is found in 1 Cor. 15, the chapter on Resurrection. To the question: how are the dead raised, St. Paul gives several allegorical answers. These are, the example of the seed; the different kinds of flesh; the difference between terrestrial and celestial bodies; the stars which differ in glory. He concludes with the sentence: "So it is with the resurrection of the dead." But is this a sufficient answer? It is not. It is not a question which can be answered allegorically. Allegory only defers the answer but cannot provide it. It would be an injustice to the Apostle were we to conclude that he was

trying to convey an universal law of *palingenesis*. His faith in the resurrection rests entirely upon the Resurrection of Jesus Christ behind whom is the God who raises the dead. We believe that the same holds good in the case of the letter to the Hebrews. The typological suggestions are of a semantic rather than theological nature.

Our conclusion is thus obvious: typology is *not* an effective link between the Testaments.

2. *Messianic prophecies*

The N. T. frequently appeals to the Hebrew Bible for references to the Person and work of the Messiah. Frequently the impression is created that these references are purposely introduced to *prove* the Messiahship of Jesus. That there is an apologetic motive behind it can hardly be denied. But how does this appeal to the O. T. fit the situation as presented by the Gospels?

Let us take a few examples:

The name of the Messiah (Mtt. 1. 23–25); the Virgin birth (Mtt. 1. 23); the town of Bethlehem (Mtt. 2. 5ff); the Flight to Egypt (Mtt. 1. 13ff.); are details in the life of the Messiah which are referred back to the Hebrew Bible. But when we come to the main story about Jesus the picture changes: Messiah's name is Jesus and not Emmanuel; he is not associated with Bethlehem but with Nazareth; his mode of birth is never mentioned⁸; his Davidic descent is played down (cf. Mtt. 22. 42ff.); that he sejournd in Egypt as an infant is nowhere repeated or even hinted at. It is obvious that these O. T. features are not introduced to verify the Messiahship of Jesus but are an after thought. The man who wrote down these traditions about the Messiah was already a believer and as such he took special pleasure in connecting the life of the Messiah with the O. T. In other words, the O. T. references are secondary and therefore not the basis of messianic faith.

Even as conservative a scholar as Franz Delitzsch is prepared to allow a discrepancy between O. T. prophecy and N. T. fulfil-

⁸ There may be a faint hint in the derisive remark by the Jews in John 8. 41.

ment. Here are his words: "Even within the O. T. itself the royal image of the future divinely anointed One is proved to be incomplete, since it is neither coextensive with the needs, nor exhausts the expectations of salvation⁹." Delitzsch goes further and admits that in the O. T. the Messiah does not occupy a central position. On the other hand, V. H. Stanton has suggested that in quite a number of instances quotations from the O. T. are not used in the N. T. as proofs but as illustrations¹⁰.

This does not mean that the O. T. is not important to an understanding of the Gospel, but only that its importance lies somewhere else.

First, we must notice the fact that in a number of instances our Lord deliberately chooses the O.T. pattern for his messianic programme, as in the case of the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Then, there are the many references on the part of the Master to the fulfilment of Scripture in his life and work. Perhaps an outstanding example is the visit to the Synagogue at Nazareth: when he closed the book after reading from Is. 61. 1-2, he said: "to-day this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4, 16-22). This has special application to the story of the Passion: it was in the O. T. that Jesus found the programme for his messianic vocation. The logion in Luke 24, 44 is not just a *theologoumenon* of the early Church: "all things written about me must be fulfilled". Without the O. T. many of our Lord's words and deeds would remain inexplicable. It is part of his messianic awareness that he deliberately places himself within the prophetic tradition.

Against this we must place the fact that our Lord overlooks and bypasses a number of O. T. features traditionally associated with the Messiah. Instead of the glory of the Davidic King he deliberately chooses the model of the Suffering Servant of Deutero-Isaiah¹¹. Instead of the prophetic Yom Yahwe, as a day of Judgement, he announces the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. Instead of smiting the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the

⁹ Franz Delitzsch, *Messianic Prophecies*, Engl., 1880, 2.

¹⁰ Cf. V. H. Stanton, *The Jewish and the Christian Messiah*, 1886, 183.

¹¹ This is now contradicted by Morna D. Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, but will require more evidence to accept her view.

breath of his lips slaying the wicked (Is. 11, 4), he calls sinners to repentance. Here the correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment is in no sense complete. The N. T. goes beyond the exceeds the prophetic vision. Prof. Eduard Riehm reminds us of two startling facts which we have lost sight of because of our traditional association of Jesus with the Suffering Servant: the O. T. knows nothing of a suffering and dying Messiah; it also knows nothing of Messiah's mediating vocation in forgiveness of sin and moral regeneration¹². It was Jesus who connected the kingly office with the Suffering Servant and who understood his death as a vicarious sacrifice¹³.

Bentzen rightly says: "That Jesus of Nazareth is the 'fulfilment' of these promises can only be said 'in faith'. It cannot be proved." It certainly cannot be proved from the O. T. All we can say is that there are in the O. T. hints, anticipations and hopes. Jesus of Nazareth took up these hints, anticipations and hopes and

¹² Because of the importance of this statement we quote Prof. Riehm *verbatim*: «Wahr aber ist trotzdem, daß die Weissagungen des Alten Bundes einen leidenden und sterbenden Messias nicht kennt; und wahr ist, daß sie den Messias nirgends eine Sündenvergebung vermittelnde und die sittlichreligiöse Erneuerung der Herzen wirkende Berufstätigkeit zuschreibt, überhaupt die vollendete persönliche Liebesgemeinschaft mit Gott nicht als durch ihn vermittelt darstellt.» (Ed. Riehm, *Die messianische Weissagung*, Gotha 1885, 207.)

¹³ Aage Bentzen, *King and Messiah*, Engl., London, 1955, p. 48: «When can state historically that Jesus of Nazareth must have considered Isaiah 53 the programme of His life and that He found God's plan concerning Himself in these Old Testament words.»

Bentzen argues against Engnell's thesis that the Servant is the king Messiah. But there is little difference between the two scholars. Bentzen is prepared to accept the Tammuz motif in Is. 53 and to connect the suffering King with the suffering Servant. All he argues for is the inclusion of a number of features in the concept of the Servant of the Lord; «to regard him as the future Messiah in the framework of the King ideology is too simple» (ib. p. 67). As we already lack conviction about Engnell's mythological king we are even less convinced of the connection between the King and the Servant in the Servant songs of Deutero-Isaiah. As to the Tammuz motif, this has been seriously questioned by S. G. F. Brandon, cf. *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, edited by S. H. Hooke, Oxford 1958; also by Review in *Canadian Journal of Theology*, April 1960, 135f.

used them creatively. He did not follow a blue-print already laid down in outline by the prophets. That he so gloriously interwove the stray strands of messianic features into the magnificent portrait of the Messiah is a witness to his unique greatness. In this creative act he managed to unite in his own person the messianic King of the stem of Jesse and the humble Servant of Deutero-Isaiah, by doing so he transmuted the age-old concept of messiahship. From henceforth the Messiah is the Servant of the Lord who lays down his life a ransom for many.

There is an interesting connection between the Synoptic temptation in the wilderness and the Johannine Prologue. Both reveal the same undertone, namely that of suffering. At the outset of the Messiah's career, he makes his choice and his choice is the hard way of suffering. There can be no cheap and easy victory; unless the grain fall into the ground and die it yields no fruit (John 12, 24).

3. Covenant Theology

Traditionally, the centre of theological attention was the messianic prophecies. These were regarded as the link between the Testaments: the O. T. was necessary in order to authenticate the New: "There were among the Jews certain men who were prophets of God, through whom the prophetic Spirit published beforehand things that were to come to pass, ere ever they happened. . . . In these books, then, of the prophets we found Jesus our Christ foretold as coming, born of a virgin, growing up to man's estate, and healing every disease and every sickness. . . . crucified and dying, and rising again. . . . We find it also predicted that certain persons should be sent by Him into every nation. . . .¹⁴". Justin proceeds in the following chapters to show in greater detail how the *predictions* of the O. T. have been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This is a dominating theme throughout his writings and looms specially large in the Dialogue with Trypho. He shows how Moses, David, Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, all prophecied of Jesus. While reading the Fathers the impression is frequently created

¹⁴ Justin Martyr, Apologia I, 31.

that the genuineness of the Gospel derives from the fulfilled predictions. We realize that this is an argument *ad hominem* and that reading from the "New" to the O. T. is already the practice of the primitive Church. There is however a difference: while it is legitimate to read back from the New to the Old Testament, it is not legitimated to reverse the order. It means that this expression of faith cannot be anticipated. Whenever the order is reversed the result is an exaggerated typological interpretation playing havoc with the text and putting the interpreter to ridicule. An example of such far-fetched exegetical interpretation is the work of David L. Cooper. Taking the O. T. as his starting-point he manages to arrive at a fully developed trinitarian doctrine by means of ruthless violence to the Hebrew text. We quote a passage at random: "In Job 26, 13 appears the following statement: *berucho shamayim shifrah*" — this D. L. Cooper translates: "By his Spirit the heavens are garnished¹⁵" and proceeds to explain: "In this passage the personality of his Spirit is clearly seen¹⁶."

How clearly?

Only by violently bending the text not just towards the N. T. position, but to the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity, is this writer able to squeeze trinitarian "clarity" out of Job. Jews have protested for centuries against wilful violation of the text, and with right. Oddly enough, on the very first page of Mr. Cooper's book appears a notice in large lettering reminding the reader of the Golden Rule of Interpretation: "When the plain sense of Scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense . . ." Mr. Cooper has obviously not kept the rule. This is a mistaken method which must be abandoned for the sake of exegetical accuracy.

Since John Cocceius (Koch, 1603—1669) "covenant theology" dominated the Protestant Church, and was particularly evident among Reformed theologians. These "federal theologians" as they were called, strongly affected the English Church at a certain period. But at no time was covenant theology as fervently held

¹⁵ Apparently Mr. Cooper's theology allows no other except the A. V. The R. S. V. reads more correctly: By his wind the heavens were made fair . . .

¹⁶ D. L. Cooper, *The God of Israel*, Biblical Research Society, 1945, p. 60.

in England as it was in the classical lands of the Reformation. Certain aspects of the "covenant" position reveal a rigidity which we cannot condone.

The underlying principle of Covenant theology is the sovereignty of God: God's purpose can never fail. Thus Adam must not succeed in spoiling God's original purpose for man. At the creation God entered into an agreement with Adam as the head of the human race, promising eternal life on condition of obedience. Adam broke the pact, but Christ, the Second Adam, took his place, and by an act of obedience constituted the New Covenant with the elect. In the words of Heinrich Heppe in his chapter on Covenant Grace: "After man had impaired the covenant entered into with God it was in God's power to punish him immediately with eternal damnation. God's objective in creating the world was to make known the glory of His nature. This had not yet been manifested to man in its perfection. So God resolved not to let judgement take effect immediately, but to use Adam's fall as a means to a new and higher revelation of His nature, and to return to the fallen world in the glory of His forgiving love and redeeming grace¹⁷."

Although "Covenant theology" in its classical expression reveals a theodicean tendency and sometimes gives the impression of a formal legal partnership, its prevailing emphasis is upon the unity of the Covenant. If John Henry Heidegger speaks of the abolition of the O. T. both *de jure* and *de facto* and thus breaks as under the story of revelation¹⁸, there are plenty of other voices to advocate the opposite view. The prevailing view is what belonged to the substance of the Covenant of grace in the O. T. remained unchanged with the coming of Christ. To the question whether the fathers of the O. T. were saved in a different way from us, the answer is given: that the Covenant of grace extends throughout the whole Bible¹⁹. Reformed theologians then speak of the "trinitarian counsel of God" in which the mediation of the Christ extends to the whole of humanity B. C. and A. D. Most attractive

¹⁷ Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Engl., London 1950, 371.

¹⁸ Cf. Heppe, *op. cit.*, 405.

¹⁹ Cf. *ib.*, p. 392.

is Leonard Riissen's position which strongly holds to the unity of the Testaments. Riissen makes five points in support of his view:

1. Scripture teaches that the Covenant of grace contracted in the N. T. is the same as entered into with Abraham.
2. The Mediator is the same in both Testaments.
3. The condition of the Covenant, namely faith, is the same in both Testaments.
4. The same promises obtain in both Testaments.
5. The sacraments which are the seal of the Covenant are substantially the same under either Covenant²⁰.

At the same time, theologians were aware that the unity of the Testaments is qualified by the time-factor: the O. T. stands to the New as promise to fulfilment. This was carefully worked out by John Wolleb, specially in respect to the Sacraments: there is a difference in the external signs, in the manner of signification, in the number and in their range. The N. T. sacraments endure till the end of the world, extend to all nations, excell in clarity²¹. It is of special interest that Wolleb objects to "Papists" doctrine on two counts:

1. That the O. T. sacraments are nothing more than types of the N. T.
2. That the O. T. sacraments accomplish nothing more than adumbrated justifying grace while the N. T. sacraments "really contain in themselves the very body of spiritual benefits".

Wolleb rightly felt that this was not taking the O. T. seriously. He therefore advocates the view that effective and justifying grace is to be found in both Testaments.

The emphasis upon the unity of the two Testaments is characteristic for Reformed theology. It was prompted by a desire to take the O. T. seriously as the Word of God. This inherent unity is not contingent upon the process of history as is the case with

²⁰ *Ib.*, p. 398; Reformed theologians counted among the O. T. sacraments the rainbow, circumcision, the Paschal lamb.

²¹ *Ib.*, p. 409.

H. H. Rowley for instance²². Not that they were not aware of the difference, as Calvin put it: the difference between the O. T. and the N. T. is a difference of *administratio* but not of *substantia*. Though the O. T. promises differ in form from the N. T. yet are they the same in content. Luther explains the connection thus: it is as if a man had first a closed letter and then broken it open — “so (also) is the O. T. a letter of Christ which after His death He opened and caused to be read through the Gospel and proclaimed everywhere²³”.

The Reformers thus envisage an organic unity which is best described in terms of Covenant.

4. *The biblical concept of Covenant*

We have already hinted that in Anglican theology the concept of the Covenant plays a less formal role as compared with the Reformed Church. Perhaps Jeremy Taylor's approach to the subject is the most original. He speaks of two Covenants: the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Faith and Repentance. These two Covenants do not replace one another but exist collaterally since the fall of Adam. The Covenant of Works is marked by severity: the sacrifices provide only for small sins, for great sins the punishment is death. But “since mankind could not be saved by the Covenant of works, that is, of exact obedience”, God in his mercy instituted the Covenant of Repentance in Jesus Christ which was already in operation after Adam's fall. This made it possible for Adam to confess his sin and to repent. Jeremy Taylor quotes a tradition to the effect that Adam spent 300 years mourning his sin on the mountains of India and as a result God promised him a Saviour²⁴.

²² Cf. H. H. Rowley's book, *The Unity of the Bible*, where he advocates a «dynamic unity».

²³ Quoted by K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I/II, pp. 76f. (Engl. 1956).

²⁴ This is in reference to Gen. 3. 15. The ancient rabbis are familiar with the thought of Adam's repentance. According to R. Meir (c. 150) Adam endured a fast which lasted 130 years (cf. Strack-Billerbeck, IV, 1, p. 107, b).

It is not according to the Covenant of Works but of Repentance that God deals with all men in all ages and in all periods²⁵.

Jeremy Taylor's two-covenant theory is attractive for its all-inclusiveness, for the unity of revelational history, and for the implied tension between judgement and grace. The question of the unity of the Testaments is well expressed by "the learned and judicious Divine" Richard Hooker to the effect "that the general end of both Old and New (Testament) is one; the difference between them consisting in this, that the Old did make wise by teaching salvation through Christ that should come, the New by teaching that Christ the Saviour is come. . . .²⁶". Hooker is well aware of the importance the Covenant plays in biblical theology. He knows that the people of the "race of Christ" are "the children of promise". This promise extends to the Christian believer who by the sacrament of Baptism becomes "incorporated into the same commonwealth with God's chosen people²⁷". Here then is a definite historical connection between Israel of the Old and Israel of the New Testament. The link is the Covenantal promises of God.

In the Bible the Covenant is the determining factor in the divine-human relationship. The fact that the O. T. knows of several covenants need not detain us. In principle they all carry the same significance: the miracle of God's "condescending immeasurable favour²⁸". This prophetic concept of the Covenant Woods describes as the declaration: "I will be your God and you shall be my people." He proceeds to observe: "Though the Covenant has in it a strong element of commandment, the thing that is foremost is a gift, the act of grace by which the people are required in gratitude to do the will of the One who has made himself their God." It is characteristic of the Covenant-relationship that it is God who is initiator and chooser and this in face "of the people's incredibly stubborn disloyalty". This covenant-relationship is the highest expression of God's unwavering faithfulness²⁹. This view of the

²⁵ Jeremy Taylor, *Symbolon Theologicon*, or a Collection of Polemical Discourses, London 1674 (Third ed. enlarged), p. 574.

²⁶ *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, I, 14, 4.

²⁷ *Ib.* IV, II, 6.

²⁸ Joseph Woods, *The O. T. in the Church*, London 1949, 81.

Covenant is largely corroborated by Prof. Johannes Behm in his learned article on *diathēkē*³⁰.

H. Wheeler Robinson expresses the same view. He too is able to discover the element of command in the biblical concept of Covenant. But this is not a command by imposition but by choice: Israel is given the opportunity to say Yes or No at Sinai. But in fact God's covenant with His people is more than this, for it is also a promise and a gift. This is principally the view of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel. Wheeler Robinson follows Sellin who associates Jeremiah's concept of the New Covenant with Ezekiel's idea of the New Heart. In this combination, so characteristic for biblical religion, Wheeler Robinson sees "the spiritual logic of the doctrine of election" carried forward "into the doctrine of grace which was to be the central theme of Christian theology³¹". We see here the working out of an inner logic inherent in the doctrine of the Covenantrelationship between God and man.

5. *The New Covenant*

In our treatise on Election we raised the question of the connection between the "old" and the "new" Covenant³². Many of the Church Fathers understood the *novum* of the Gospel to constitute a break in the story of election. The implication being that because God failed with the Jews, he transferred his favours to the Gentiles. Thus Lactantius literally says that God "changed" his covenant from Israel to the "foreign nations³³". Theologically this is an impossible position for it calls in question not only God's

²⁹ Op. cit., p. 44.

³⁰ Cf. Kittel's Theol. Wörterb. II, 137. Behm uses the term «disposition» (Verfügung) on the part of God in his definition of Covenant. We have said elsewhere that T. C. Edwards' translation of *diathēkē* with «pledge» is preferable, we still hold to this view (cf. J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, 1958, 116).

³¹ H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the O. T.*, 1953, 155.

³² Cf. *A Theology of Election*, pp. 114ff.

³³ Lactantius, *Div. Instit.* IV, 11.

wisdom and power, but his faithfulness. Thus the very meaning of Covenant in the biblical sense is annulled. In the context of prophetic revelation *berit* invariably means God's "unswerving loyalty to Israel" and stands as a sign and token for "the faithfulness of the unchanging God³⁴". Israel, therefore, must remain the *am Yahwe* not because he deserves it, but because the God of Israel is a Covenant-keeping God. George A. F. Knight rightly observes that the inner kernel of the Covenant-relationship in God's *hesed*³⁵.

We have stressed elsewhere that the *kainē diathēkē* instituted at the Last Supper (cf. specially 1 Cor. 11, 25) is a direct reference to Jer. 31, 31³⁶. As such it could never mean a New Covenant *ab initio* but only the broken Covenant restored. The new element in Jeremiah's prophecy is the inwardness of the Covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it." If Prof. Dalmann's equation of *berit* with *keyam* is correct, "then the new pledge in the Blood of the Messiah carries the idea of re-establishing what has fallen into desuetude³⁷". We therefore must reject Behm's interpretation that we have here "two different *diathekai*, one replacing the other³⁸". Not only is the Covenant the same but the contracting parties are the same: Israel and God.

There is however a difference. Since the coming of Messiah a new situation has arisen: history has reached the brink of Eternity. The *eschaton* has become visible; God's promise is thus in the last stages of fulfilment: "the old things have passed away; behold they are become new³⁹". The passing away of the "old" is the *kairos* but not the Covenant, for God's faithfulness endures for ever. The *novum* is the fulfilled promise: the law once written upon stones is now written upon the believer's hearts. The Messiah

³⁴ George A. F. Knight, *A Christian Theology of the O. T.*, 1959, p. 224.

³⁵ *Hesed* is one of the Hebrew words which can only be paraphrased but not translated. The R. S. V. reads «steadfast love».

³⁶ J. Jocz, *A Theology of Election*, p. 116.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 117.

³⁸ Kittel's *Theol. Wörterb.* II, 133f.

³⁹ The above reading is from the R. V. which in this case is preferable to the R. S. V. (2 Cor. 5, 17).

has accomplished what the cult could never do: "put away sin" (Hebr. 9. 26).

There is one more difference.

The "old" Covenant was with Israel; the "new" Covenant includes mankind. The Messiah has removed the middle-wall of partition and has joined the two severed limbs of humanity. Messianic humanity knows of no division between Jew and Greek (Eph. 2, 14–15). Those who once were strangers and sojourners are now fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Eph. 2, 19). To be in Christ, means to be of "Abraham's offspring and an heir according to promise" (Gal. 3, 29).

Abraham I. Carmel (this is the new Jewish name of a former Roman Catholic priest, who renounced the Christian faith to become an orthodox Jew) mentions the struggle he had until he attained to the dignity of becoming "a son of Abraham" by submitting to rabbinic law and joining the Synagogue⁴⁰. Had Roman theology laid greater stress upon the all-inclusiveness of messianic Israel and the oneness of the Covenant, this priest would have known that to be in the Messiah, *ipso facto* means to be a son of Abraham and a partaker of God's promises.

The contention of this article is that the messianic prophecies must not be isolated and made the main link between the Testaments. These are only aspects of the Covenant and must be understood in the context of God's faithfulness. The "times of refreshing" is the fulfilment of God's promise in Jesus Christ (Acts 3) that God will dwell in the midst of His people (cf. 2 Cor. 6, 14–18). Overspanning the story of revelation which began with Abraham, is the arch of God's unswerving faithfulness not only to the Hebrew people but to mankind. The Messiah's life, sacrifice and Resurrection is the pledge of God's Covenant-keeping faithfulness which extends to the human race.

There is no "new" Covenant, as there is no "new" Israel⁴¹; God's Covenant is one as God's people is one. The Covenant, and only the Covenant, is the organic link between the Testaments.

⁴⁰ *Jewish Chronicle*, Febr. 26, 1960 (Letters to the Editor).

⁴¹ The concept of a «new» Israel is entirely foreign to the Bible; cf. *A Theology of Election*, p. 120ff.