

THE COVENANT AS GIVING EXPRESSION TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

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Various solutions have been proposed for problems in connection with the relationship between Old and New Testament. For the Early Church the connection between the Testaments does not seem to offer any serious problem. In the Synoptic Gospels as well as in other New Testament writings the Old Testament is regarded as Word of God and its authority is placed beyond cavil. The New Testament is regarded as a continuation of the Old by a whole series of citations from the Old Testament to prove its fulfilment in the New Testament.¹ With the discovery of the Qumran writings it has become clear that during New Testament times a special kind of exegesis of the Old Testament was prevalent.² This discovery is an important aid to a better understanding of the application of Old Testament citations in the New Testament, but at the same time we must bear in mind that every New Testament author has used the Old Testament according to his own insights.³

In spite of this acknowledgment of the close relationship between the two Testaments, Marcion under influence of Gnostic ideas decided to reject the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament and to adhere only to a small part

¹ Cf. J. L. Koole, *De Overname van het Oude Testament door de christelijke Kerk, passim*. Recently my colleague, Peter A. Verhoef, has made a valuable contribution to our subject in 'The Relationship between the Old and the New Testament' in J. Barton Payne (ed.), *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, Word Books, Waco and London (1970) 280-303.

² Cf. especially F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Tyndale Press, London (1959) and J. van der Ploeg, *Bijbelverklaring to Qumrân*, Noord-Hollandse U.M, Amsterdam (1960).

³ Cf. for a general survey of the problem of the text of the Old Testament in Qumran-writings and New Testament J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the Old Testament Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament*, Brill, Leiden (1965).

of the New Testament as a kind of purified Word of God.⁴ It is noteworthy that this development took place as early as the middle of the second century AD. Here we have an attempt to solve the problem of relationship between the Testaments by stressing their discontinuation. This solution is still accepted in certain scholarly circles today although not with the same motives, *e.g.* Rudolf Bultmann has moved to a position not far removed from that of Marcion when he finds the Old Testament of little interest to a modern Christian. It has limited value only in so far as it can place somebody in an existential decision. A very small part of the Old Testament can thus be of any value to modern man.⁵

The view of the Alexandrian school under the influence of Clemens and Origen is well known. They worked out a system of allegorical exegesis to connect Old and New Testament. Their exegesis met with severe opposition from the school of Antioch with Paul of Samosata and John Chrysostom as the more important exponents of a literal interpretation of Scripture. The allegorical interpretation was, however, very popular in certain circles.⁶ Even today it is not yet dead. Occasionally it turns up in a new guise especially amongst groups where scholarly work is not held in high esteem.

All these early attempts at a solution of problems around the relationship between the two Testaments show that from the earliest times in various circles of the Church this relationship was not taken for granted, but asked for an explanation. We may today after many years of scholarly research disagree with some of their solutions, but our own modern solutions might be just as unacceptable. The fact is that the relationship of the Testaments is of so varied a character and so problematic that any one solution might only touch on one aspect of the truth.

To illustrate how difficult the whole problem of relationship is, we want to draw the attention to a few modern approaches to the problem. We want to stress in advance that we are only

⁴ Cf. John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament*, SCM, London (1967) 60-78, 101.

⁵ Cf. a forthcoming paper to be published in OTWSA on this subject.

⁶ Cf. A. A. van Ruler, *Die christliche Kirche und das Alte Testament*, Kaiser Verlag, Munich (1955) 11 and *cf.* especially the outstanding discussion by H. W. Ros-souw, *Klaarheid en Interpretatie*, J. v. Campen, Amsterdam (1963) 52 ff.

discussing a few modern solutions and are not attempting to give a complete survey of all modern solutions.⁷

One of the most interesting solutions is the emphasis on the *Heilsgeschichte* in Old and New Testament.⁸ The Old Testament must then be regarded as a phase of the *Heilsgeschichte* or History of Salvation. The climax of the History of Salvation is reached in the New Testament with the coming of Christ. The latest attempt in this direction by F. Mildenerger is of great importance, *e.g.* his view that the History of Salvation of the New Testament is to be regarded with the aid of pneumatic exegesis as the fulfilment of Israelite beginnings. He has laid heavy emphasis on the acts of God throughout the Bible as binding-force of the two Testaments.⁹ Also G. Ernest Wright propounds the view that the historical development throughout the Bible with emphasis on the acts of God illustrates the unity of Scripture.¹⁰ In the last decade a movement in Germany under the leadership of Wolfhart Pannenberg also stresses the importance of Revelation as history in the interpretation of the Bible.¹¹ The heavy emphasis on the historical progressive relationship between the Testaments is very important and has much in its favour. On the other hand not all parts of Scripture can be explained from a historical setting like, *e.g.*, Psalms or Proverbs. The approach of salvation history is also an important aspect in the whole complex problem of relationship, but does not give a satisfactory reply to all our problems, *e.g.* in the Prophets and also other places the Bible gives us the impression of describing an *Unheilsgeschichte* for the unfaithful people of the Lord. We have then to take the Bible only in its broadest sense as describing History of Salvation.

Another ancient solution which is still prevalent today is promise and fulfilment. The Old Testament is taken as promise and the New Testament as fulfilment of the promise. One of the latest exponents of this view, R. E. Murphy, has regarded the New Testament as the last and final reinterpretation of the

⁷ Cf. van Ruler, *op. cit.*, 9-12 where a short summary of different approaches is given.

⁸ Cf. van Ruler, *ibid.*, 12 and E. O'Doherty, 'The Unity of the Bible', *Bible Today* 1 (1962) 53-57.

⁹ Fr. Mildenerger, *Gottes Tat im Wort*, G. Mohn, Gütersloh (1964) *passim*.

¹⁰ G. Ernest Wright, 'The Unity of the Bible', *SJT* 8 (1955) 337-352.

¹¹ W. Pannenberg (ed.), *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, Göttingen (1963).

Old Testament.¹² The whole of Scripture is to be taken as progressive revelation with its final consummation in the coming of Christ. There is a strong element of truth in this idea, because in various places the New Testament authors have claimed the fulfilment of an Old Testament pronouncement. But it is, however, a question whether we can regard the whole of the Old Testament as promise and fulfilled in the New Testament. We are in grave danger of sacrificing the independence of the Old Testament as Word of God.¹³ What will be the authority and value of parts of the Old Testament which are not fulfilled in the New Testament? Some scholars like W. Vischer have tried to show that in every part of the Old Testament one can discover Christ,¹⁴ but this view has quite correctly been severely criticized by modern scholars.¹⁵

One of the latest popular solutions of the problem, viz. typological exegesis, moves in the direction of interpretation like the Alexandrian view of allegorical exegesis. The bond between the Testaments can be explained by a type of exegesis. In short the typological exegesis amounts to the following: the typology of historical facts of, for example, the Old Testament on the one hand and the historical facts of a later age, e.g. the New Testament can be brought in relation with each other.¹⁶ These facts which can be connected, can be regarded as a contingent self-presentation of God.¹⁷ There is a remarkable repetition of historical facts which have some analogical relation to each other. Again it is undeniable that in certain cases a kind of typological interpretation is quite legitimate, e.g. the vertical typology as it occurs in Hebrews.¹⁸ On the other

¹² R. E. Murphy, 'The Relationship between the Testaments', *CBQ* 26 (1964) 349-359 and cf. also C. Larcher, *L'Actualité chrétienne de l'Ancien Testament d'après le Nouveau Testament*, du Cerf, Paris (1962) *passim*.

¹³ Cf. van Ruler, *op. cit.*, 11 and also A. H. Edelkoort, *De Christusverwachting in het Oude Testament*, H. Veenman & Zonen, Wageningen (1941) 5-21.

¹⁴ Wilhelm Vischer, *The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ*, I, II, Lutterworth, London (1949) (ET by A. B. Crabtree).

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., the criticism of Edelkoort, *op. cit.*, 14.

¹⁶ G. von Rad, 'Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments', *EvTh* (1952) 33ff.

¹⁷ Cf. L. Goppelt, *Typos* (1939) 70 and also the discussion of van Ruler, *op. cit.*, 59ff.

¹⁸ Cf. Horace D. Hummel, 'The Old Testament Basis of Typological Interpretation', *BiR* 9 (1964) 38-50 where Hummel distinguishes two types of typological patterns, viz. vertical and horizontal. Our problems start with the horizontal typology. Cf. also C. T. Fritsch, 'To' Antitypon' in *Studia biblica et semitica, Festschrift Th. C. Vriezen*, H. Veenman & Zonen, Wageningen (1966) 100ff.

hand, if we were to apply this exegesis to the whole of Old and New Testament many problematic questions would arise. Are we allowed to apply this kind of exegesis where it cannot be clearly distinguished according to Scripture as in Hebrews? Are we not producing types and antitypes subjectively according to our preconceived idea of typological exegesis

It is immediately clear from our discussion above that no one solution can hold the golden key which unlocks all the mysteries of the relation between the Testaments. It would also be preposterous to create the impression that a new solution can be presented now which solves all our problems. When we propose a fresh approach to the relationship between the two Testaments in light of the latest research on covenant-forms in the Bible, it is only an attempt to focus our attention on another angle. We are not emphasizing the newness of our approach, because for many centuries Christianity has spoken of the *Old* and *New Testament* where testament taken over from the Latin has the meaning of the Greek *diathēke* and the Hebrew *berîth*. Actually it means the Old and New *b^erîth* (covenant). What is fresh in our approach is the application of the latest research on the covenant to this idea of an old and new *b^erîth*.

It is well known in scholarly circles today that the discovery of the relation between the ancient Near Eastern treaty and Old Testament covenant has opened new possibilities for a reinterpretation of biblical material.¹⁹ From various schools of research attention has been drawn to covenantal rituals and also covenantal terminology. Especially in connection with terminology new discoveries were rapidly made, e.g. concepts like knowledge, love,²⁰ lord—servant, father—son²¹ suddenly came alive as result of their covenantal overtones. These studies on the covenant were mainly made in connection with the Old Testament. Special attention was given to the different cove-

¹⁹ A vast literature has accumulated on this subject: cf. D. J. McCarthy, *Der Gottesbund im Alten Testament*, Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart (1966), and F. Vattioni, 'acenti studi sull'alleanza nella Bibbia e nell'antico Oriente', *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 77 (1967) 81-226, and also the Tyndale lecture of J. A. Thompson, *The Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament*, Tyndale Press, London (1964).

²⁰ Cf. W. L. Moran, 'The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy', *CBQ* 25 (1963) 77-87.

²¹ Cf. F. C. Fensham, 'Father and Son as Terminology for Treaty and Covenant' in H. Goedicke (ed.), *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William Foxwell Albright*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore (1971) 121-135.

nants of the Old Testament. The interpretation of the various covenants became very difficult because they were transmitted by different biblical traditions.²² In spite of these difficulties one can clearly distinguish three important covenants in the Old Testament between God and His people, viz. the covenant of Abraham, the covenant of Sinai and the covenant of David. These three covenants stand in close relation to each other. Especially the covenants of Sinai and David cannot be regarded as totally separate covenants. It is much better to take the covenant of David as an extension of the covenant of Sinai with special promises to the house of David. It is understandable that with the new situation of the Davidic dynasty circumstances developed which were quite different from those of the covenant of Sinai. A new approach to the covenant is thus to be expected. These three covenants have one important aspect in common, the promises by God to His people or to His elected favourites. In the case of Abraham a few promises are prominent: God promised to Abraham that he would become the father of a numerous progeny and that the descendants of Abraham would inherit Palestine—the famous promise of the Promised Land.²³ In another strand of tradition God promised to Abraham that the people of the world would be blessed through his descendants.

It is noteworthy how emphatically the author of Exodus stresses the fact that the seventy descendants of Abraham grew into a multitude in Egypt which became a danger to the indigenous population only on account of their number. According to the author of Exodus the promise of the Lord to Abraham to multiply his descendants is fulfilled. The only promise left is the inheritance of the Holy Land. It is thus not surprising to note that with the covenant of Sinai the promise of the possession of the Holy Land is clearly repeated. To the ears of a people wandering in the desert, uprooted and rejected, a promise to possess a fertile and rich country was sweet music. With the conquest of Palestine over a long period and the

²² Cf., e.g., Walther Zimmerli, 'Sinaibund und Abrahambund', *Gottes Offenbarung*, C. Kaiser, Munich (1963) 205-216; R. E. Clements, *Abraham and David*, SCM, London (1967) where the connections between the covenants of Abraham and David are discussed, and cf. also N. Lohfink, *Die Landverheissung als Eid*, Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart (1967).

²³ 'Covenant, Promise and Expectation in the Bible', *TZ* 23 (1967) 305-322.

possession of the greatest part of it in the time of David and Solomon this promise was also fulfilled.

Finally came the promise to David that his descendants would occupy the throne of Israel for ever.²⁴ Since the inheritance of the Holy Land was fulfilled this new promise of a throne for ever has a strong individual character. It is noteworthy that two of the covenants were made with individuals and one, that of Sinai, with a group of people as such. This is not at all strange in the light of the fact that in the Hittite vassal-treaties, in the majority of cases, a treaty is made between the overlord and the vassal-king, while in a few cases the vassal-people are also mentioned.²⁵ It is noticeable that in every case, whether an agreement is made between an individual representing his people or with the people as such, the promise of the agreement is given as a benefit both to the representative and his people. It is thus understandable that the promise of an eternal throne was accepted by certain circles of the people as part of their own heritage.

The three covenants have one aspect in common, the promises. Promise creates hope and asks for faith. To my mind the importance of hope in the Old Testament and in the Bible is not stressed strongly enough. With the important book of Jurgen Moltmann on the theology of hope²⁶ and with the studies of Walther Zimmerli on hope in the Old Testament a new important field of study is opened.²⁷ In the most difficult circumstances the people of the Bible were never left without promise or hope. In the darkest night always a glimmer of light is left. The faith of the Bible is not a faith of mourning, but a faith of an everlasting joy, of promise and hope.

It is worth noticing that the covenant-promises are accompanied by a condition. A covenant or treaty was a conditional affair. If the minor partner would keep the stipulations of the covenant, the promises would come into effect, otherwise the

²⁴ Cf. also R. A. Carlson, *David the Chosen King*, Almqvist & Wiksell, Uppsala (1964), and the dissertation of the University of Kiel of Klaus Seybold, *Das davidische Königtum im Zeugnis der Propheten*, 1967.

²⁵ Cf. Johannes Friedrich, 'Die Staatsverträge des Hatti-Reiches in hethitischer Sprache', *MVAG*, 31 (1926) 19, 29ff.; E. F. Weidner, *Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien Heinrich's*, Leipzig (1923) lines 59ff., 2 lines 25ff., 35ff., 44ff. and 53ff. Cf. also V. Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge*, (1931) 57-8.

²⁶ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theologie der Hoffnung*,³ Kaiser Verlag, Munich (1966).

²⁷ Walther Zimmerli, 'Der Mensch and seine Hoffnung nach den Aussagen des Alten Testaments' in *Studia biblica et semitica*, 389-403.

covenant would be broken and the guilty partner would be punished. There must exist faithfulness or else the covenant-promises are abrogated.²⁸

In the case of Israel and the kings in the lineage of David, they soon abused the principles of the covenant and broke its stipulations. This was more than anything else responsible for the beginning of the prophetic message. The prophet, as guardian of the covenant and the religious and social life of the Israelites, preached a message of imminent disaster for unfaithfulness to the covenant and repentance after which new hope would arise. It is clear that in the prophetic message of disaster the curses of the covenant play a very important role.²⁹ On the one hand there were the religious traditionalists who believed that the promises of the Lord to David would stay in effect in spite of anything that happened; and on the other hand there were the prophets who emphasized the fact that unfaithfulness had broken the covenant and eliminated the promises; all that was left was imminent doom. The tension between these two groups created many religious and even political problems. When the traditionalists were proved wrong with the destruction of Jerusalem, it was a big shock to the ordinary people. But the promise and hope never died out. Already Amos spoke of the Day of the Lord as judgment for the unfaithful Israel; there would be a day of darkness, but in the future there would also be a day of hope when the fallen houses of David would be repaired. In between the prophecies of doom there appear prophecies of hope, of Messianic hope. Sometime in the future a new David would appear who would rule his people in righteousness. It is clear that the prophets, especially a prophet like Jeremiah, had no confidence in the living king of Judah; their hope was placed on a future king. The promise of the Lord to David of an eternal throne received strong eschatological characteristics in certain prophetic writings. It might also be true that most of the people who interpreted these Messianic prophecies regarded the coming Messiah as an earthly king.

²⁸ 'Malediction and Benediction in Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and the Old Testament', *ZAW* 74 (1962) 1-9.

²⁹ 'Common Trends in Curses of the Ancient Near Eastern Treaties and Kudurru-Inscriptions compared with Maledictions of Amos and Isaiah', *ZAW* 75 (1963) 155-175 and D. R. Hillers, *Treaty-Curses in the Old Testament Prophets*, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome (1964).

From our discussion above it is clear that the most important parts of the Old Testament which emphasize the importance of promise and hope cannot be correctly understood if they are not connected to the covenant-idea. The pervasive influence of the covenant on religious ideas of the Old Testament cannot be denied.

The important question now is whether we can trace this influence of covenant-promise and hope through to the New Testament, or not. Surprisingly not much has been done in the past by scholars to investigate the covenant-idea in the New Testament and in particular the influence of Old Testament covenant-conceptions on the New Testament.³⁰ If some influence is acknowledged, it is always regarded as not of much importance, although a few New Testament scholars have drawn attention to the fact that there was a continuity between the old covenant and the new.³¹

The discovery of the importance of the covenant-idea in the Qumran writings which are roughly contemporary with New Testament times should issue a word of warning against negligence of the covenant-idea in the New Testament. It is clear that the Essene-sect regarded themselves as a covenant people.³² This shows how strong the covenant-idea was in New Testament times.

In the New Testament the word covenant or testament, *diathēkē*, is not often used; but this should not prevent us from studying various concepts used in the New Testament which have, via the Septuagint, a covenant-background in the Old Testament. Furthermore, we should study covenantal rituals to see if there is any relation between Old Testament rituals and those of the New Testament.

We want to start our investigation with the latter aspect, viz. the covenantal ritual. From ancient Near Eastern treaties it is

³⁰ One exception is Annie Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance dans le Judaïsme aux abords de l'ère Chrétienne*, du Seuil, Paris (1963). Her discussion of the covenant-idea in the New Testament is, however, very short and does not touch on the major issues.

³¹ Cf., e.g., C. A. Anderson Scott, *Christianity according to St. Paul*, Cambridge University Press (1932) 168 and Oscar Cullmann, *Heil als Geschichte*, Mohr, Tübingen (1965) 239, in both cases discussed in connection with Pauline theology.

³² Cf. Jaubert, *Notion*, 116ff.; Jean Carmignac, 'La renovation d'alliance Qumran', *BTS* 44 (1962) 16-18; M. Weise, *Kultzeiten und kultischer Bundesschluss in der 'Ordensregel' vom Toten Meer*, Brill, Leiden (1961), and a typed M. A.-dissertation of the University of Stellenbosch by F. du T. Laubscher, *Die Verbondsgedachte in die Qumrängeskrifte*, 1967.

clear that two rituals especially played an important role at the contracting of a treaty; they were the covenant-meal and sacrifice.³³ This may be explained by the fact that one part of an animal was used for a meal and the other part sacrificed to the gods in whose name the oaths of the treaty were taken. The evidence on the ritual is not always the same, because full particulars of the ritual are not given in every case.³⁴ It is, however, interesting to note that in Exodus 24, where the contracting of a covenant between the Lord and the Israelites is described, the slaughtering of oxen is mentioned along with the sacrifice and the covenant-meal. The blood of the oxen was sprinkled against the altar of the Lord to point to His participation in the ritual. The covenant is called a covenant of blood. It is noteworthy that C. J. Cadoux has already drawn attention to the relation between Exodus 24 and the synoptic description of the death of Christ.³⁵ The relation between these two parts of Scripture is undeniable. This gives the New Testament description a new dimension. It is obvious that in the New Testament precisely the same covenant-ritual is described as in Exodus 24. We have the covenant-meal, the Last Supper, the sacrifice itself; Jesus Christ, and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. With the institution of the Lord's Supper Jesus used the words 'This is my blood, the blood of the covenant' (Mk. 14:24.), according to the best manuscripts of the New Testament.³⁶ A clearer connection with Exodus 24 could not be expected and furthermore, a clearer reference to the institution of a covenant between the Lord and His people is unthinkable. A very old tradition via the apostle Paul mentions that Christ spoke of 'the new covenant in my blood' (1 Cor. 11:25). It seems to me beyond cavil that the New Testament, with the complete description of the covenant-ritual and with

³³ 'Die Offer en Maaltyd by die Vorming van die Verbond in die Nuwe Testament', *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe* 5 (1965) 77-85.

³⁴ For Near Eastern material cf. C. F. Jean, *Lettres diverses*, ARMT II, Geuthner, Paris (1950) 37:6-14; Martin Noth, 'Das alttestamentliche Bundschliessen im Lichte eines Mari-textes', *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, Kaiser Verlag, Munich (1957) 142ff.; Sidney Smith, *The Statue of Idrimi*, British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, London (1949) 16-17 and D. J. Wiseman, 'Abban and Alalah', *JCS* 12 (1958) 126, 129.

³⁵ C. J. Cadoux, *The Historic Mission of Jesus*, Lutterworth Press, London (1941) 260.

³⁶ Cf. Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Bruce M. Metzger, Allen Wikgren (ed.), *The Greek New Testament*, British and Foreign Bible Society, London (1966) *ad loc.*

the clear reference to the covenant of blood, describes a covenant-forming between the Lord and His people. Furthermore, the reference to the new covenant is obviously an attempt to connect the new covenant of Jeremiah 31:31 (*diathēkē kainē* in LXX Je. 38:30 with the covenant contracted by Christ on the cross.³⁷

It is also important to note that Paul connected the cross to a curse which rested on Christ for the sins of the people. Paul has said that Christ 'redeemed us from the curse of the law because cursed is every one that hangs on a tree' (Gal. 3:13). It is noticeable that most of the words of Christ spoken on the cross and also what happened to Him during His crucifixion can be paralleled by curse-material from ancient Near Eastern treaties and the Old Testament, *e.g.* the violent death of Christ, the fact that He was forsaken, His thirst, *etc.*³⁸ It is clear that Christ was cursed on the cross as a violator of the covenant, but in His case it was done as a substitute for the people. The old covenant was breached and consequently the curses of that covenant came into effect. Christ took all these curses on Him and, with His death as a sacrifice, formed the new covenant of His blood. It is also noteworthy that in Galatians 3, where Paul discusses the whole problem of law and the curse of the law, he strongly emphasizes that the promises of the early covenant of Abraham are not eliminated.

Our next step will be to discuss only superficially a few important covenant-terms to ascertain whether there is a continuation of certain terms from the Old to the New Testament or not. Take, *e.g.*, the terminus technicus *diathēkē*.³⁹ Only a glance in the LXX shows that the Hebrew *berith* was uniformly translated into Greek by *diathēkē*. It is quite obvious that the usage of *diathēkē* in the Synoptic Gospels can be directly connected to *b^erith* in the Old Testament, as we have already seen. It is also obvious from the usage of *diathēkē* in 1 Corinthians 11:25 that Paul was well aware of the Old Testament meaning of this term. It is, however, noteworthy that Paul used *diathēkē*

³⁷ Cf. C. A. Anderson Scott, *op. cit.*, 68.

³⁸ Cf. *Biblical Essays* (1966) 219-2:26.

³⁹ A vast literature is built up around this concept. Cf. especially Johannes Behm, *TWNT*, II (1950) under *diathēkē*; also A. Schlatter, *Die Geschichte des Christus* (1921) 144; C. H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks*, Hodder & Stoughton, London (1954) 31ff. and E. Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, SCM, London (1964) 130ff.

also in the sense of testament by combining the Old Testament meaning of *b^erîth* with the idea of a testament of inheritance (especially Gal. 3:15ff.). This same combination is also made by the author of Hebrews (Heb. 9:16ff.).⁴⁰ On the one hand the well-known concept of testament is used, but on the other hand it is combined with the religious concept of the new covenant in the same sense as it is known from Jeremiah to the time of Paul.⁴¹ Christ is called the mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 9:15). This reflects a good knowledge of treaty and covenant as it was known in Old Testament times. Although Paul and the author of Hebrews gave their own interpretation to the term *diathēkē*, it is also clear that the basic meaning of the Old Testament *b^erîth* was accepted. When they spoke of *diathēkē* it was always in connection with the old covenant or in opposition to it as a new covenant (2 Cor. 3:6ff.). There was no idea of a discontinuity between the Testaments, but of a richer and deeper covenant formed through the blood of Christ.

A pair of covenant-terms which are of interest are father—son. It is clear from a comparison of treaty-material from Mari, el-Amarna and the Old Testament that father—son was used as a treaty-concept.⁴² The most important example is the one in the covenant of David (2 Sa. 7) where the Lord says that He will be a father to David's son and that David's son will be a son to Him. With all the parallel material from the ancient Near East at our disposal it becomes clear that a covenant-relationship is expressed here. The role of 2 Samuel 7 in the forming of the Messianic expectation must never be underestimated. The question is now whether the father—son relationship between God and Christ can be explained only by a filial relationship or whether we should also expect covenantal overtones in it. The role of Christ as mediator of the covenant and also as king of the new kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24-25) points to Him as a Partner in the forming of the new covenant. But this is an unusual Partner. It is a Partner who has taken the sins and curses of this people on Himself and as Son of God has formed an indestructible covenant with His Father.

⁴⁰ Cf. the still very useful discussion by E. Riegenbach, 'Der Begriff der Diathēkē im Hebräerbrieff' in *Theologische Studien Theodor Zahn zum 10. Oktober 1908 dargebracht*, Leipzig (1908), 289ff.

⁴¹ Cf. J. Behm, *TWNT*, II, 134 and note also the general discussion of Behm.

⁴² Cf. note 20.

As in the covenants of the Old Testament we have in the New Testament covenant promises and hope. The important promises are the resurrection and the second coming of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is closely connected to the promise of the resurrection of the people of God (1 Cor. 15). The promise of the second coming of Christ is to my mind firmly rooted in the words of Jesus Christ and is definitely not to be regarded as *weitere Gemeindebildung*.⁴³ The hope of Christianity is the resurrection and the second coming.

It is thus clear from our arguments that the relationship between the two Testaments is firmly rooted in the relationship between God and His people as it is expressed by the covenant. We may call it a progressive vertical relationship in which the Lord as a major partner of the covenant makes promises to His people with the forming of every new covenant. The climax of this progressive vertical relationship was reached with the forming of the new covenant of the blood of Christ. Here the vertical line of special attention to the needs of mankind has reached its most complete fulfilment, because God has sent His Son as mediator of a new indestructible covenant. The fact that a climax was reached with the forming of the new covenant does not mean that the other covenants have lost their meaning for mankind. Because of the fact that these covenants give expression to a relationship with God and, should this relationship be broken, to punishment, makes them of abiding value.

⁴³ Cf. also R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen (1958) 128 where certain pronouncements of Jesus in connection with His second coming are regarded as probably authentic.