

“Covenant”

Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels, Vol. I:373-380. [1906]

In order to a correct apprehension of the term “covenant,” as it is used by our Lord in the Gospels, a brief survey of the OT usage is necessary.

The covenant conception is of frequent occurrence in the OT. Used at first in connection with single transactions and partial aspects of the religious intercourse between God and man, it later becomes the formula designating the entire structure and content of the religion of Israel in its most comprehensive sense. This latter representation occurs as early as Gen. 17:1-14, Ex. 19:5, 24:7-8, and often in Deuteronomy. The earlier covenants belonging to the time of Noah and Abraham (Gen. 6:18, 9:8-17, 15:18) do not yet possess this comprehensive character, but appear as solemn religious rites whereby some particular promise of God is made alive. Whether the word *berith* (ברית) originally meant “enactment,” “appointment,” “law,” a meaning which it undoubtedly has in several instances, or did from the beginning signify a two-sided agreement, cannot be determined with certainty. It seems easier to conceive of the former sense as developed out of the latter than the reverse. At any rate, the comprehensive signification in which it stands for the whole religious relationship between God and Israel, rests on the idea of the covenant as a two-sided agreement. It should be remembered, however, that the two-sidedness never extends so far that God and Israel appear on an equal footing in the determination of the covenant. The planning and proposing of the covenant belong exclusively to God. Still the fact that Israel voluntarily accepts the covenant is as strongly emphasized (Ex. 19:5, 24:3, 7, and elsewhere). Indeed, the covenant idea serves primarily to express the free, ethical, historically originated bond that exists between God and Israel. Its covenant character marks off the religion of Israel as a religion of real, conscious, spiritual fellowship between God and His people, in distinction from the religions of paganism, in which either the Deity and the creature are pantheistically fused, or the Godhead after a deistic fashion is so far removed from the creature as to render true communion impossible, and where the relation between a national god and his worshippers is not a matter of choice but of necessity on both sides.

In the early Prophets the conception of the covenant is not particularly prominent. With Hosea, the figure of marriage, probably not viewed as yet by the prophet as a species of covenant, serves the same purpose. There is no reason, however, for denying that Hosea knew the covenant conception in its comprehensive religious sense, and on this ground to call in question the genuineness of 8:1. Greater prominence the covenant idea obtains from the age of Jeremiah onwards. Besides the emphasis thrown on the ethical-historical character of Israel’s religion two other important principles attach themselves to the term, partly developing out of the principle just stated. On the one hand, the covenant idea begins to express the continuity of God’s dealing with His people; as it is a bond freely established, so it is the fruit of design and the fountain of further history, it has a prospective reference and makes Israel’s religion a growing thing; in a word, the covenant idea gathers around itself the thoughts we have in mind when speaking of a history of redemption and revelation. On the other hand, inasmuch as God is the originator of the Covenant and has solemnly bound Himself not merely to fulfill His promises to Israel, but also to carry out His own purposes contemplated in the covenant, the same bond which originally expresses the freedom of the relation between God and Israel can also become the pledge of the absolute certainty, that God will not finally break with His people, Israel’s infidelity notwithstanding. In Isaiah 40-66, and especially in

Jeremiah, the covenant thus stands to express the continuity and sureness of the accomplishment of the Divine purpose with reference to Israel. Out of the combination of these two ideas arises the Messianic or eschatological significance which the covenant idea obtains in both these prophets. In Isaiah 40-66 it is more than once introduced to emphasize the infallible character of the Divine promise given of old (Isa. 54:9-10, 55:3, 59:21, 61:8). In two passages (42:6 and 49:8) the servant of Jehovah is designated as **בְּרִית עַם**, a somewhat obscure phrase, of which the two most plausible interpretations are, either that the servant will be the instrument of realizing the future covenant between God and Israel, or, placing the emphasis on **עַם** that he will be the means of establishing a people-*berith*, a *berith* in which Israel, in contrast to its present scattered condition, will once more become a unified, organized nation. These two passages are of importance, because they bring the idea of the covenant into connection with the figure of the Servant of Jehovah, which, assuming that the latter was Messianically interpreted by our Lord and applied to Himself, would explain that He represents Himself as the inaugurator of a new covenant.

In Jeremiah the covenant idea appears as a Messianic idea in two forms. In so far as the promise given to the house of David was a promise pledged in solemn covenant, the Messianic blessings are a covenant gift (33:20-21; cf. Ps. 89:28, Isa. 55:3). This is an instance of the old application of the idea to a concrete promise, which, however, in the present case, owing to the wide scope of the promise involved, would easily become identified in the mind of later generations with the expectation of an eschatological covenant in the comprehensive sense. The latter is the other form in which Jeremiah uses the covenant with reference to the future (31:31-34). This is the only place where the notion of a new covenant occurs explicitly, although the thought itself is not foreign to the older prophets. Hosea has it in the form of the new marriage which Jehovah will contract with Israel. Jeremiah conceives of the new covenant as the outcome of the covenant character of the relation between God and Israel in general. To the prophet's mind religion and the covenant have become so identified that the covenant idea becomes the stable, permanent element in the historical development; if in its old form the covenant disappears, then in a new form it must reappear. The newness will consist in the twofold feature, that the sin of the people will be forgiven, i.e. the former sin, and that the law of Jehovah, instead of being an outward, objective covenant obligation, will become an inward, subjective covenant reality, written on the heart in consequence of the universal and perfect knowledge of Jehovah which will prevail. This passage in Jeremiah lies at the basis of the NT use of the phrase "the new covenant."

Two further passages in the prophets, to which a Messianic application of the covenant idea could easily attach itself, are Zech. 9:11 and Mal. 3:1. In the former passage the original reads "Because of the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water"; the LXX has, in the second person of address to Jehovah, "Because of the blood of thy covenant, *thou* hast sent forth," etc. On the former rendering the covenant is the covenant made with Israel, or, since this interpretation of the suffix "thy" is deemed impossible by some, we may refer the suffix to the compound phrase "covenant blood," and understand the phrase "thy covenant blood" of the sacrificial blood by means of which Israel continually upholds and renews the covenant with Jehovah. On the rendering of the LXX the covenant is represented as the covenant made and maintained by Jehovah. In the Malachi-passage the coming of the "angel" or "messenger of the covenant" is predicted. This "angel of the covenant" is not identical with the Lord, but as a distinct person he accompanies the coming of the Lord to His temple. He is called "the angel of the covenant," either

because he realizes the covenant, or because his coming is in virtue of the existing covenant. It is easy to see how on either view a significant connection could be established between the Messiah and the covenant.

The LXX regularly renders *berith* by *διαθηκη*, the later Greek versions prefer *συθηκη*. The latter term better expresses the idea of a two-sided agreement; but probably this was precisely the reason why the LXX translators, desiring to emphasize the one-sided Divine origin and character of the covenant, avoided it. It should also be remembered that in not a few instances *berith* in the original meant not a covenant but an authoritative disposition, which, as stated above, is according to some scholars even the primary meaning of the word. On the side of the Greek, also, there were considerations which explain the choice of *διαθηκη* in preference to *συθηκη*. It is true, in classical Greek the former meant usually a testamentary disposition and might in so far have seemed unsuitable as a rendering for *berith*. But occasionally at least *διαθηκη* could stand for a two-sided agreement (Aristoph. *Av.* 432). The verb *διατιθεσθαι* was not bound to the notion of “testament,” but signified authoritative arrangements generally. And above all things it should be noted that the testamentary *διαθηκη*, among the Greeks before and at the time of the LXX translation differed in many respects from our modern Roman-law “testament,” and possessed features which brought it into closer contact with the Hebrew *berith*. The *διαθηκη* was a solemn and public transaction of a religious character, by which an irrevocable disposition of rights and property was made, and which for its effect was not dependent on the death of the *διαθεμενος*, but immediately set in operation certain of the duties and relationships established. Thus conceived, the *διαθηκη* could all the more easily become the equivalent of the *berith* between God and Israel, because already in the OT the idea of “the inheritance” had significantly attached itself to that of the covenant.

In the NT the noun used is always *διαθηκη*, but the cognate forms of *συθηκη* appear in the verb (Luke 22:5) and the adjective (Rom. 1:31). *διαθηκη* occurs in the NT 33 times. The word retains the one-sided associations of the LXX usage, yet in most cases the NT writers show themselves aware of the peculiar covenant-meaning descended with it from the OT. An additional possibility of interpreting it in the sense of testament was furnished by the fact that the blessings of the Messianic era were derived from the death of Christ. Hence in Heb. 9:16-17 the new covenant is represented as a testament bestowing upon believers the eternal inheritance, because the death of Christ had to intervene to make the bestowal effectual. As Ramsey has pointed out (*Expositor*, Nov. 1898, pp. 321-330), this representation is based on Roman law, according to which a testament has no force until the death of the testator. On the other hand, the Pauline representation of Gal. 3:17-18 is based on the Greco-Syrian law of the earlier period, under which the *διαθηκη*, once made, could not be subsequently modified, and took effect in certain directions immediately. No reflection is here made on the death of the testator. Still, that *διαθηκη* does not here have the unmodified OT sense of “covenant,” but means “testamentary disposition,” is plain from the fact that “sonship” and “heirship” are connected with it in the course of the argument. These two passages in Hebrews and Galatians are the only NT passages which explicitly refer to the testamentary character of the *διαθηκη*. In how far in other instances the associations of the testament idea lay in the speaker’s or writer’s mind cannot be determined with certainty (cf. Acts 3:25, *υιοι της διαθηκης*; Gal. 4:24, *διαθηκη εις γεννωσα δουλειαν*).

In the AV of the NT *διαθηκη* is in 14 instances rendered by “testament” (Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24,

Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25, 2 Cor. 3:6-14, Heb. 7:22, 9:15, 16, 17, 18, 20, Rev. 11:19). As a marginal alternative “testament” is also offered in Rom. 9:4, Gal. 3:15, 4:24, Heb. 8:6, 12:24, 13:20. In all these cases, except in Heb. 9:16-17, the RV has replaced “testament” by “covenant,” offering, however, the former as a marginal alternative in Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25, 2 Cor. 3:6-14, Gal. 3:15, 17, Heb. 7:22, 8:6-10, 13, 9:15, 20, Rev. 11:19. In the American RV the marginal reading “testament” has in all these cases been dropped, except in Heb. 9:15, 20. The principle by which the Revisers were guided is plain. The only question can be whether, in view of what was stated above, they were right in rendering “covenant” and not “testament” in Gal. 3:15, 17. The point to be determined in each case is not whether the associations of “testament” were present to the speaker’s or writer’s mind, but whether those of “covenant” were absent: only where the latter is the case ought “covenant” to be abandoned, and Gal. 3:15, 17 seems to belong to this class. What motives in each case underlie the choice of “testament” and “covenant” in AV is not so plain. Possibly these motives were not always exegetical, but derived from the usage of earlier (English and other) versions. The following explanation is offered tentatively wherever the contrast between the old and the new *διαθηκη* is expressed or implied, testament was chosen, because “testament” had long since, on the basis of the Latin Bible, become familiar as a designation of the two canons of Scripture, in the forms “the Old Testament,” “the New Testament.” This will explain Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Cor. 11:25, 2 Cor. 3:6-14, Heb. 7:22. In Heb. 9:15-20, of course, the import of the passage itself required “testament.” Heb. 8:6 (“a better *covenant*”) 7 (“that first *covenant*”) 8 (“a new *covenant*”) 9, 10, 13 (“a new *covenant*”), 9:1 (“the first *covenant*”), 12:24 (“the new *covenant*”), seem to run contrary to the explanation offered, but in each of these instances the context furnished a special reason for favoring “covenant”; in Heb. 8:6-13 the discourse revolves around the quotation from Jeremiah, which had “covenant”; 9:1 is still continuous with this section, and in 12:24 the contrast between the mediatorship of Moses and that of Jesus, and the reference to the transaction of Ex. 24, suggested “covenant.” In 2 Cor. 3:6-14 “testament” was especially suitable, because here the idea of *διαθηκη* might seem to approach that of a body of writings (v. 14 “the reading of the Old Testament”). Strange and unexplained is Rev. 11:19 (“the ark of his testament”), cf. Heb. 9:4 (“the ark of the covenant”).

It seems strange at first sight that a conception so prominent in the OT is so little utilized in the NT. Perhaps the main reason for this was the intensity of the eschatological interest in that age, which made other terms appear more suitable to describe the new order of things felt to be approaching or to have already begun. On the whole, the covenant idea had not been intimately associated with eschatology in the OT. The consciousness that the work of Christ had ushered in a new state of things for the present life of the people of God, distinct and detached from the legal life of Judaism, for which latter the word “covenant” had become the characteristic expression, dawned only gradually upon the early Church. The phrase “Kingdom of God,” while emphasizing the newness of the Messianic order of things, leaves unexpressed the superseding of the Mosaic institutions by the introduction of something else.

With this agrees the fact that the conception of Christianity as a covenant is most familiar to precisely those two NT writers who with greatest clearness and emphasis draw the contrast between the Mosaic forms of life and those of the Christian era, viz. St. Paul and the author of Hebrews. Even with St. Paul, however, the contrast referred to finds only occasional expression in terms of the covenant: as a rule, it is expressed in other ways, such as the antithesis between law and grace, works and faith. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only NT writing which gives to the covenant idea the

same central dominating place as it has in the greater part of the OT.

In the Gospels the word “covenant,” in a religious sense, occurs but twice, in Luke 1:72, and in the words spoken by our Lord at the Supper. In the former passage the covenant with Abraham is referred to, and the Messianic salvation represented as a fulfillment of the promise of that covenant. The emergence of the idea here is in harmony with the best OT traditions: it expresses the consciousness of the sovereign grace and undeserved faithfulness of God which pervades the prophetic pieces preserved for us in the gospel of the incarnation according to St. Luke. Of course, in a broad sense the idea of the relation between God and Israel embodied in the word “covenant” underlies and pervades all our Lord’s teaching. Notwithstanding the so-called “intensive universalism” and the recognition of religion as a natural bond between God and man, antedating all positive forms of intercourse, our Lord was a thoroughgoing supernaturalist, who viewed both the past relationship of God to Israel and the future relationship to be established in the Kingdom not as the outcome of the natural religion of man, but as the product of a special, historic, supernatural approach of God to man, such as the OT calls “covenant.” While probably the legalistic shade of meaning which the word had obtained was less congenial to Him, He must have been in full accord with the genuine OT principle expressed in it. Mark 8:38 and Matt. 12:39 speak of the Jews as an “adulterous generation,” and probably the later prophetic representation of the covenant as a marriage-covenant lies at the basis of this mode of statement.

The words spoken at the Supper were, according to St. Matthew (26:28) and St. Mark (14:24), *τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ αἶμα μου τῆς διαθήκης* (AD in Matthew and A in Mark *τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης*); according to St. Luke (22:20) and St. Paul (1 Cor. 11:25) *τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματι μου* (in 1 Cor. *ἐμῷ αἵματι*). There is some doubt, however, about the genuineness of the context in St. Luke in which these words occur. In D and some other MSS, 22:19b (beginning with *τὸ ὑπερ ὑμῶν*) and v. 20 are lacking. The textual-critical problem is a very complicated one (cf. Westcott and Hort, *Notes on Select Readings* in the Appendix, pp. 63-64; Haupt, *Ueber die ursprüngliche Form und Bedeutung der Abendmahls Worte*, pp. 6-10; Johannes Weiss, *Das älteste Evangelium*, pp. 294-299; Johannes Hoffmann, *Das Abendmahl im Urchristenthum*, pp. 7, 8 [all of whom adopt the shorter text]; Schultzen, *Das Abendmahl im Neuen Testament*, pp. 5-19; R.A. Hoffmann, *Die Abendmahlsgedanken Jesu Christi*, pp. 7-21 [who are in favor of the TR]). It ought to be remembered, though it is sometimes overlooked, that the rejection of vv. 19b, 20 as not originally belonging to the Gospel is by no means equivalent to declaring these words unhistorical, i.e. not spoken by Jesus. Wendt, e.g. (*Die Lehre Jesu*, p. 496), assumes the originality of the shorter text in St. Luke, and yet believes, on the basis of the other records, that Jesus spoke the words which St. Luke, for reasons arising out of his “combination-method,” omitted. (Similarly Haupt, p. 10). Still, as a matter of fact, with some writers the adoption of the shorter text is accompanied by the belief that it represents an older and more accurate tradition of what actually took place. On the other hand, it remains possible, even in retaining the TR as originally Lukan, to believe that St. Luke’s source supplied him with a highly peculiar version of the occurrence preserved in vv. 15-19a and that he assimilated this to the other more current representation by borrowing vv. 19b, 20 from St. Paul. On the whole, however, the acceptance of the genuineness of the longer text naturally tends to strengthen the presumption that a statement in regard to which all the records agree must be historical. Contextual considerations also seem to speak in favor of the genuineness of the disputed words. If vv. 19b, 20 do not belong to the text, St. Luke must have looked upon the cup of v. 17 as the cup of the Sacrament, for it would

have been impossible for him to relate an institution *sub una specie*. But this assumption, viz., that the cup of v. 17 meant for St. Luke the cup of the Sacrament, is impossible, because v. 18 comes between this cup and the bread of v. 19. Further, v. 18 so closely corresponds to v. 16 as to set vv. 15-18 by themselves, a group of four verses with a carefully constructed parallelism between the first and the third, the second and the fourth of its members respectively; and inasmuch as v. 17 belongs to this group, it cannot very well have been connected by the author with v. 19 in such a close manner as the coordination of the cup and the bread in the Sacrament would require. In general, the advocates of the shorter text do not succeed in explaining how the author of the Third Gospel, who must have been familiar with the other accounts, and can hardly have differed from them in his belief that the Supper was instituted as celebrated in the Church at that time, could have regarded vv. 15-19a as an adequate institution of the rite with which he was acquainted. It is much easier to believe that a later copyist found the cup of the Sacrament in v. 17, and therefore omitted v. 20, than that a careful historian, such as St. Luke was, should have deliberately entertained this view, even if he had found a version to that effect in one of his sources.

Altogether apart from the textual problem in St. Luke, the historicity of the words relating to the covenant-blood has been called in question. Just as the saying about the *λυτρον* in Mark 10:45 and Matt. 20:28, so this utterance has been suspected since the time of Baur on account of its alleged Paulinizing character. Recently this view has gained renewed advocacy by such writers as W. Brandt, *Die Evangelische Geschichte*, pp. 289ff., 566; Bousset, *Die Evangelienzeit Justin des Märtyrers*, p. 112ff.; Wrede, *ZNTW*, 1900, pp. 69-74; Hollmann, *Die Bedeutung des Todes Jesu*, p. 145ff. The principal arguments on which these writers rest their contention are, that whilst to St. Paul the idea of the new covenant is familiar, no trace of it appears elsewhere in the teaching of Jesus; that it is expressive of an antithesis to the OT religion and its institutions out of harmony with Jesus' general attitude towards these; that in Justin Martyr's version of the institution the disputed words do not occur (so Bousset); that the structure of the sentence in Matthew and Mark still betrays the later addition of the genitive *της διαθηκης* (so Wrede). The mere fact, however, that a certain conception occurs with a degree of doctrinal pointedness in Paul, does not warrant us in suspecting it when it occurs in the mouth of Jesus. With St. Paul himself the shade of meaning of the word is not in every passage the same. It cannot be proved that the Apostle read into what were to him the words of the institution an anti-Judaistic significance, such as belongs to the conception in Gal. 4:24 and 2 Cor. 3:6. Even the characterization of the *διαθηκη* as *καινη* does not require us to assume this. Even to St. Paul, we shall have to say, the phrase *καινη διαθηκη* has in the present instance the more general soteriological associations, in view of which the antithesis of the new to the old and the superseding of the old by the new recede into the background. The new covenant is the covenant which fulfills the OT promises, rather than the new covenant which abrogates the OT law. With still more assurance we may affirm this of the words as ascribed to Jesus in Mark and Matthew. Here (apart from the hardly original reading of A and D in Matthew and A in Mark) the explicit designation of the *διαθηκη* as *καινη* is not found. While the thought of the substitution of one covenant for another is undoubtedly the logical correlate of the statement even in this form, yet such an inference, if present at all, can have lain in the periphery only, not in the center of the consciousness of Him who thus spoke.

It ought to be observed that the literal rendering of the words is not: "This is *my* covenant-blood," with the emphasis on the pronoun, but: "This is my blood, covenant-blood." The enclitic *μου* is too weak to bear the stress the former rendering would put upon it. Accordingly, *μου* belongs

neither to διαθηκη nor to the compound idea “covenant-blood,” but to the noun “blood” only, as is also required by this, that το αιμα μου should be the exact correlate of το σωμα μου. The other construction, “my covenant,” could only mean either “the covenant concluded with me,” as in the original of Zech. 9:11, or “the covenant made by me as a contracting party,” as in the LXX rendering of the passage, hardly “the covenant inaugurated by me between God and you.” And yet the last it would have to mean here, if μου went with διαθηκη. By these considerations we are led to adopt the rendering “this is my blood, covenant-blood”; and this rendering makes it appear at once, that our Lord does not in the first place contrast *His* covenant-blood with the Mosaic covenant-blood, but simply speaks of His blood as partaking of the character of covenant-blood after the analogy of that used by Moses. But even if the comparison with the Mosaic covenant bore more of an antithetical character than it does, it would still be rash to assert that such an antithesis between the relation to God inaugurated by Himself and that prevailing under the Mosaic law could find no place in our Lord’s consciousness, especially towards the close of His life. His attitude towards the Mosaic law, as reflected in the Gospels, presents a complicated problem. This much, however, is beyond doubt, that side by side with reverence for the Law there is, both in His teaching and conduct, a note of sovereign freedom with regard to it. From the position expressed in such sayings as Mark 2:21-22, 7:15-23 to the conception of a new covenant superseding the old there is but one step.

We take for granted that the words were actually spoken by Jesus. In view of the fact that He uttered them in Aramaic, the question, whether the rendering of Matthew and Mark or that of Paul and Luke more nearly reproduces the original, becomes difficult to decide and also of minor importance. Zahn (*Evan. d. Matt.* p. 686, note 52) suggests that from the Aramaic form דְּמֵי דְּרִיתְקָא both renderings might, without material modification of the sense, have been derived. That the thought is in both forms essentially the same will appear later, after we have inquired into the content of Jesus’ statement.

The intricate problems connected with the institution of the Supper can here be touched upon in so far only as they bear upon the meaning of the words relating to the covenant. We give a brief survey of the various interpretations placed upon those words.

First we may mention the interpretation according to which the covenant spoken of by Jesus stands in no real connection with His death. Most modern writers who detach the original significance of the act of Jesus from His death, assume that the reference to the covenant is a later addition. Thus Johannes Hoffmann makes Jesus say no more than “This is my body,” “This is my blood,” and interprets this as meaning, that the disciples must be closely knit together as members of one body, Himself forming the center. The meal is a meal of friendship. The Savior even at this eleventh hour did not expect to die, but confidently looked forward to the immediate glorious appearance of the Kingdom of God. With this thought in mind He asked the disciples to unite themselves symbolically into the little flock for which the Kingdom was appointed.

Dismissing this and similar views, because they leave the covenant words out of consideration, we note that Spitta has developed a hypothesis which, while cutting loose the Supper from the death of Christ, nevertheless interprets its symbolism as a covenant symbolism (*Zur Geschichte und Literatur des Urchristenthums*, i. pp. 207-337). According to Spitta, the covenant is none other than the Davidic-Messianic covenant promised by the prophets, and inasmuch as this covenant had been frequently

represented under the figure of a great feast, our Lord could by means of the Supper give to the disciples a symbolic anticipation of its approaching joys, the more so since the figure of a banquet to describe the eschatological Kingdom occurs also elsewhere in Jesus' teaching. The partaking of this Messianic feast could be represented as a partaking of the Messiah ("This is my body," "This is my blood"), because the Messiah was the Author and Center of these future blessings. Jesus, while knowing that His death was at hand, yet in faith projected himself beyond death into the time of the Kingdom: the Supper was to him a feast of joy, not a memorial of death. It was a single triumphant anticipation of the great feast of victory, not intended to be repeated as a rite. The present description of the covenant as a *new* covenant in the Pauline-Lukan record is, according to Spitta, a later modification of the conception in an anti-Judaistic direction. So far as its understanding of the term "covenant" is concerned, this hypothesis has a certain OT basis to rest upon. To be sure, the Davidic covenant, to which Spitta makes Jesus refer, is in the OT a past covenant, a covenant made with David, the pledge and basis of future blessings, not a name for the blessings of the Messianic age themselves. But this might easily become blended with the prophetic prediction of a new covenant in the Messianic time, and then actually the covenant of David could become equivalent to the Messianic blessedness (cf. Isa. 55:3, "the sure mercies of David"). There is, however, no prophetic passage which joins together the conceptions of the Messianic covenant and of a feast, so that no explanation is offered of the association of the one with the other in the mind of Jesus. The account of Ex. 24 far more plausibly explains the combination of these two ideas, for here the covenant and the feast actually occur together. And if this be the more direct source of our Lord's reference to the covenant, then it follows that the blood and the covenant stand in a much more direct connection with each other than Spitta assumes. According to Spitta, it is the blood which represents the personality of Jesus, who is the Author and Center of the covenant. According to Ex. 24:8, it is the blood directly inaugurating the covenant. Apart from every reference to Ex. 24, when the blood is brought into connection with the covenant ("this is my blood of the covenant"), it becomes entirely impossible to think of anything else than a covenant based on sacrificial blood: every other mode of joining these two terms is artificial. Spitta's further assumption, that the eating of the bread and the drinking of the wine stand for a partaking of the Messiah's body and blood, as a symbol of the eating of the Messiah, altogether apart from His death, is highly improbable. The feast as a whole might be the symbol of a participation in the Messiah, though even the examples quoted by Spitta of this mode of speaking are not sufficient to prove a current usage, if the sacrificial meal be left out of account. Assuming, however, that the general phrase "eating the Messiah" was familiar to Jesus and the disciples outside of every connection with the sacrificial meal, the distributive form in which the records present the thought, that of eating the Messiah's body and drinking His blood, could hardly have possessed such familiarity, and compels us, while not rejecting the idea of appropriating the Messiah, to think of Him as appropriated in His sacrificial capacity.

We turn next to the theories which recognize that the covenant stands through the blood in connection with the death of Jesus. When the blood is called "covenant-blood," this undoubtedly implies that Jesus' death is instrumental in introducing the covenant. Justice is not done to this when merely in some indirect way the death is supposed to prepare the way for the covenant, viz., in so far as it forms the transition to a higher life which will enable Jesus to bestow upon His disciples the covenant blessings. Thus the direct nexus between the blood and the covenant is severed. The view stated is that of Titius (*Die neutestamentliche Lehre von der Seligkeit*, i. p. 150ff.). According to this writer, the Supper is to be explained not from the idea of the forgiveness of sin, but from that of the

communication of life. Titius does not identify this covenant with the consummate eschatological state: it is something intermediate between that and the communion with God into which Jesus introduced His disciples before His death. The new covenant is made possible by the death of Jesus, because through this death He will be raised into heaven, whence the powers of eternal life can descend upon His Church through the gift of the Holy Spirit. It may be justly objected to this construction, that in it the death of Jesus appears not as a source of blessing by itself, but as a more or less accidental entrance into the life of glory, from which the blessing flows. As Titius himself admits, in the abstract it would have been quite possible to procure the new covenant and the perfected communion with God without the intervention of Jesus' death, viz., if it had pleased God to exalt the Messiah in some other way. Thus it becomes difficult to understand how so much emphasis can be placed by Jesus upon the appropriation of His death, or how He can require the disciples to drink His blood. The appropriation symbolized certainly cannot relate to the accidental form in which the blessing is prepared, it must have reference to the substance of the blessing itself. If the death is the object of appropriation, then it must possess a direct and intrinsic significance for the covenant in which the disciples are to share.

This is recognized by Wendt (*Lehre Jesu*, p. 502ff.), according to whom Jesus regarded His death as a covenant-sacrifice, standing in the same relation to the new covenant predicted by Jeremiah as the sacrifice brought by Moses sustained to the Sinaitic covenant. In his opinion, the record of Ex. 24 shows that the Mosaic sacrifice had nothing to do with atonement, but consisted of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, meant as a gift to God expressing the people's consent to His revealed law, and hence became a seal of covenant relation. The sacrifice pledged both God and the people. In analogy with this, Jesus represents His death as a gift dedicated to God, for the sake of which God will establish the new covenant, i.e. the state of salvation in the Kingdom of God, not, to be sure, on any strictly legal principle of recompense, but in harmony with His inexhaustible goodness and grace. Wendt's interpretation is wrong, not so much in what it affirms as in what it denies. That Jesus regarded the sacrifice of His life as a gift to God, and ascribed to it saving significance because it was an act of positive obedience, may be safely affirmed. The confidence, however, with which he appropriates the effects of this act to the disciples does not favor Wendt's assumption, that He made these effects dependent on a gracious will of God, imparting to the sacrifice a value which intrinsically it did not possess. But, apart from this, the analogy with the Mosaic sacrifice leads us to believe that Jesus did not confine Himself to viewing His death under the aspect of a gift. The prominence here given to the blood forbids us to interpret the sacrifice as exclusively, or even primarily, a symbol of gratitude or consecration to God. Even though the sacrifices brought were not specific sin-offerings, but burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, this does not eliminate from them the element of expiation. The Law itself speaks of expiation in connection with the burnt-offerings (Lev. 1:4), and the Passover-sacrifice, closely akin to the peace-offerings, certainly had expiatory significance. It may even be doubted whether the idea of a gift to God, except in the most general sense in which every sacrifice is a gift, was present to the mind of the author of Ex. 24. When Moses calls the blood sprinkled on the people "the blood of the covenant which Jehovah has made with you," this can scarcely mean "the blood by the dedication of which God is induced to make the covenant." It must mean either "the blood by whose expiatory power the covenant is inaugurated," or "the blood by which, as a bond of life between God and the people, the covenant is established and maintained." Perhaps it may express both of the thoughts just mentioned, since the ideas of *expiatio* and *communio* were often united in the conception of sacrifice. Besides this, the association in the mind of Jesus between the

new covenant and the forgiveness of sins is rendered highly probable by the joint-occurrence of the two ideas in the Jeremiah-passage, where the forgiveness of sins is named as the great blessing of the new covenant. Now, if Jesus had this thought in mind, and spoke at the same time of the sacrificial pouring forth of His blood, then it was almost impossible for Him not to unite the two thoughts, so as to conceive of the blood as a blood of expiation securing forgiveness. It is by no means necessary to rest this argument on the words in Matthew "unto the forgiveness of sins." Supposing that these words are a later interpretation of the thought, we shall still have to recognize them as an essentially correct interpretation, which merely resolves the $\upsilon\pi\epsilon\rho$ of Mark and Luke into $\pi\epsilon\rho\iota + \epsilon\iota\varsigma$.

A further argument may be added to this from the part which the covenant conception plays in the second part of the Book of Isaiah in connection with the figure of the Servant of Jehovah, who is called, as we have seen, the בְּרִית עַם . In our opinion, although this has been denied by Ritschl and others, there can be no doubt that the Servant-of-Jehovah-prophecy, and particularly Isa. 53, was an influential factor in determining the Messianic consciousness of Jesus. In this prophecy, however, the sacrificial role of the Servant, in an expiatory, vicarious sense, is so distinctly delineated, that, once finding Himself in the chapter, Jesus could not conceive thereafter of His death, or of the relation of His death to the covenant, on any other than is here set forth (cf. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, pp. 13-56).

As a matter of fact, the trend of recent investigation of the problem of the Supper is towards the acknowledgment, that the words, as they stand, not merely in Luke and Paul, nor merely in Matthew, but even in Mark, clearly express, and were intended by the writers of the Gospels to express, the expiatory interpretation of the death of Jesus. So far as the purely exegetical determination of the sense of the words *ex animo auctorum* (in distinction from the estimate put upon their historic credibility) is concerned, the traditional Church-doctrine is being more and more decisively vindicated. True, many modern writers, while granting this, emphatically deny that our Lord spoke, or could have spoken, the words which St. Paul and the Synoptists attribute to Him, or that what He spoke can have had the meaning which the words in their present setting and form convey. The two main reasons for this denial are, that, on the one hand, the teaching of Jesus about the sinner's relation to God is such as to leave no room for sacrificial expiation as a prerequisite of the sinner's acceptance, forgiveness flowing from God's free grace; and that, on the other hand, in the early Apostolic Church the expiatory interpretation of the death of Jesus is not present from the beginning, as it would have been if Jesus had taught it, but marks a subsequent doctrinal development. Neither of these contentions has sufficient force to discredit the unanimous witness of St. Paul and the Synoptists. In point of fact, Jesus nowhere represents the forgiveness of sins as absolutely unconditioned. It is one of the gifts connected with the state of sonship the Kingdom. Consequently, it is bound to His own person in the same sense and to the same degree as the general inheritance of the Kingdom is. Unless one is ready to assert with Harnack, that in the gospel, as preached by Jesus himself, there is no place for His person, it will be necessary to believe that our Lord considered His own Messianic character and work of supreme importance, not merely for the preaching, but also for the actual establishment of the Kingdom of God. This being so, it became necessary for Him to combine with the specific form He gave to His Messiahship a specific conception of the manner in which the blessings of the kingdom are obtained by the disciples. His views about the forgiveness of sins would be less apt to be determined by any abstract doctrine as to the nature of God, than by the concrete mode in which the developments of His life led Him, in dependence upon Scripture, to conceive of the character of

His Messiahship and its relation to the coming of the Kingdom. If He anticipated death, as there is abundant evidence to show He did, from a comparatively early point in His ministry, then He could not fail to ascribe to this death a Messianic meaning; and this Messianic meaning, if there was to belong to it any definiteness at all, could hardly be other than that portrayed by the prophet Isaiah in the suffering Servant of Jehovah.

It is quite true that the silence observed by our Lord in regard to this important matter till very near the close of His ministry is calculated to awaken surprise. But this silence He likewise preserved till the same point with regard to His Messianic calling in general; the problem is not greater in the former respect than in the latter; the reasons which will explain the one will also explain the other. Nor should it be forgotten that, side by side with His high conception of the love of God, Jesus ascribed supreme importance to the Divine justice. He carefully preserved the valuable truth contained in the exaggerated Jewish ideas about the forensic relation between God and man (cf. Keim, v. 331, "A continual oscillation between the standpoint of grace and that of Jewish satisfaction can be established"). Recognizing this element in His teaching as something He did not hold perfunctorily, but with great earnestness of conviction, we have no right to assert that every idea of expiation and satisfaction must have been on principle repudiated by Jesus as inconsistent with the love of God. Nor is there much force in the second contention, namely, that the absence of the expiatory interpretation of the death of Jesus from the early Apostolic preaching proves the impossibility of deriving this doctrine from Jesus. The doctrine is certainly older than St. Paul, who declares that he "received" ἐν πρώτοις, as one of the fundamental tenets of the Apostolic faith, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3). This "receiving" on the part of St. Paul is separated by no more than seven years from the death of Jesus; according to recent schemes of chronology, by an even shorter interval. When in the discourses of the earlier chapters of Acts the emphasis is placed on the resurrection rather than on the death of Jesus, this must be explained from the apologetic purpose of these discourses. They were intended to prove that, notwithstanding His death, Jesus could still be the Messiah. Probably even upon the disciples themselves, at that early date, the full meaning of the teaching of Jesus concerning His death had not dawned; but if it had, to make this the burden of their preaching to the Jews would have been an ill-advised method. We know from these same discourses in Acts that the disciples looked upon the death of Jesus as foreordained. It is not likely that, holding this, they can have rested in it as sufficient for their faith, and entirely refrained from seeking the reasons for the Divine foreordination, which in this, as well as all other cases, must have appeared to them teleological. In the light of this, the references to Jesus as the Servant of God, which occur in these early discourses, sometimes in connection with His suffering, become highly significant, partly because they sound like reminiscences of Jesus' own teaching, partly because they render it probable that our Lord's death was interpreted in dependence on Isa. 53. Finally, attention should be called to the central place which the forgiveness of sins occupies in the early Apostolic preaching. The prominence of this theme requires for its background a certain definite connection between the Messiahship of Jesus and the forgiveness of sins, and this is precisely what is afforded by the expiatory interpretation of the Savior's death (cf. Denney, *The Death of Christ*, pp. 63-85, where the preceding points are luminously discussed).

On the grounds stated we conclude that there is neither exegetical nor historical necessity for departing from the old view, that Jesus represented His death as the sacrificial, expiatory basis of a covenant with God. The next question arising is, Who are meant as the beneficiaries of this

expiation on which the covenant is founded? At first sight it would seem as if only one answer were possible, viz., those to whom He gives the cup in which the wine, the symbol of the expiating blood, is contained. Nevertheless, the correctness of this view has been of late strenuously disputed. This has been done mainly on the ground before stated, that for the disciples the whole tenor of our Lord's teaching represents the forgiveness of sins as unconditioned, assured by the gracious love of God as such. Hence it is assumed that Jesus intended the covenant-sacrifice not for His disciples, but for the unbelieving mass of the people, who were so hardened in their unbelief as to render an atoning sacrifice necessary in order to their reacceptance into the favor of God (thus Johannes Weiss, *Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, p. 28ff.; and R. A. Hoffmann, *Die Abendmahlsgedanken Jesu Christi*, pp. 60-88). Weiss, while believing that the covenant-blood is primarily shed for the nation, would not exclude the disciples from its effects. Hoffmann, on the other hand, distinguishes sharply between those who are concerned in the covenant-sacrifice as its direct beneficiaries, i.e. the enemies of Jesus, and those whom He desires to appropriate the spirit of His self-sacrifice for others, and therefore invites to eat His body and drink His blood. The words spoken with the cup express on this view two distinct thoughts: (1) the blood is covenant-blood for the unbelieving Jews; (2) the blood as the exponent of the spirit of self-sacrifice of Jesus must pass over into the disciples, so that they too shall give their life for others. In other words, the disciples do not drink the blood in the sense in which it is defined by the phrase της διαθηκης, but in the sense in which it symbolizes the subjective spirit on Jesus' part which led Him to offer His life for others. It will be readily perceived that this introduces an intolerable dualism into the significance of the blood: it must mean at the same time objectively the life poured forth in death as the principle of atonement, and subjectively the life pouring itself forth in death as the principle of self-sacrifice. There is no hint in the words themselves at any such double meaning. From the simple statement no one would guess that the blood is drunk by the disciples in any other capacity than that in which the Lord describes it, as "blood of the covenant." St. Paul and St. Luke have not understood Jesus in the manner proposed: for, according to their version, the cup, that which the disciples drink, is the new covenant itself in the blood, not merely the blood which for others is the covenant-blood. Hoffmann has to assume that St. Paul and St. Luke misinterpreted the intent of Jesus, and regards Mark and Matthew as giving the correct version. But even into the words of St. Mark and St. Matthew his view will not fit readily. If our Lord invited the disciples to drink His blood, in the sense of receiving into themselves the spirit of His self-surrender to death, the description of this blood as covenant-blood becomes irrelevant to the expression of this thought. Whether the blood is covenant-blood or serves any other beneficent purpose, is of no direct consequence whatever for the main idea, viz., that it is the exponent of a spirit which the disciples must imitate, nay, the introduction of the former thought only tends to obscure the latter. Our Lord certainly did not expect the disciples to make the sacrifice of their own life a covenant-sacrifice in the sense His was for the nation. The υπερ πολλων in Mark and the περι πολλων in Matthew, to which Hoffmann appeals, cannot prove the exclusion of the disciples from the covenantal effect of the blood. The phrase is derived from Isa. 53:11-12, where it serves to affirm the fruitfulness, the efficacy of the self-sacrifice of the Servant of Jehovah. This simple thought suffices here as well as in Mark 10:45 to explain Jesus' statement that many will be benefited by His death. Who the many are, disciples or non-disciples, the υπερ πολλων alone does not enable us to determine.

The one question that still remains to be answered is, whether the covenant-blood appears in the words of Jesus, "This is my blood of the covenant," primarily as the blood which through expiation inaugurates the covenant, or primarily as the blood which by being sacramentally received will

make those who receive it partakers of the covenant. Both meanings are equally well suited to the words themselves. In order to choose definitely between them, we should have to enter upon the extremely complicated discussion that has of recent years been carried on, and is still being carried on, concerning the origin of the Lord's Supper and the significance of the act performed and the words spoken by our Lord on the last evening of His earthly life. A few remarks must suffice to indicate the bearings of this problem on the question before us. The two views above distinguished coincide with the so-called parabolic or purely symbolic and the so-called institutional or sacramental interpretation of the transaction. According to the former, Jesus did not mean to institute a rite, did not intend the act to be repeated, but simply enacted before the eyes of His disciples, in a visible parable, the drama of His death, indicating by the parabolic form He gave it that His death would be for their good through the inauguration of a covenant. According to the latter, Jesus instituted, and for the first time caused His disciples to celebrate, a rite in which He made the partaking of bread and wine, as sacramental symbols of His body and blood, to stand for the appropriation of His expiatory sacrifice and of the covenant founded on it.

It ought to be observed that these views are not in themselves mutually exclusive. The parabolic significance of the body and blood, as symbolizing death, must on the second view be assumed to form the background, expressed or presupposed, of the sacramental transaction—expressed, if the breaking of the bread and the pouring of the wine be made significant; presupposed, if the broken bread and the poured wine be made the starting-point of the observance. That the so-called parabolic view is frequently advocated in a form which excludes the sacramental complexion of the act, is due not so much to the view itself, but largely to a general theory on the nature of the parables of Jesus.

Jülicher, the foremost representative of the parabolic interpretation of the supper (cf. *Theologische Abhandlungen C. r. Weizsacker gewidmet*, p. 207ff.), is also the strenuous advocate of the theory that in every genuine parable of Jesus there can be but one point of comparison. Consequently it is insisted upon that, if the broken bread and the wine stand as figures for the death of Jesus, figures which involve the destruction of these elements, they cannot at the same time stand as figures for the appropriation of the benefits of His death, because this would involve the usefulness of the elements, the very opposite of their destruction. Jülicher was not at first disposed to carry this to an extreme, but admitted that as a secondary point of comparison the usefulness of the bread and wine as food and drink might have stood before the mind of Jesus. Others, however, demand that on the parabolic view every figurative significance of the eating and drinking must be rigorously excluded, and make this a ground of criticism of said view, because in the records the eating and drinking are undoubtedly made prominent (cf. Johannes Hoffmann, *Das Abendmahl im Urchristenthum*, pp. 61-65, and Jülicher's review of Hoffmann's book in *Theol. Literaturzeitung*, 1904, col. 282ff.).

Jülicher's canon of interpretation, while on the whole representing a sound principle of exegesis, leads in single instances to the rejection of undoubtedly genuine material. It makes Jesus construct His parables with conscious regard to the unity and purity of their form, rather than with the practical end of their efficacy in view (cf. Bugge, *Die Haupt-Parabeln Jesu*). Where, as in the present case, the two points of comparison, that of the dissolution of the elements and that of their appropriation for nourishment, are so naturally combined into the one act of the meal, it were foolish to require the exclusion of either on the ground of a puristic insistence on the rules of formal rhetoric.

In all probability the combination of these two aspects of the symbolism was not first made by our Lord, but was antecedently given in the union of the OT sacrifice and the sacrificial meal. Schultzen (*Das Abendmahl im Neuen Testament*, p. 53ff.) has shown, to our mind convincingly, that the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup are placed by our Lord under the aspect of a sacrificial meal, for which His own death furnishes the sacrifice. As in the sacrificial meal the offerer appropriates the benefits of the expiation and the resulting benefits of covenant-fellowship with God (Ex. 24: 10-11, Ps. 50:5), so the disciples are invited to appropriate by eating and drinking all the benefits of expiation and covenant-fellowship that are secured by the sacrifice of the Savior's death.

We may assume, therefore, that both the symbolism of sacrifice and the symbolism of the sacrificial meal are present in the transaction performed by Jesus. But the question still remains unanswered, whether the former is present in explicit form or merely as the unexpressed background of the latter. Those who emphasize the symbolical significance of the breaking of the bread, a feature named in all the records, hold that the death is not merely presupposed but formally enacted. On the whole, however, the trend of the discussion has of late been in the direction of the other view, which attributes no special significance to the breaking of the bread or the pouring forth of the wine, but makes the broken bread and the wine, as symbols of the death as an accomplished fact, the starting-point for the enacted symbolism of the sacrificial meal. It has been pointed out with a degree of force that the formula, "This is my body," "This is my blood," in the sense of "This symbolizes what will happen to My body and to My blood," is out of all analogy with Jesus' usual parabolic mode of statement, because elsewhere not the symbol, but the thing symbolized, always forms the subject of the sentence (so Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, p. 687, note 53). It may also be urged that the natural sequence, in case a parabolic enactment of the death of Jesus were intended, would have been as follows: "He brake the bread and said: This is my body; and he gave it to them and said, Take," and similarly with the cup. As the record stands, the pouring out of the wine is not mentioned at all. It seems that Jesus took a cup which had already been filled. If He had intended to give a parabolic representation of the event of His death, He would have taken pains to fill one before their eyes. The fact that with both elements the giving to eat and to drink precedes the declaration of what the bread and the wine stand for, favors the view that this declaration deals primarily with the symbolism of the sacrificial meal. The words, "This is my body," then obtain the meaning: To partake of this bread signifies the partaking of My sacrificed body in a sacrificial meal; the words, "This is my blood," the meaning: To partake of this wine signifies the partaking of My sacrificial blood in a sacrificial meal. Thus we would reach the conclusion that the phrase "blood of the covenant" has for its primary import: blood through the partaking of which participation in the covenant is assured. The Pauline-Lukan version, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," cannot be quoted with conclusiveness in favor of either view. This version may either mean: this cup is by the blood it contains the new covenant, or: this cup is the new covenant, which new covenant consists in My blood. Each of these two renderings leaves open the two possibilities, that the shedding of the blood is represented as the source of the new covenant, or that the drinking of the blood is represented as the participation in the new covenant. To prevent misunderstanding, however, it should be stated once more, that the sacramental interpretation of the words has for its background the symbolic significance of bread and wine as exponents of the expiatory death of Jesus itself.

In conclusion, we must endeavor to define the place of the covenant conception thus interpreted within the teaching of Jesus as a whole, and its correlation with other important conceptions. Like

the Kingdom of God, the Messiahship, and the Church, the Covenant idea is one of the great generalizing ideas of the OT, the use of which enables Jesus to gather up in Himself the main lines of the historic movement of OT redemption and revelation. From the Kingdom the Covenant is distinguished in several respects. The Kingdom conception is more comprehensive, since it embraces the eschatological realization of the OT promises as well as their provisional fulfillment in the present life, being on the whole, however, eschatologically conceived, the present Kingdom-powers and blessings appearing as so many anticipations of the final Kingdom. The Kingdom is also comprehensive in this other respect, that it covers indiscriminately the entire content of the consummate state, the external as well as the internal, the judgment as well as the salvation aspect. Over against this the Covenant idea, while by no means pointedly excluding the eschatological state (in Hebrews the idea is used eschatologically, the new covenant coinciding with the *αιων μελλων*), yet is more characteristic as a designation of the blessings of believers in the present intermediate period. And among the manifold contents of salvation it preeminently designates the internal ones of forgiveness of sin and fellowship with God, as is already the case in the passage of Jeremiah.

If the word rendered by *διαθηκη* had in our Lord's mind the associations of the word "testament," and if the statement found in the context of Luke 22:29-30, "I appoint unto you (*διατιθεμαι υμιν*), even as my Father appointed unto me a kingdom, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom," may be understood as having been suggested to Him by this testamental sense of *διαθηκη*, then this would bring the Covenant idea much nearer to the Kingdom idea, inasmuch as in the latter saying the full content of the blessedness of the final state is the object of the *διατιθεσθαι*. It is not certain, however, that the sequence of the narrative here in Luke is chronological, and that, therefore, these words were uttered immediately after the reference to the covenant-blood in the Supper. In Matt. 19:27-29 words in part identical occur in a different connection. In the Supper, God is the *διαθεμενος*, whereas here it would be Jesus. It is better, therefore, not to introduce the testamentary idea into the words of the Supper, and to adhere to the distinction between the Kingdom and the Covenant from the point of view already indicated. According to the Pauline interpretation, the Supper, and with it the Covenant, belong to the pre-eschatological state, in which believers are during the present life, for the Supper is a proclamation of the death of Jesus "until he come" (1 Cor 11:26). The sayings in Mark 14:25, Matt. 26:29, Luke 22:16, 18 also mark the Supper and the participation in the Covenant as belonging to a state distinct from the final Kingdom of God. Our Lord, however, does not place this second stage of the covenant-life of the people of God in contrast with the former stage from the point of view that it involves the abrogation of the OT legal forms of life, as St. Paul does in 2 Cor. 3 and Gal. 3. If it is a new covenant, it is new simply for the positive reason that it brings greater assurance of the forgiveness of sin and closer fellowship with God.

From the idea of the Kingdom that of the Covenant is still further distinguished, in that it appears in much closer dependence than the former on the Messianic person and work of Jesus. In our Lord's preaching of the Kingdom, His Messianic person and work remain almost entirely in the background, at least so far as the verbal disclosures on this subject are concerned, while the matter comes to stand somewhat differently if the self-revelation contained in Jesus' Messianic acts be considered. The Covenant is explicitly declared to be founded on His expiatory death, and to be received by the partaking of His body and blood. This importance of the person and work of Jesus, both for the inauguration and the reception of the Covenant, agrees with the view that the Covenant designates the present, provisional blessedness of believers, for this stage is specifically controlled

and determined by the activity of Christ, so that St. Paul calls it the Kingdom of Christ in distinction from the Kingdom of God, which is the final state. The Covenant idea shares with the idea of the Church this reference to the present earthly form of possession of the Messianic blessings, and this dependence on the person and work of the Messiah (cf. Matt. 16:18, 18:17). The difference is that in the conception of the Church, the organization of believers into one body outwardly, as well as their spiritual union inwardly, and the communication of a higher life through the Spirit, stand in the foreground, neither of which is reflected upon in the idea of the Covenant. The Covenant stands for that central, Godward aspect of the state of salvation, in which it means the atonement of sin and the full enjoyment of fellowship with God through the appropriation of this atonement in Christ.