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UNITY AND CONTINUITY IN
COVENANTAL THOUGHT:
A STUDY IN THE REFORMED
TRADITION TO THE
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY

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VOLUME ONE

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SUMMARY

The Westminster Assembly is a useful starting point for detailed discussion of the development of covenantal thought, particularly in view of the direction taken by recent studies which place a strong dichotomy between the early Reformers and their seventeenth-century successors, notably between John Calvin and those who have traditionally been designated 'Calvinists'. The most extreme, or virulent, of these is an unsparing attack upon the *Westminster Confession* as one of the principal reservoirs of 'a plague that had long infected the Reformed churches'. In seeking to overthrow what he described as 'the treasured confession of my mother church', the author made the astonishing claim, which puts this basic issue in a curious nutshell: 'It was Calvin who rescued me from the Calvinists'. And the deadly virus identified as the cause of this plague was the *Confession's* covenantal statements, of which it was said, 'Calvin knew nothing, for these theological innovations were the work of his successors'.¹

In order to set the scene, therefore, Part One of the thesis has been devoted to a consideration of the background to the Westminster Assembly and its documents, an examination of the sources and content of the theology of the covenant expressed in the standards, and also a critical survey of the historiography of the covenant from around the middle of the last century to the present time. The historical background to the Assembly as it relates to both the English and Scottish churches is designed to get the feel of the general ecclesiastical climate and theological orientation in which the divines and their immediate predecessors lived and moved, while the examination of sources and content more particularly identifies the direction from which the doctrine of the covenant came to be embodied in the *Confession* and *Catechisms*, and also the issues which are emphasized in, and immediately related to, the chapters dealing specifically with the covenant.

The scriptural origin of the Reformed doctrine of the covenant is indisputable, so that serious research in this area has never been considered necessary. The temptation to include a section on Scripture in this study has likewise been resisted, but its importance has been kept in mind throughout. In order to demonstrate that the idea of the covenant as held by the Reformed church, even in many of its particular aspects, was no new thing, Part Two picks up some of the threads offered by forerunners in the field. These include several of the church fathers, notably Augustine. The survival and use of the idea in both its

political and theological applications during the medieval period has not been overlooked. It was found that the idea of the covenant had specific governmental, hermeneutical and soteriological functions in medieval thought which were by no means despised or abandoned in the reaction of the Reformation against medieval scholasticism.

Among the early reformers, Luther's theology held firmly to the basic concepts underlying covenantal theology, but it was in the Reformed camp that the importance of the doctrine was chiefly recognized and utilized in the controversies of the time, first by Oecolampadius and Zwingli and then more distinctly by Bullinger, whose little monograph *De Testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno* was the first to appear on the subject. The findings of this research into Bullinger's work interact strongly with those studies which regard Bullinger's view of the covenant as strictly bilateral and consequently portray him as the founder of a separate Reformed tradition, distinct from that which emanated from Calvin and the Genevan school.²

Part Three is devoted entirely to Geneva, showing the seminal influence of Calvin's work in the development and transmission of covenantal thought. In demonstrating that the covenant in both its unilateral and bilateral aspects was an essential part of Calvin's overall theological structure, the disputed questions as to whether Calvin was a 'covenant theologian', and whether he taught a covenant of works is carefully considered in its proper theological context and not merely with respect to the use of terms.

For the first time in any study of covenantal thought, detailed attention has been given in this research to the work of Theodore Beza. Beza has been consistently singled out by those who oppose the Calvinists to Calvin, as the guilty party in initiating a rigid, theocentric, supralapsarian, scholastic orthodoxy which diverged manifestly from Calvin's warm, Christocentric, humanistic, biblical theology. Just as consistently he has been denied any interest in the theology of the covenant, with the result that 'covenant theology' has been interpreted as a reaction against Bezean orthodoxy in an effort to recover a place for responsible man in the economy of salvation. The evidence, however, supplied by a wider consultation of Beza's works than his merely controversial writings, supports a contrary argument. Beza's basic fidelity to Calvin becomes apparent in controverted areas and the warm heart of a concerned pastor is heard to beat in his sermonic material. More importantly for this research, Beza is found to have a keen interest in the covenant both unilaterally and bilaterally, particularly in relation to the doctrine of the union between Christ and his church, just as Calvin had before him and the Calvinists after him.

In the final part of the thesis the issues and arguments already raised are followed through in representative writers from three main interrelated locations of post-reformation development in Reformed theology. One is the influence of the Heidelberg theologians, Ursinus and Olevianus, in the Palatinate Church of Germany. The others are the English Puritan movement, dominated mainly by the influence of William Perkins, and the Scottish connection in the writings of Knox, Rollock and Howie.

It is the conclusion of this research that while covenantal theology inevitably underwent a process of refining and expansion, and was given fuller definition and varying emphases by later writers, that it nevertheless remained true to the central idea or ideas of the covenant as taught by the Reformers. Such a process cannot be construed as constituting a fundamental shift or departure from the theology of the early Reformers. Rather there is a general agreement, a unity and continuity in the Reformed theology of the covenant which makes the Westminster divines in this respect the worthy successors of Calvin and his colleagues.

Notes

1 H. Rolston III, *John Calvin versus The Westminster Confession* (Richmond, 1972), 5-6, 23.

2 J.W. Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*, (Ohio, 1980), is a recent example of this viewpoint.

PART ONE

SETTING
THE SCENE

CHAPTER ONE

Historical Background to The Westminster Assembly

The original intention in contemplating this research in the development of Reformed covenantal thought in the early seventeenth century was to concentrate on the Westminster Assembly (1643-49), with particular focus upon the representatives of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,¹ and the importance of their contribution in the deliberations of that distinguished body, especially in the formulation of its documents, the Westminster Standards.²

It soon became obvious, however, that the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms* were gathering together in a clear, concise and comprehensive fashion the fruits of theological debate and development with roots going deep into the sixteenth-century Reformation and beyond. For example, one not otherwise uncritical of the *Confession*, has commented that 'It marks the maturest and most deliberate formulation of the scheme of Biblical revelation as it appeared to the most cultured and the most devout Puritan minds. It was the last great creed-utterance of Calvinism, and intellectually and theologically it is a worthy child of the *Institutes*'.³ Another has remarked that work done by the Westminster Assembly of Divines was 'the ablest and ripest product' of the Reformation of the sixteenth century.⁴ Again the *Confession* has been described as 'an admirable summary of faith and practice', which lacked only in originality, for the simple reason that 'These later divines...availed themselves of the labours of the Reformation... Bullinger and Calvin, especially the latter...left them little to accomplish, except in the way of arrangement and compression'.⁵

From this perspective Westminster represented not so

much the central focus, much less the inauguration, of a theological era, but rather the culmination of a period of intense theological discussion and ecclesiastical feet-finding after the momentous upheaval of renaissance, reformation and revolution which had gripped Europe, and the implications of which were still being worked out in many countries, including England and Scotland. It represented rather 'the most complete and mature development of Reformed theology in creedal form'.⁶

This is not to say that further theological development, particularly in covenantal thought, was stultified after the mid-seventeenth century, but the manner in which the *Confession of Faith* has remained for three centuries the subordinate standard of faith for many branches of the Christian church, is ample evidence that some fairly substantial and conclusive statements had been made.⁷ From another perspective, the Westminster Assembly can be viewed as the beginning of a remarkable period of religious stimulation and growth in the English-speaking world, which was not without its political significance also, and in which the idea of the covenant was to have a prominent place.⁸

The pursuit of various issues in covenantal thought, therefore, drove this research back into an earlier period of which the Westminster Assembly is roughly the cut-off point. In the process it inevitably widened the horizons beyond the Scottish scene to embrace the continental, English, and, to some extent, the New England churches in all the complexities and variety of their controversies and counsels.

In the course of the study some discussion will be necessary regarding what constitutes 'covenant theology' or a covenantal theologian. It may be helpful at this stage, however, to indicate briefly a working definition of the concept as used in the following pages. Historians have tended to define 'covenant theology' with respect to the

number of covenants employed, or whether or not the covenant can be viewed as the organizing principle in the theological system of a given writer. But it would be much more satisfactory to keep the discussion within the parameters legitimated by the scriptural usage of the concept, that is, as a divinely ordained means of portraying the nature of God's relationship with man, particularly 'the organic unity and progressiveness' of God's saving purpose for his people throughout the history of mankind.⁹

Without exception, this was the central idea in the Reformed use of the concept among both the sixteenth-century reformers and their successors. It is a restricted and superficial view which treats the covenant as some kind of 'oversubtle device' created by the English Puritans to ease the pressure of an overpowering predestinarian system inherited from their reforming predecessors in Geneva.¹⁰ It would be a more profitable pursuit, and one which will be followed in this study, to look not merely at the nomenclature of the covenant and how and where it is used, but at the theological doctrines which are essential to, and embodied in, the concept of the covenant itself.

The generic development of covenantal thought as it relates to this study lies therefore in the Reformed stream of the sixteenth-century Reformation in Europe. But before moving back to the fountain-head of Reformed teaching, it would be helpful for purposes of comparison and contrast to peg down significant aspects of the history and theology of the Westminster Assembly.

One interesting preliminary observation is the paucity of recent higher studies on the subject.¹¹ This is surprising as it forms not only 'the most important chapter in the ecclesiastical history of England during the seventeenth century', but had far-reaching effects for the rest of the English-speaking world as well, not least in

Scotland.¹² The Scottish involvement means that there are two distinct histories, English and Scottish, interrelated at various points, leading up to the Assembly, and each making its unique contribution to the outcome.

English Background

The story of the Reformation in England is well documented and need not be detailed here.¹³ But it was no sooner established when rumblings of discontent began to be heard which became known as 'Puritanism'. The task of defining and describing this movement has excited no little enquiry and animosity in the past.¹⁴ Perhaps the simple explanations of Henry Parker and Edmund Calamy, who were close to it, catch sufficiently the key characteristics which led to it being so named: Parker claimed that 'Dissent in Ecclesiasticall Policie about Ceremonies and other smaller matters...first gave occasion to raise this reproachfull word Puritan in the Church... Those whom we ordinarily call Puritans are men of strict life and precise opinion, which cannot be hated for anything but their singularity in zeale and piety'.¹⁵ Calamy also stressed both the ecclesiastical and ethical content given to the term when he said that 'They (ie.the Prelates) called them [ie.the Nonconformists] *Puritans*', but that 'in process of time the vicious multitude called all *Puritans* who were strict and serious and of holy lives, though ever so conformable'.¹⁶

The initial issue in the rise of Puritanism was the 'vestiarian controversy'. The English Reformation, unlike that in Switzerland or Scotland, was largely of monarchical instigation. It was therefore less representative in form and retained more of the old mode of worship and form of church government. This difference was especially felt by English scholars who had studied on the Continent. A compromise, confining such things to the category of *adiaphora*, was followed, with the blessing of Bullinger and

a more hesitant Calvin.¹⁷ Protests occurred. John Hooper (of martyr fame) was among the first to object to episcopal vestment, oaths of consecration, and swearing by the saints as relics of Rome and the 'inventions of Antichrist'.¹⁸ The feeling that the Church was 'but half-reformed and established' was in evidence long before Fuller's remonstrance with Elizabeth.¹⁹

It was the Elizabethan Church Settlement, however, that roused properly both the Puritan ire and identity in England. The first dissension had already taken place in the English Church at Frankfort during the Marian exile.²⁰ The importance of the exiles during the reign of Mary cannot be overestimated. Their association with the Reformed churches of Switzerland, Germany and Holland had a profound influence upon them. Their experience of exile itself intensified their dislike of Rome and everything associated with it. The example of the Reformed churches demonstrated to them that the loss of ceremonies and vestments was not to be mourned and that the church could function successfully on more apostolic lines without them.

But there was a more important influence on the exiles. While they had an Augustinian heritage in their Anglo-Saxon background, it had exerted little political influence up to this point.²¹ But on the Continent these men were exposed more to the idea of the sovereignty of God occupying a dominant place in their theological thinking, and that had tremendous repercussions for every area of life, whether practical, political or religious. Tudor absolutism, *jure divino* kingship, and prelatical pretensions were bound to feel its impact. John De Witt correctly found in this the genius of Puritanism: 'The idea of the absolute sovereignty of the living and ethical God, who executes His purposes mediately or immediately as He pleases, entered as a new power into the life of England and of the English Church. Thus, English Puritanism was born; its positive principle, the constitutive principle of

the the theology of John Calvin; its negative principle, opposition to all hierarchical pretensions and all sacramentarianism in doctrine or in ceremony. The people welcomed it. The national party wondered at it. The crown opposed it'.²²

Collinson has also pointed out that a rump of Knox's and Goodman's congregation in London 'retained something of its disciplined identity, a nucleus in the years to come for the English Presbyterian movement'.²³ Here too account must be taken of the polity and influence of à Lasco's Church of the Strangers in London. He acknowledged a debt to the models of Geneva and Strasbourg, and insisted that this was the apostolic pattern.²⁴ À Lasco also regarded the Anglican church as half-reformed and his own congregation as an example of the pure Reformed churches.²⁵

Elizabeth's *Injunctions* did instruct the clergy to sweep away much of the superstitious paraphernalia in church and home - 'shrines...trindals, and rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry, and superstition'.²⁶ But the hopes of the Puritans for greater reformation were dashed by the rigid enforcement, pushed by Archbishop Parker, of the Act of Uniformity (May/June 1559), which for them failed in adequate revision of the Prayer Book and its insistence on compliance with forms, ceremonies and the use of surplices.²⁷ Thus began eighty years of 'mischiefs', as Puritan and Prelatist parties emerged in the division of the Convocation at St. Paul's on 13 January, 1562, when papers were presented against the articles.²⁸

If these injunctions were intended to represent the final 'goal' of the English reformation, it was clear that many disagreed.²⁹ Semi-conformity and acceptance of preferments in the interests of 'good order' or continuing reformation from within the establishment was manifest in men like Grindal of London, Sandys of Worcester, Pilkington

of Durham, Home of Winchester, Jewel of Salisbury, and Bentham of Coventry, who maintained close contact with the continental Reformers, especially Bullinger and Gaultier.³⁰ Others, however, who 'scrupled the habit', suffered deprivation and were ejected from office.³¹

Outright nonconformity was also the inevitable reaction to such measures. Despite the threats of Elizabeth and the conciliatory efforts of Grindal - the Calvinist 'with a human face' - more extreme Puritans seceded to set up their own congregations modelled on Geneva and Scotland.³² In 1568 a number of London ministers separated to form the 'circumstantial separatists', or what Collinson styled 'London's Protestant underworld'.³³ Those who separated sought affiliation with the Dutch and French churches in the city, and informed Knox, 'We desire no other order than you hold'.³⁴

There is a measure of ambiguity about the Scottish and Genevan attitudes to developments within the English church. For example, Beza, early on, was prepared to tolerate episcopacy, but as he learned more about the way episcopacy was behaving, he was no longer able to speak favourably of it. He complained to Bullinger about the abominable and extravagant power being assumed by the bishops, their abuse of church discipline and benefices, and asked, 'Where did such a Babylon exist'?³⁵ But at the same time Beza, like Knox, advised the Puritans not to form sects and to 'thole' meantime what they could not change.³⁶

The bishops for their part were under no illusions as to the aims of the separatists. Sandys in a letter to Bullinger summarized it as 'the complete overthrow and uprooting of the whole of our ecclesiastical polity', and the introduction of a presbyterial form of church government. A list of issues he mentioned showed clearly that the question of church government and ecclesiastical authority was fast becoming the primary concern in the Puritan conflict. Sandys was worried because of the

Puritan claim to 'have all the reformed churches on their side'.³⁷ And Elizabeth's complaint against the hierarchy's inability to secure uniformity was an indication of the growing strength of the movement.³⁸

The 'presbyterianism' advocated by these English separatists was somewhat different from the Scottish variety. Presbytery here was identified with each individual church session or *senatus praesbyterorum*.³⁹ The popularly celebrated birthday of English presbyterianism is 20 November, 1572, at Wandsworth, Surrey, and is associated with the names of Walter Travers (c.1548-1643), Thomas Wilcox (c1549-1608), and John Field (d.1588), but that has now been prove erroneous.⁴⁰

Whatever the origins of the movement, the central figure who emerged as the champion of the cause was Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603). A Cambridge graduate, Cartwright was appointed Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in 1569, but when deprived of his chair because of his propositions for the reform of the church on apostolic lines, he proceeded to Geneva where he befriended Beza and Andrew Melville.⁴¹

With the failure of moderate appeals for reform on the basis of Cranmer's *Reformatio Legum*, the cause of Puritanism was forcefully spelt out in the *Admonitions* to Parliament in 1572, calling for reformation in accordance with the examples of the churches in France and Scotland.⁴² Cartwright, in controversy with Whitgift, defended the principles for reform in the *Admonitions*, but 'for his unlawfull...most daingerous dealings...in matters touchinge Religion and the state of this Realme' an order was issued for his apprehension.⁴³ He returned to the Continent associating with the Reformed churches in Geneva, Heidelberg, Basel and the Netherlands, until his return to England in 1585/86.⁴⁴

Cartwright's experiences are important, since through them he came to represent 'the nexus between English

Puritanism and the Continental Reformation'.⁴⁵ This could be claimed not only with respect to church government issues, but also in the area of theology, especially the theology of the covenant. His writings will be considered later, but his two important catechetical works could well have served as models for the catechisms of the Westminster Assembly.⁴⁶ Cartwright also shared in the composition of the *Puritan Book of Discipline*, which was translated and reprinted as *A Directory of Church-Government* (1644-45), and no doubt influenced the production of the Westminster *Directory*, and *Form of Presbyterial Church-Government*.⁴⁷

The influence of Cartwright's work remained strong enough for him to serve as a link between Elizabethan Puritanism and the Westminster theologians. It is not true to say that the later Presbyterian movement can claim no descent from the Cartwright era.⁴⁸ Donald MacAlister has demonstrated the strong connection through Cambridge, pointing out that the contribution of Cambridge to the Westminster Assembly shows 'that the tradition established by men like Cartwright two generations before had persisted and borne fruit'.⁴⁹

The Hampton Court Conference and the Anti-Puritan Canons (1604) marked the dividing line between early Elizabethan Puritanism and later Puritanism, or what some would call Puritanism proper.⁵⁰ The difference between these has been widely discussed. George Yule saw it as a movement towards 'moral austerity...and a more individualistic approach to salvation', whereas Cartwright and his associates were simply seeking the reform of church order. This distinction is greatly overdone. Later Puritans were as much concerned about church order as their predecessors, and the early ones were just as concerned about godly living and Christian obedience. Yule's quote from Cartwright, supposedly repudiating later type 'austerity', could have been written by any one of the later Puritans.⁵¹ Also his statement that the issue of

church order had dropped into the background to be 'revived only by the insistence of the Scots commissioners to the Westminster Assembly' is simply inconsistent with evidence.⁵² The church order issue was one great factor representing continuity between Elizabethan and later Puritanism. The hopes of immediately reforming church order may have received a setback in 1604, but it remained a dominant theme throughout the preaching years which prepared the ground for its re-emergence into the arena when the time was considered ripe.⁵³ Long before the Scots Commissioners arrived, it became the immediate concern of the Long Parliament and of numerous petitions which were moving in the direction of an Assembly quite independent of the Scots.

In this respect credence is due to De Witt's emphasis on the unchanging nature of the movement from Cartwright to the Assembly.⁵⁴ Robert Paul, however, may have some room for taking issue with De Witt as to where the later Puritans stood with respect to the kind of church order desired. He held that non-prelatical did not always mean non-episcopal, nor did separatist always mean Presbyterian.⁵⁵ Nevertheless there was a strong persistence of Presbyterian ideas in England before the Assembly, allowing that they 'differed in some details' from Scottish presbyterianism.⁵⁶

This did not mean that the English variety was any less Presbyterian, as some writers have implied.⁵⁷ It is difficult to keep track of the variety and shades of opinion expressed on church order even within some of the parties of the period; still more difficult to follow the rise and wane of their respective influences. This tended largely to a state of confusion and an attitude of scarcely knowing where to begin. It was at this point that the Scottish commissioners played their part, not by reviving interest in church order, but by issuing a clarion call as to the kind of church order which they saw as in accordance

with the word of God and the best Reformed churches, and which they considered as the answer to unifying church and kingdom, thereby making 'certain once for all of the Kirk's security'.⁵⁸

Marsden claimed that the Puritan conflict before Hampton Court 'had been a quarrel on inferior points. It had intermeddled only with ceremonies and forms, with the accidents and externals of religion. Now it descended to the doctrines'.⁵⁹ Cragg added: 'Those who withstood Cartwright disliked his church polity but not his doctrine. Whitgift was no less a Calvinist than his opponent... The leaders of the Elizabethan church were Calvinists almost to a man'.⁶⁰ This was true generally speaking. Whitgift constantly appealed to Calvin in his *Answers to the Admonitions* and to Cartwright's *Replies*.⁶¹ And the *Lambeth Articles* (1595) were strongly Calvinistic.⁶²

But doctrinal matters were not entirely absent from the early period. The controversy in Cambridge which led to the production of the *Lambeth Articles*, justifies Porter's warning against indiscriminate use of the term 'Calvinist'.⁶³ Cremeans, too, pointed out that Whitgift was not a Calvinist in the way that Cartwright was.⁶⁴ Perhaps the difficulty here lies in the fact that the term 'Calvinist' has been used too much to designate positions with respect only to the doctrine of predestination. New more helpfully treated a whole range of doctrines - nature, man, the fall, Scripture, grace, the sacraments and the church - in his attempt to make doctrine the basis of opposition between 'Anglican' and Puritan, claiming that they emerged from different Protestant traditions. He identified the difference as a more Pauline-Augustinian emphasis in the Puritans, even though he regarded this as 'minimal' and more implicit than obvious.⁶⁵ Useful as New's broader approach is, his argument has a weakness in the difficulty in making a too rigid Anglican/Puritan dichotomy, and in the way he isolated the writings from the

controversies and developments of the period.

Dewey Wallace wisely warned against the twin errors of 'running theological differences back into too early a period and of denying theological differences at all'⁶⁶ Wallace was concentrating on the doctrine of grace and identified signs of divergence in this area in men like John Overall (1560-1619) and Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626).⁶⁷ He did however carefully relate these to the more significant theological dispute - the predestinarian one.⁶⁸

Signs of emerging theological polarity were more evident in the cases of Peter Baron (or Baro) (1534-1599) and William Barrett, who attacked the Reformed doctrine of predestination and came to represent the 'avant-garde' of English 'Arminianism'.⁶⁹ Baron was a French refugee who had studied in Geneva. He became Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity in Cambridge (1574), where he began to criticize Calvinistic predestination, holding that predestination was conditioned by faith and obedience. Barrett was a Fellow of Caius College, who opposed the predestinarian views of Calvin, Beza, Vermigli and Zanchius in a *Concio ad Clerum* on 29 April, 1595.⁷⁰

This proto-Arminian movement in Cambridge was symptomatic of a reaction against Calvinism in Europe at the turn of the century - Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) himself in Holland, and John Cameron (1579-1625), the Scottish theologian in Saumur, and his successor Moise Amyraut (1596-1664), were foremost here.⁷¹ This growing 'Arminian' party in England was eventually personified in William Laud (1573-1645), who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. His fame as the imposer of 'Laud's Liturgy', even if he was not its author, was a good indication of where his interests lay.⁷² He was certainly a life-long opponent of Calvinist theology, but he was no theologian. His utterances were mostly declamations of a view of predestination which 'my very soul abominates'.

Reform of church order on Erastian lines was his chief aim.⁷³

Alongside this 'Arminian' development was the rise of a new generation of more theologically articulate Puritans. Most of these had been in exile and had drunk deeply from the wells of the Reformed churches abroad. Cartwright and Dudley Fenner (1558?-1587) were forerunners here.⁷⁴ William Perkins (1558-1602) and his pupil William Ames (1576-1633) became known throughout Europe.⁷⁵ Consideration will be given later to the significance of this stream for covenantal thought. The generation of 'Westminster men' who succeeded them was thoroughly drilled in theological distinctions, and when Laud attacked their church order views they were not slow to respond and take issue, not only with his liturgical reforms, but with what they regarded as his Arminian theology as well.⁷⁶

The central issue, however, was the old one of authority in the church. The Reformation had overthrown Papal authority, but in England that had been replaced by monarchical and prelatical authority. For the Puritan, like Calvin, the authority of the Scriptures was supreme in all matters of faith and conduct, and that included church order on presbyterial lines. From the turn of the century, the idea of episcopacy by divine right began to be developed in addition to *jure divino* kingship.⁷⁷ This theory also tended to align the church more with the position of Rome. To claim validity of succession, meant acknowledging Rome as a true church.⁷⁸ A clash was inevitable. In the Puritan mind, as at the Synod of Dort, Arminianism was regarded as the first step on the road to Rome.⁷⁹ And for them Laud was the living proof of it.

Scottish Development

In all the developments south of the border the Scots were more than just casual or merely interested spectators. Events there were always filled with portent for the

welfare of the Scottish church, even though the more broadly-based nature of the Reformation in the north had ensured that it took a different direction to that of its nearest neighbour.

Knox had had early experience of the English church.^{e0} From 1549-1553 he had ministered there, taking a keen interest in the need for further reformation of the 'Englishe Order', as did other Reformed ministers from outwith the country.^{e1} Complaint was made of Knox's excessive 'authoritie' during the revision of the Prayer Book. It was said: 'A runnagate Scot dyd take awaye the adoration or worshipping of Christe in the Sacrament'.^{e2} Knox refused the bishopric of Rochester because he foresaw trouble, and when subsequently questioned as to 'whether no Christian might serve in the ecclesiastical ministration according to the rites and lawes of the realm of England', he judiciously reminded the Privy Council that many things were still 'worthy of reformation in the ministry of England'.^{e3}

The Scottish vision of a Reformed Kirk was very different from that of the official English version. When on the Continent, Knox still regarded the English order in need of being purged of the 'Letanye, Surplice and many other thinges' which would be strange and unbearable in other Reformed churches.^{e4} During the troubles at Frankfort he declared that the English Service Book still contained 'thinges bothe superstitious, impure and imperfect', and that it was 'slacknes to reforme Religion (when tyme and place was graunted)' that had provoked God's anger against England.^{e5} He complained against the obtrusion of the 'rochet and a bishop's robe', and against the discrepancy that existed between the English-faced rites and ceremonies and the face of Christ's church as displayed in the Christian churches reformed.^{e6}

Calvin abhorred the Frankfort contention, but agreed that those who allowed such rites and ceremonies indulged

'faecis Papisticae reliquiae'.⁸⁷ Knox took up this kind of phrase in the years following with reference to English ceremonies. They bore 'the mark of the Beast...all these dregges of Papistrie...these Diabolicall inventions, viz. Crossing in Baptisme; Kneeling at the Lord's table; mummelling, or singing of the Letanie'.⁸⁸ The General Assembly adopted the same language. Writing to 'there brethren, the Bischops and pastours of England' on 27 December, 1566, they urged support for those who 'refuse the Romish ragges...that fight agains that Roman antiChrist'. Such were identified with the works of Belial - 'surp-claithes, cornett cap and tippet, has bein badges of idolaters...the dregges of that Romish...and odious beast'.⁸⁹

In these matters a single voice was to be heard from the Scottish Reformed church, English Puritanism and Genevan or Genevan-influenced sources, and on the question of church government and worship the similarity persisted. It is no great wonder then that 'Cartwright regarded the Church of Scotland as his ideal in practice', and that the English Puritans looked north for support and example.⁹⁰ The Puritan Petition based on these examples, and placed before Parliament in 1584-85, included what Bancroft called a programme for presbyterianism.⁹¹ Bancroft also complained of the close consultation between the Puritans and Scots which was followed by the production of a new edition of the Genevan Prayer Book.⁹² At the same time Traver's *Disciplina Ecclesiae sacra ex Dei Verbo descripta* (1573), which first appeared in Geneva, was produced in English, and in all probability was the basis of the Puritan *Book of Discipline*.⁹³ A similar source and pattern was to be observed in Scotland where the Service Book adopted was 'callit the Ordour of Geneva'.⁹⁴ *The First Book of Discipline* (1560), compiled by Knox and his colleagues swept away so much that had been retained by the English church.⁹⁵ *The Second Book of Discipline* (1578)

was specifically aimed at attacking the Erastian policy of the Regent Morton, which was 'patently modelled on developments in England', and to break free from the persistent pressure of forced compromises concerning ecclesiastical benefices which had plagued the progress of reformation in Scotland from the beginning.⁹⁶

The regulation of the church courts, the order of the ministry (superintendents notwithstanding), the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, and the general policy of the church bore little or no resemblance to the pattern of English episcopalianism.⁹⁷ In all the reforming measures of the Kirk, the model was 'that most godlie Reformed Church and citie in the world, Geneva', and behind that 'the reverent face of the primitive and apostolick Church'.⁹⁸ This was precisely how the English Puritans in 1572 felt that their church ought to be reformed, 'both by the Word of God, and the example of the primitive church, as also of Geneva, France, Scotland and all other churches rightly reformed'.⁹⁹

The relation between the English Puritans and the developing Scottish presbyterianism is something that still requires more careful research and analysis, even though Scott-Pearson drew attention to it in 1925.¹⁰⁰ The importance of the French church, also mentioned in the above statement, should not be overlooked. There were strong similarities between the Scottish pattern of reformation and the French. Knox maintained careful contact with the French church.¹⁰¹ It is clear that if the Scots did not consciously imitate the organization of the French church, 'certainly a common source, possibly emanating from Geneva...provided a pattern and example'.¹⁰²

Knox's efforts, acknowledged by Spottiswoode, 'to conform the government of the church with that which he had seen in Geneva' and elsewhere, were continued by Andrew Melville.¹⁰³ Such efforts were especially spurred on by the compromise of the Leith Convention (1572), which Knox

and the General Assembly severely criticised in their desire for 'a more perfyte ordour...for quhilk thay will prease as occasion sall serve'.¹⁰⁴ Knox had no further occasion to press for anything, but Melville returned from Geneva in 1574 to re-emphasize the Calvinistic distinction between the two kings and two kingdoms (or jurisdictions), which had been explicit in the Scottish Reformation since its inception, and even in its embryonic stage.¹⁰⁵

Melville supported the General Assembly's efforts to resist the adulteration of its Reformed church order by the old hierarchical system. Successive Assembly discussions and resolutions found expression in *The Second Book of Discipline*, the 'Charter of Presbyterianism', and eventually outlawed 'the office of a Bischop, as it is now usit...within this realme'.¹⁰⁶ But it was one thing to ban bishops on paper or even from the church, quite another to ensure their disappearance from the realm when the political and financial benefits they brought to the crown and nobility was calculated to ensure their continuance even as titulars. Violent reaction under the government of Arran led to the suppression of presbyterianism and began a see-saw power struggle between the Genevan-orientated church order introduced by Knox and an English-orientated episcopalianism, imposed by the Crown.¹⁰⁷

The shrewd programme of manipulation and oppression followed by James for the 'revival of episcopacy' was difficult enough, but at least not all his bishops were idle and hostile or ardent anti-Calvinists.¹⁰⁸ Charles, overshadowed by his primate, appointed men stamped with Laudian Arminianism, and when they sought to impose 'Laud's Liturgy' on a long-suffering Scots populace in 1637, patience snapped and brought about a Presbyterian revolt, in which their covenanting outlook played a major role.¹⁰⁹

The momentum of a 'covenanted community' surging forward to reform was generated by the signing of the National Covenant, drawn up chiefly by Alexander Henderson

and Johnston of Wariston.¹¹⁰ It was carried through by the famous Glasgow Assembly (Nov. 1638). Reaction by Charles led directly to the Bishops' Wars and the eventual humiliation of the king by the victorious Scots at Newcastle in 1640.¹¹¹

Unifying Aims

In the meantime the king's attitude in both politics and religion was provoking sympathy for the Scots and reaction at home. Puritan support in Parliament had dramatically increased, largely out of disgust for Laud's unscrupulous work of 'harrying Puritans out of the Church and constitutionalists out of the State', demanding that they 'surrender...soul and conscience, to his direction'.¹¹²

The Scottish rebellion encouraged English protest. Petition followed petition concerning the state of religion in the land. The most famous was the Root and Branch Petition, signed by 15,000 Londoners demanding that the episcopal system of church government 'with all its dependencies, roots and branches be abolished'.¹¹³ No one however was too clear about what should take its place. It was at this time (1641) a group of Scottish commissioners visited London, led by Henderson, and pressed for 'unity of religion and uniformity of church-government as one especial means to conserve peace in His Majesty's dominions'. This unity was to accord with that of the Reformed churches generally, and it expressed the desire for 'one Confession of Faith, one form of Catechism, one Directory for all parts of public worship of God...and one form of church government'.¹¹⁴

The measure of Scottish influence on English policies is always difficult to gauge due to ingrained prejudices, but there was a marked movement towards the Scottish suggestions in the Grand Remonstrance drawn up by the Commons later that year, and reinforced by numerous

petitions, calling for 'a general Synod of the most grave, pious, learned and judicious divines of this island, assisted by some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us, to consider all things necessary for the peace and good government of the church'.¹¹⁵

By June 1642 consultations with the General Assembly had taken place and a Bill calling for an Assembly was passed by both Houses in spite of monarchical rejection. Finally an ordinance was passed agreeing that an Assembly be called 'to settle a government in the Church as may be most agreeable to God's Holy Word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad...and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions'.¹¹⁶

The Assembly convened on 1 July, 1643, and following the opening procedural sessions, including the taking of the famous protestation, it proceeded to a revision of *The Thirty Nine Articles of Religion*.¹¹⁷ The records of these debates indicate the theological expertise of the divines. It is regrettable that their deliberations in this field were so rudely interrupted by the political events which gave pre-eminence again to the question of church government. This issue dominated the Assembly apart from time out to draw up the *Confession of Faith* and the *Catechisms*, something that was accomplished with remarkable readiness, and an even more remarkable degree of unanimity.¹¹⁸ Perhaps the lengthy discussion on the *Articles* helped in this respect.¹¹⁹

It was the arrival of the Scots and the Solemn League and Covenant which re-directed the Assembly's doctrinal debates. Its policy committed all involved to 'endeavour to bring the churches of God in the three Kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, Confession of faith, form of church-government, directory for worship

and catechising'.¹²⁰ A new Confession was envisaged to replace those already in use - namely, *The Scots Confession* (1560), *The Thirty-Nine Articles* (1563), and *The Irish Articles* (1615).¹²¹

According to Baillie 'the best heads that are here', were appointed 'to prepare matter for a joint Confession of Faith'.¹²² Work began on the *Confession* in July, 1644 and nineteen chapters of 'the humble advice of the Assembly of Divines', was presented to Parliament on 25 September, 1646, but the complete work was not ordered to be printed until June, 1648.¹²³ Because of increasing division on the question of church order Parliament never fully authorised the *Confession*. It was left to the Scottish Church and Parliament to approve and ratify it as the 'Publick and Avowed Confession of the Church of Scotland'.¹²⁴

Most accounts of the work of the Assembly tend to concentrate on the church government issues with little if anything to say on the debates surrounding the drawing up of the *Confession*. Works on the *Confession* tend to be expositions of the doctrines with little reference to the history. Perhaps this is understandable since reports of debates on some doctrinal points were frustratingly scant and incomplete. For example, on the covenants there was an insertion on 6 November, 1645, 'Debate upon the Covenants...make report of the whole business of the Covenant on Monday morning'. But there was no report mentioned on Monday, and the only further comment on the subject was, 'Report additional concerning the covenant about the fulness of the administration under the Old Testament debated'.¹²⁵

Work on the *Catechisms* was also proceeding at the same time. Baillie indicated something of the early speed and unanimity of this when he wrote on 26 December, 1644: 'We have near also agreed in private on a draught of Catechise, whereupon, when it comes in publick, we expect

little debate'.¹²⁶ It was, of course, an age of Catechisms. At least twelve or fourteen members of the Assembly had published their own before the Assembly met. The decision to 'prepare a draught of two Catechisms', based on the work done on the *Confession*, followed a strong Calvinistic tradition in catechical works.¹²⁷ So, too, did the official title, *The Grounds and Principles of Religion...*, given to the shorter work when printed.¹²⁸ Again reports of debates are meagre, and once more the work was never fully ratified by Parliament. Only the *Shorter Catechism*, was ordered to be printed by both Houses.¹²⁹ It was again left to the Scots to adopt fully these further standards of intended uniformity.¹³⁰

Any proper assessment of the influence of Continental Reformed churches on the covenantal thought of English Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism must necessarily await consideration of the content of their theology. But the history of the development and growth of church life and the various issues affecting the ecclesiastical structures of the period do reveal something of the general orientation of their thinking. In crises and areas of confusion and debate the tendency was to look for guidance mainly to the Swiss churches. Geneva, or churches strongly influenced by the pattern and polity of Calvin's kirk provided the chief inspiration for continuing reform in both England and Scotland.¹³¹ It would be surprising indeed if a similar orientation and direction was not to be found in their theological development. It would be even more surprising if their theology was found to depart so rapidly and drastically from that of the early Reformers as has been alleged. To this matter attention must now be turned.

NOTES: Chapter One

1 The chief Scottish commissioners were Robert Baillie (1599-1662), George Gillespie (1613-1648), Alexander Henderson (1583-1646), and Samuel Rutherford (c1600-1661).

2 *The Confession of Faith, The Larger Catechism, and The Shorter Catechism*, are the theological documents of the Assembly. *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God, The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government and of the Ordination of Ministers*, and *The Directory for Family Worship*, are the other chief documents.

3 W.A. Curtis, *A History of Creeds and Confessions*, (Edinburgh, 1911), 275.

4 J. De Witt, 'The Place of the Westminster Assembly in Modern History', *PRR*, 35. (1898), 369.

5 J.B. Marsden, *The History of the Later Puritans*, (London, 1872), 86.

6 P.Y. De Jong, *The Covenant Idea in New England Theology 1620-1847*, (Grand Rapids, 1945), 49.

7 P.Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. (New York, 1881), 1.788, 805ff.

8 B.B. Warfield, *The Significance of the Westminster Standards as a Creed*, (New York, 1898); see also F.A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live*, (New Jersey, 1976), 109-110.

10 P. Miller, *The New England Mind - The Seventeenth Century*, (New York, 1939), 394.

11 The most recent study is R.S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord*, (Edinburgh, 1985). But as the sub-title indicates, it concentrates on 'Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly and the "Grand Debate"'. J.B. Rogers has written on *Scripture and the Westminster Confession*, (Kampen, 1966). The most recent overall view is J.H. Leith, *Assembly at Westminster: Reformed Theology in the Making*, (Atlanta, 1978). J.R. De Witt's *Jus Divinum*, (Kampen, 1969), is also on the question of church government. G.S. Hendry, *The Westminster Confession for Today*, (London, 1960), has attempted a contemporary interpretation of the *Confession*. Apart from these and a number of articles and essays from time to time, reliance must be placed on older works.

12 Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.728.

13 See G. Burnet, *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1865); W. Cobbett, *A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland*, 2 vols. (London, 1892); G. Constant, *The*

Reformation in England, 2 vols. (London, 1932-1942); F.M. Powicke, *The Reformation in England*, (London, 1941); G. Rupp, *The English Protestant Tradition*, (Cambridge, 1949); A.G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, (London, 1964); *Reformation Studies*, (London, 1982); T.H.L. Parker, *English Reformers*, LCC XXVI, (London, 1966); T.M. Parker, *The English Reformation to 1558*, (Oxford, 1966); P. Lake and M. Dowling, eds. *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth Century England*, (London, 1987).

14 See W. Bradshawe, *English Puritanisme*, (London, 1640); D. Neal, *The History of the Puritans*, 4 vols. (London, 1731-1738); [I. Maddox], *A Vindication of the Government, Doctrine and Worship of the Church of England Established in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth Against the Injurious Reflections of Mr. Neal in his late History of the Puritans*, (London, 1733); Z. Gray, *An Impartial Examination of Mr. Daniel Neal's History of the Puritans*, 3 vols. (London, 1736-1739); J.B. Marsden, *History of the Early Puritans*, (London, 1850), 1-4; J. Heron, *A Short History of Puritanism*, (Edinburgh, 1908), 8; W. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, (New York, 1938), 3ff; A.S.P. Woodhouse, *Puritanism and Liberty*, (London, 1938), 35-37; M.M. Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, (Chicago, 1939); C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England*, (London, 1964), ch.1; B. Hall, 'Puritanism: The Problem of Definition', *Studies of Church History*, vol.2, ed. G.I. Cuming, (London, 1965), 283-296; P. Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, (London, 1967), 13, 22-28, 60-61; L.J. Trinterud, ed. *Elizabethan Puritanism*, (New York, 1971), 3-11.

15 H. Parker, *A Discourse Concerning Puritans: A Vindication of those who unjustly suffer by the mistake, abuse, and misapplication of that name*, ([London], 1641), quoted by Hall, *op.cit.*, 285.

16 E. Calamy, *The Non-Conformists Memorial*, 3 vols. ed. S. Palmer, (London, 1802), 1.5.

17 On Bullinger see *Zurich Letters*, 2 vols. (Cambridge,), 1. passim; on Calvin see correspondence with Cranmer in *Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, 2 vols. ed. H. Robinson, (Cambridge, 1846-87), 1.227; 2.608-609; 713, but particularly the letter to King Edward VI: 'It is true, sire, that there are certain things indifferent which we may lawfully bear with. But we must always observe this rule, that there must be sobriety and moderation in ceremonies, so that the light of the gospel be not obscured, as though we were still under the shadow of the law' (*Ibid.*, 2.709). The difficulty with Calvin's position here was that it was subjected to different interpretations by conformists and non-conformists alike who regarded themselves as Calvinists.

18 J. Strype, *Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1812), 1.305. For account see J. Hooper, *Early Writings*, ed. S. Carr, (Cambridge, 1843), 479, 534, 554, etc.; Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, (Oxford, 1822), 2.350ff; *Original Letters*, 1.87; 2.410, 426, 466, 468, 566-567, 571, 573, 585, 665, 673, 674-676; *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, (Cambridge, 1846), 428-431.

19 W. Fuller, 'Booke to the Queene', *Second Parte of a Register*, 2 vols. ed. A. Peel, (Cambridge, 1915), 2.52; see also A.F. Mitchell, *The Westminster Assembly: Its History and Standards*, (London, 1883), 29-50.

20 [W. Whittingham], *A Brief Discourse of the Troubles at Frankfort, 1554-1558 AD*, ed. E. Arbor, (London, 1909); J. Knox, 'A Brief Discourse of the Troubles at Frankfort 1575', *The Works of John Knox*, 6 vols. ed. D. Laing, (Edinburgh, 1895), 4.1-68; C.H. Garrett, *The Marian Exiles*, (Cambridge, 1938), 41. The latter says that 119 theological students and 67 clergy returned after Mary's death.

21 Leith, *op.cit.*, 85f; Mitchell, *op.cit.* 25ff.

22 De Witt, *op.cit.*, 376-377.

23 Collinson, *op.cit.*, 46.

24 J. à Lasco, *Opera*, 2 vols. ed. A. Kuyper, (Amsterdam, 1866), 2.48-50, 55-56; *Original Letters*, 2.567-568.

25 *Ibid.*, 2.10.

26 'Injunctions' (1559), in Neal, *History*, (1837 ed.), 1.104. (All references taken from this edition.)

27 Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1821), 1.181ff; see also H.N. Birt, *The Elizabethan Religious Settlement: A Study of Contemporary Documents*, (London, 1907).

28 Neal, *History*, 1.98; J.B. Marsden, *The History of the Early Puritans*, (London, 1850), 44-45.

29 B.J. Kidd, *History of the Counter Reformation*, (London, 1933), 9.

30 eg. E. Grindal, *The Remains of Edmund Grindal D.D.*, (Cambridge, 1843), 203, 207; *Zurich Letters*, 1.169, 177, etc.; see also 'The Life and Death of William Whittingham', in P. Lorimer, *John Knox and the Church of England*, (London, 1875), app. 303-317 esp. 311. On Bullinger's influence see D.J. Keep, 'Henry Bullinger and the Elizabethan Church'. PHD Thesis (Sheffield University, 1970).

31 *Zurich Letters*, 1.175-176; 2.118-119, 161-162; see Marsden, *Early Puritans*, 48f.

32 Collinson, *William Grindal: The Struggle for a Reformed Church*, (London, 1979), 152; Strype, *The Life and Acts of Edmund Grindal*, (Oxford, 1821), 42-48.

33 A.F Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism 1535-1603*, (Cambridge, 1925), 19; Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 84.

34 Lorimer, *op.cit.*, 300.

35 T. Beza, in *Zurich Letters*, 2.128-135, 153-154; cf. W.H. Frere and C.E. Douglas, eds. *Puritan Manifestoes*, (London, 1907), 43-55; Arbor, ed. *Troubles at Frankfort*, 239-250. For discussion of Genevan influence and the attitudes of Beza and Calvin, see Collinson, *op.cit.*, 81-83, 109-110; T. Witheroe, 'Why did the Reformers Reject Episcopacy', *BFER*, 27. (1878), 657-677; J. Pannier, 'Calvin et l'épiscopat. L'épiscopat élément organique de l'Eglise dans le calvinisme intégral', *RHPR*, 6. (1926), 305-335, 434-470; J.L. Ainslie, *The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches*, (Edinburgh, 1943); J.T. McNeill, 'The Doctrine of the Ministry in Reformed Theology', *CH*, 12. (1943), 77-97. Beza was not just drawing final and radical conclusions from what was implicit in Calvin's teaching. He appears to be following Calvin's attitude to the letter. Calvin regarded episcopacy as such as non-existent in the Word of God - 'arisen from human custom; it is not at all supported by the authority of scripture' (*Com.on Phil.* 1:1; cf. *Inst.*, IV.4.4; IV.6.10). He saw it as something that evolved in the early church 'by human agreement, to meet the need of the times' (*Inst.*, IV.4.2). For this reason he was prepared to tolerate it provided it was subject to God's word and kept free from secularism, abuses, lordship, and tyranny (*Inst.*, IV.4-12). But where any of these arose, he would not tolerate it for a moment, but reform it out of existence as he did in Geneva (see 'On Necessity of Reforming the Church' (1544), *CR*, 24.469ff). This was Beza's attitude. In Scotland where reform could progress without episcopacy, and *pseudepiscopi* was causing problems, he called for its extinction ('Letter to Knox' 1572 in Knox, *Works*, 6.613-615). In England while Cranmer and Grindal were assuring him of reform according to the Word, he was tolerant of the episcopate, but when he heard rumours of abuses, his attitude correspondingly hardened.

36 Beza, in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 43-45.

37 E. Sandys, *Zurich Letters*, 1.294-296.

38 Elizabeth I, in *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, eds. J. Bruce and T. Perowne, (Cambridge, 1853), 386; also Strype, *Parker*, 2.app.24.

39 The *Puritan Book of Discipline* defines Presbytery as 'Praesbyterium in singulis ecclesijs constituendum est, quod est consessus et quasi senatus presbyterorum', which

is translated in the *Directory of Church Government 1644/45* 'Further in every particular church there ought to be a Presbytery, which is a consistory, and as it were a senate of elders'. See Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 74-77; P. Lake, 'Presbyterianism: The Idea of a National Church and the Argument from Divine Right', *Protestantism and the National Church*, 193-224 esp. 195.

40 On Travers see S.J. Knox, *Walter Travers: Paragon of Elizabethan Puritanism*, (London, 1962). Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 75f, shows that Field was not present at Wandsworth and suggests that John Edwin, Nicholas Crane and John Smith were more likely leaders. Cf. W.A. Shaw, 'English Presbyterianism', *EHR*, 3. (1888), 655-667; P. Lorimer, 'The Presbytery of Wandsworth Erected in 1572', *BFER*, 21. (1872), 758-772.

41 Neal, *History*, vol.1, and B. Brook, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Thomas Cartwright*, (London, 1845) offer sympathetic treatment. But Anglo-Catholic hostility to Cartwright is found in P. Heylen, *Ecclesia Restaurata. Or The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1848); *Aerius Redivivus or The History of the Presbyterians*, ed. H. Heylen, (London, 1670), and G. Paule, 'Life of Archbishop Whitgift' (1612), *Ecclesiastical Biography: or The Lives of Eminent Men connected with the History of Religion in England from the Commencement of the Reformation to the Revolution*, 6 vols. ed. C. Wordsworth, (London, 1818). vol.4. Other works by and about Whitgift contain much on Cartwright. Another extreme view of him as a 'mercenary-minded hypocrite' is M. Sutcliffe, *An Examination of M. Thomas Cartwright's late Apologie*, (London, 1596); More fair-minded accounts are in: Marsden, *Early Puritans*; S. Clarke, 'Lives of Sundry Modern Divines, Famous in their Generation for Learning and Piety and Most of them great sufferers in the Cause of Christ', appended to *A General Martyrologie, containing a Collection of all the greatest persecutions*, (London, 1651); *English Puritan Divines in the Reigy of Queen Elizabeth: Cartwright and his Contemporaries*, (London, 1848); and the modern work by Scott Pearson, *op.cit.* A useful source book is *Cartwrightiana*, ENCT 1, eds. A. Peel and L.H. Carlson, (London, 1951). See also J. Venn, ed. *Grace Book A. Containing the Records of the University of Cambridge for the Years 1542-1589*, (Cambridge, 1910); 'Cartwright and Melville at the University of Geneva, 1569-1574', *AHR*, 5. (1899), 284-290; Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1824), vol.2.

42 T.Cranmer, *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticum*, ed. E. Cardwell, (Oxford, 1850). This appeal was made by Wm. Stockland and Th. Norton (translator of Calvin's *Institutes*) in April 1571, and shows the importance of doctrinal as well as practical issues in the early Puritan debates. See also Neal, *History*, 1.175f; J.F. Neale,

'Parliament and the Articles of Religion, 1571', *EHR*, 67. (1952), 510-521. The *Admonitions* can be found in *Puritan Manifestoes*, 19ff.

43 Cartwright responded to Whitgift's *Answer to the Admonition*, with *A Replie to the Answer*. Whitgift then wrote *A Defense of the Answer to the Admonition*, and Cartwright penned a *Seconde Replie*. The argument can be followed in *The Works of Whitgift*, 3 vols. ed. J. Ayre, (Cambridge, 1851-53), vol.1. See also *Puritan Manifestoes*, 22-33 etc.; Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 433; Collinson, *op.cit.*, 121.

44 There is much confusion about the dates of Cartwright's movements; eg. cf. *OXDCC*, 242, and Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 8-9, 167-168. We follow the latter.

45 Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 409.

46 Published together in London 1616. Catechetical manuals were legion prior to the Assembly. See A.F. Mitchell, *Catechisms of the Second Reformation*, ix-x, lxxv-xci. Mitchell considers Cartwright's work as having some influence (xix, xxiii). See also D. MacAlister, *The English Authors of the Shorter Catechism*, (Glasgow, 1925).

47 When this document was drawn up is uncertain. Bancroft cited it in connexion with Wandsworth in his *Dangerous Positions*, (1593). Travers was almost certainly one of the authors, if not the chief one. He had already published his *Ecclesiastica, Disciplina*, which was translated as *A Full and Plaine declaration of Ecclesiastical Discipline* (1574). See E.D. Morris, *Theology of the Westminster Symbols*, (Columbus, 1900), 45.

48 Shaw, 'English Presbyterianism', 667.

49 MacAlister, *op.cit.*, 15.

50 Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, began his account around the 1570's.

51 G. Yule, 'Theological Developments in Elizabethan Puritanism', *JRH*, 1. (1960), 16-25. The quotation is to be found in Whitgift, *Works*, 1.110. Yule also posits a strong Calvin versus Calvinism dichotomy, but he wants to allow the Elizabethan Puritans, apart from their theology of separation, in on Calvin's side! The later Puritans certainly took their religion seriously, if that can be regarded as 'moral austerity', but breathing through their writings is also a spirit of 'liberty and joy'. The old Puritan kill-joy image is long overdue a decent burial! See S.B. Ferguson, 'The Teaching of the Confession', in *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*, ed. A.I.C. Heron, (Edinburgh, 1982), 38; G. Rupp, 'A Devotion of Rapture in English Puritanism', in *Reformation Conformity and Dissent*, ed. R.B. Knox, (London, 1977), 115-131.

52 *Ibid.*, 24.

53 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*, (New York, 1955), 4; G. Davis, 'Arminianism versus Puritan in England ca.1620-1640', *Huntingdon Library Bulletin*, 5. (1934), 151-179. This article gives various reasons for the growing unpopularity of episcopacy during these years, but emphasizes that the main subject of contention between Puritans and episcopalians was the *jure divino* claim for the calling of the bishops (pp.160-161).

54 De Witt, *op.cit.*, 27-31.

55 Paul, *op.cit.*, 29 n.51; 30 n.56. See also M.W. Dewar, 'How Far is the Westminster Assembly of Divines an Expression of 17th Century Anglican Theology?' PhD Thesis (Queen's University, Belfast, 1960).

56 De Witt, *op.cit.*, 31; also Haller, *Rise of Puritanism*, 11ff.

57 Rogers, *op.cit.*, 123-124; E.W. Kirby, 'The English Presbyterians in the Westminster Assembly', *CH*, 23. (1964), 418-428.

58 Haller, *Liberty and Reformation*, 104-105.

59 Marsden, *Early Puritans*, 325; also Mitchell, *History*, 60ff.

60 G.R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason: A Study of Changes in Religious Thought within the Church of England 1660-1700*, (Cambridge, 1950), 14.

61 Whitgift, *Works*, passim, esp. 3.632-634; Calvin, *Articuli de Praedestinatione*, *CR*, 37.713-714.

62 Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.523-525. Note the comparison with Calvin's *Articuli de Praedestinatione*, *CR*, 37.713-714. For historical background see Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.658-662; Curtis, *History of Creeds*, 185-187.

63 H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge*, (Cambridge, 1958), 323ff.

64 C.D. Cremeans, *The Reception of Calvinist Thought in England*, (Urbana, 1949), 71-74; see also Dewar, *op.cit.*, 35-40, who points out that the original draft of the *Articles* was 'even more *ad mentem Calvinii*'.

65 J.F.H. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of their Opposition 1558-1640*, (London, 1964), 64; also Dewar, *op.cit.*, 9-104 who considers leading figures first in a Puritan versus Episcopacy context, and then in a Calvinist versus Arminian one.

66 D.D. Wallace, *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology 1525-1695*, (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), xii.

67 Overall was Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (1595-1607) and later became Bishop of Norwich. He was accused of teaching universal atonement. Andrewes became Master of Pembroke Hall (1589), until raised to the episcopate in 1605. He was a favourite of James VI and played a leading role in the Hampton Court Conference. For further details see P.A. Wesley, *Launcelot Andrews 1555-1626*, (London, 1958), 43-44; Porter, *op.cit.*, 157 etc.; *OXDCC*, 999, 50.

68 Wallace, *op.cit.*, 65-78 esp.68.

69 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, 434.

70 Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.659; Fuller, *University of Cambridge*, 150-151, 125 (sic.152)-153; C. Hardwick, *History of the Articles of Religion*, (London, 1876), 165-171; Porter, *op.cit.*, 344-363, 376-390; Wallace, *op.cit.*, 66-68, 72-73, 126; *OXDCC*, 133.

71 On Arminius see *The Works of James Arminius D.D.*, 3 vols. eds. J. and W. Nichols, (London, 1825-1875); J. Nichols, *Calvinism and Arminianism Compared in their Principles and Theology*, 2 vols. (London, 1829); J.L. Girardeau, *Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism Compared*, (Columbia, 1890); A.J.G. Hawes, 'Arminius and His Teaching', *CQR*, 97. (1923), 132-146; A.W. Harrison, *Arminianism*, (London, 1937); C. Bangs, 'Arminius and the Reformation', *CH*, 30. 1961; *Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation*, (Nashville, 1971); A. Sell, *The Great Debate*, (Worthing, 1982); C.A. Beckwith, 'Arminius', *NSHE*, 1.296-298; H.C. Rogge, *RE*, 2.103-105. On Cameron and Amyraut see *Infra*, 1.19-191 n.154.

72 Laud was educated at Oxford, becoming president of St. John's College in 1611, and chancellor of the University in 1629. He was raised to the Primacy in 1633 and began to implement his reform programmes. Growing hostility led to his impeachment by the Long Parliament and to his imprisonment and trial. He was executed on 10 January, 1645. See *The Works of Archbishop Laud*, 7 vols. eds. W. Scott and J. Bliss, (Oxford, 1847-1860). Numerous accounts of his life are available. The writing of Laud's Liturgy has been ascribed to Bp. Wedderburn by G. Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, (Edinburgh, 1954), 49-55, 81-82.

73 Laud, *Reply to Lord Saye and Sele*, quoted in Cragg, *op.cit.*, 15 n.2. Not all who favoured episcopacy and liturgical reforms could be branded Arminians, but this was usually the case. Political events forced those who were otherwise ambivalent to take sides (Cragg, *Ibid.*, 16). On Laud's Arminian outlook, see also J. Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, (London, 1659), 61-62.

74 Though short-lived and mainly in exile, Fenner's writings and influence are vitally important in the flow of Reformed theology. (See *Infra*, 2.168ff, 187 n.6).

75 Perkins will be considered in detail later (*Infra*, 2.190-237). Ames, tutored by Perkins, left Cambridge in 1610, eventually moving to Holland where he became Professor of Theology at Franeker in 1622. He was widely respected throughout Europe and his influence was prominent in the New England churches. His most important works were *Medulla S.S. Theologicae*, (Amsterdam, 1623), and *De Conscientia et eius iure vel casibus* (Amsterdam, 1630). The translations were *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, Drawn out of the holy Scriptures*, (London, 1643), and *Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof*, (London, 1643).

76 On Laud's Arminianism see Marsden, *Early Puritans*, 348-356, and for an estimation of his opponents see Mitchell, *History*, 116ff. See also Davis, *op.cit.*; and Dewar, *op.cit.*, 71-104.

77 See Paul, *op.cit.*, 20ff; P. Doyle, 'Church and State and the *Jure divino* theory of Episcopacy in the English Church', *CQR*, 109. (1929-30), 239-261; Mitchell, *History*, 63f; Davis, *op.cit.*, 160f; Dewar, *op.cit.*, 59-63.

78 Neal, *History*, 2.310ff esp.323.

79 Davis, *op.cit.*, 179 'They...treated Arminianism and Popery as synonomous terms or implied that the one inevitably led to the other'.

80 Lorimer, *op.cit.*; Mitchell, *History*, 23f.

81 Knox, *Works*, 4.11; à Lasco, *Opera*, 2.10, 163.

82 *Ibid.*, 3.80.

83 Strype, *Eccl. Memorials*, 2.400; Knox, *Works*, 3.81-86.

84 Knox, *Works*, 4.11, 17.

85 *Ibid.*, 4.32-33, 44.

86 *Ibid.*, 4.36, 42.

87 Calvin, *Epistolae et Responsae* 15 Nov. 1555 in Knox, *Works*, 4.52; cf.59; cf. CR, 15.337-344, 523-524, 551-554, 776-781.

88 Knox, *Works*, 6.12; cf. 5.515.

89 *BUK*, 1.85-88. G. Yule, 'Continental Patterns and the Reformation in England and Scotland', *SJT*, 22. (1969), 317, uses the signature on this letter - 'Your loving brethren and preacher in Christ Jesus' - in an attempt to demonstrate a difference of attitude between the 1600 General Assembly which described episcopacy as 'antichristian' and 'repugnant to the Word of God'. The full quote is 'Antichristian and Anglican episcopall digniteis, offices, places, titles and all ecclesiasticall

prelacies, are flatt repugnant to the Word of God...' (D. Calderwood, *History of the Kirk of Scotland*, 8 vols. ed. T. Thomson, (Edinburgh, 1842-49), 6.3). The 'Antichristian' more likely refers to Rome in this statement. Yule does not consider the content of the 1566 letter. Its language is a lot less flattering regarding episcopal trappings. Content rather than formal signatures would show the true attitude. Secondly it was a very different episcopal attitude that was involved in 1600. In 1566 the General Assembly was writing to bishops with Puritan sympathies. There were very strong hopes for further reformation in the English Church then. The later situation was one where episcopacy was being tyrannically imposed upon the Scottish Church. Furthermore, Yule overlooks the fact that the names, titles and offices etc. of episcopacy had already been declared 'slanderous and offensive' by the General Assembly long before 1600 (see *BUK*, 1.246).

90 Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, vii; cf. 250, 415, 418; Knox, *Works*, 4.91-94; and *The Marprelate Tracts*, ed. W. Pierce, (London, 1911), 236.

91 R. Bancroft, *A Survey of the Pretended Holy Discipline*, (London, 1593), 66.

92 Bancroft, *Daungerous Positions and Proceedings...under pretence of Reformation, and for the Presbyteriall Discipline*, (London, 1593), 74.

93 Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, 252f; also Mitchell, *History*, 52, who mentions how the provisions of this book for synods at both provincial and national level, and 'presbyterians, greater and lesser', had been subscribed to by about five hundred Puritans who had begun to put it into practise in *ecclesiola in ecclesia*.

94 Knox, *Works*, 2.210; 4.139-214; see J.K. Cameron, ed. *The First Book of Discipline*, (Edinburgh, 1972), 131.

95 Cameron, ed. *op.cit.* Also on the effect of this work see J. Kirk, '"The Polities of the Best Reformed Kirks": Scottish Achievements and English Aspirations in Church Government after the Reformation', *SHR*, 59. (1980), 26-27.

96 J. Kirk, ed. *The Second Book of Discipline*, (Edinburgh, 1980), 38-42 esp.41; cf. 13ff, 122-124.

97 For discussion of the position of superintendents in the post-Reformation church see Kirk, *op.cit.*, 74-84; 'The Development of the Melvillian Movement in the late Sixteenth-Century Scotland'. PhD Thesis (Edinburgh University, 1972), 33-53; J.K. Cameron, *op.cit.*, 49-54, 115-128; G. Donaldson, 'The Scottish Episcopate at the Reformation', *EHR*, 60. (1945), 349-364; '"The Examples of Denmark" in the Scottish Reformation', *SHR*, 27. (1948), 57-64; 'The Polity of the Scottish Church 1560-1600', *RSCHS*, 11. (1955), 212-226; *The Scottish Reformation*, (Cambridge, 1960), 81f, 184-185, 199-201; *Scotland: Church and Nation*

through Sixteen Centuries, (Edinburgh, 1960), 56-59; D.G. Mullen, *Episcopacy in Scotland: The History of an Idea 1560-1638*, (Edinburgh, 1986).

98 Knox, *Works*, 2.16, 264; 5.211f; 6.16; cf. 1.306, 333.

99 *Puritan Manifestoes*, 19; *Second Parte of a Register*, 1.18. A similar statement at the same time occurs in the *BUK*, 1.107; cf. 238, 144-249.

100 Scott Pearson, *op.cit.*, viii. Throughout his book Scott Pearson draws attention to numerous points of mutual interest, eg. the Vestiarian controversy (18-19), the establishing of Presbyterianism (76, 77, 321, 340); Cartwright's unaccepted call to St. Mary's College, St. Andrew's (194), Scottish ministers in exile in England (250-252, 262-263, 339, 409); influence on the Book of Discipline (252-253, 276, 339-344, 409); Scottish sympathy with suffering Puritans (321, 339-340, 343), and vice-versa (262-263); and the testimony of the Scots Commissioners at the Assembly (418).

101 Knox, *Works*, 1.253-254, 232, 269, 272; 2.15, 137; 4.71, 245, 275, 286, 347; 6.11, 20, 21.

102 Kirk, 'Melvillian Movement', 64, 672-676.

103 J. Spottiswoode, *The History of the Church of Scotland*, 3 vols. ed. M. Russell, (Edinburgh, 1851-56), 1.371.

104 *BUK*, 1.246. Knox's letter to the General Assembly in 1572 regarding the Leith Settlement (*Works*, 6.620-622) has been interpreted to mean that Knox was happy with the Settlement and that his 'farewell advice to the Church of Scotland was that it should have bishops' (Donaldson, *Scottish Reformation*, 170; 'Scottish Episcopate', 349-364; W.C. Dickinson, ed. *History of the Reformation in Scotland*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1949), xxxv n.1). This is not convincing. Knox was rather seeking clarification of measures that had been forced upon the church by the issue of benefices, and which he saw as being grossly violated by the bishops and their nominators. The measures were in any case only 'ane interim, until farder and more perfyte ordour be obtained' (*BUK*, 1.246).

105 In 1548 Henry Balnaves had affirmed that ecclesiastical power lay 'in the office of the administration of the Word of God', while the prince's jurisdiction was over the people 'in the civil ordinance' (Knox, *Works*, 3.526-529). In May, 1559 a letter from the 'Professors of Christ's Evangel' to Mary of Guise, the Queen Regent, reminded her that it is the government of 'temporall kingdomes' only that is committed to earthly princes, and that they are not to overstep the limits of their office by attempting to usurp authority in Christ's kingdom, because 'the government of the spirituall and hevinlie Kingdome, the Kirk of God...[God] has onlie

committit to his sone Christ, for he is the heid thairof, all uthair ar her memberis under him' (*The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 5 vols. Aberdeen, 1841-52, 4.89). Andrew Melville's famous rebuke of James VI is no more than a re-emphasis of this letter (see J. Melville, *Autobiography and Diary*, ed. R. Pitcairn, (Edinburgh, 1842), 325,370), and the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate and that of the offices of the church as outlined in *The First Book of Discipline* (see Cameron, ed. *op.cit.*, 165-174). All this follows the footsteps of Calvin (see *Inst.*, IV, and J.T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, (New York, 1954), 80ff), and contrasts sharply with the single sovereignty concept of the English Church advocated by Cranmer (*Works*, 2.116ff), Whitgift (*Works*, 1.21-22,472; 2.246,264; 3.176), and Hooker (*Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, 7.15.3; 8.1.7. For a full discussion of this issue see J. Kirk, 'Melvillian Movement', 74-134, and for a contrary view see W.C. Dickinson, *Andrew Lang, John Knox and Scottish Presbyterianism*, (Edinburgh, 1952), 15. For a discussion of the theory in early Puritanism see Scott Pearson, *Church and State: Political Aspects of Sixteenth-Century Puritanism*, (Cambridge, 1928), 9-40.

106 *BUK*, 2.453; see also 1.331f, 338-340, 342-343, 351-363, 368-372, 391.

107 eg. The Black Acts (1584). see *Acts of the Parliaments in Scotland*, 12 vols. eds. T. Thomson and C. Innes, (Edinburgh, 1814-1875), 3.292-293; Calderwood, *History*, 4.

108 J. Melville, *Diary*, 372; W.R. Foster, *The Church Before the Covenants*, (Edinburgh, 1967), 13. Even Foster's sympathetic account makes grim reading. See also Calderwood, *History*, 6.530-531; Spottiswoode, *History*, 3.241, for varying accounts of James policy, and T. McCrie, *The Life of Andrew Melville*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1819), 2.293,381 etc.

109 On 'Laud's Liturgy' see Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637*, (Edinburgh, 1954), 49-53, 81-82; R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, 2 vols. ed. D. Laing, (Edinburgh, 1841), 1.421f. For a useful article on the relation of the covenant to the revolutionary mood of the Scots see S.A. Burrell, 'The Apocalyptic Vision of the Early Covenanters', *SHR*, 43. (1964), 1-24. The validity of Burrell's 'apocalyptic' interpretation in this period is open to doubt. See also G.D. Henderson, *The Burning Bush*, (Edinburgh, 1957), 61-74; A.H. Williamson, *Scottish National Consciousness in the Age of James VI: The Apocalypse, the Union and the Shaping of Scotland's Public Culture*, (Edinburgh, 1979).

110 Henderson was an ecclesiastical statesman of the first order. Johnston was a skilled Edinburgh lawyer and a

devout churchman. On Henderson see J. Aiton, *The Life and Times of Alexander Henderson*, (Edinburgh, 1836); T. McCrie and T. Thomson, *Lives of Alexander Henderson and James Guthrie*, (Edinburgh, 1846); G.W. Thomson, *Alexander Henderson: A Biography*, (1883); R.L. Orr, *Alexander Henderson: Churchman and Statesman*, (London, 1919). On Johnston, the *Diaries* are the main source of information: *Diary...1639*, ed. G.M. Paul, (Edinburgh, 1896); *Diary...1632-9*, ed. G.M. Paul, (Edinburgh, 1911); *Diary...1650-4*, ed. D.H. Fleming, (Edinburgh, 1919); *Diary...1655-60*, ed. J.D. Ogilvie, (Edinburgh, 1940). See also G.M. Forrester, 'Archibald Johnston of Wariston, especially as in his Diaries', *RSCHS*, 9. (1947), 127-141.

111 On the Assemblies of this period see *The Principal Acts of the Solemne Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland indicted by the Kings Majestie and convened in Glasgow the XXI November 1638*, 12-13, 19-30; and *The Principal Acts of Foure Generall Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland Holden at Edinburgh 1639, at Aberdeene 1640, at St. Andrews and Edinburgh 1641 and at St. Andrews 1642*, (Edinburgh, 1642), 7-11, 13-14. For accounts of the Bishops Wars: C.V. Wedgewood, *The King's Peace 1637-1641*, (London, 1974), 246-282, 328-361; D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-1644*, (Newton Abbott 1973); D. Matthews, *Scotland Under Charles I*, (London, 1955).

112 Mitchell, *History*, 83; H. Hallam, *Constitutional History of England*, 3 vols. (London, 1855), 2.39ff.

113 *Ibid.*, 97; Baillie, *Letters and Journal*, 1.273f; B.B. Warfield, 'The Westminster Assembly and Its Work', *PTR*, 6. (1908), 181; *OXDCC*, 1181.

114 From the 'Kings Pamphlets' in the British Museum E.157.2, cited by Mitchell, *History*, 102-103 n.1.

115 'Kings Pamphlets', E.197; E.206.14; E.170 in Mitchell, *History*, 105; J. Forster, *The Debates on the Grand Remonstrance, November and December 1641 with an Introductory Essay*, (London, 1860).

116 'An Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, for the calling of an Assembly of learned and godly Divines...June 12, 1643', in *The Confession of Faith*, (1976 ed.), 11.

117 Main sources on the Assembly are: A.F. Mitchell and J. Struthers, eds. *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines while engaged in Preparing their Directory for Church Government, Confession of Faith, and Catechisms (November 1644 to March 1649)*, (Edinburgh, 1874). (The original MSS Minutes are in Dr. William's Library, London, but transcripts of the originals made by M.E. Thompson and J. Struthers are in New College Library, Edinburgh, MSS X14/a.1/3); J. Lightfoot, *The Whole Works of John Lightfoot D.D.*, 13 vols. ed. J.R. Pitman, (London,

1822-25), vol. 13; G. Gillespie, *Notes of debates and proceedings of the Assembly of Divines and other Commissioners at Westminster, Feb. 1649 to January 1645*, (Edinburgh, 1846); Baillie, *Letters and Journals; Journals of the House of Commons*, vols. 3-6, (15 Mar. 1642 - 14 Aug. 1651); *Journals of the House of Lords*, vols. 5-10, (1642-1648). See also J.R. McKay, 'The Promise and Vow Taken by Members of the Westminster Assembly', *PTR*, 8. (1910), 389-400. For *Thirty-nine Articles*, see Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.611-651, 754-756; 3.486-516; Neal, *History*, 3.app.viii.519-524; E.T. Green, *The Thirty-Nine Articles and the Age of Reformation*, (London, 1896), 343-348.

118 It is not possible to agree with K.G. Rendall, 'Samuel Rutherford: The Man and His Ministry'. MA Thesis (Durham University, 1981), that the compilation of the *Confession* 'proved to be a protracted and wearisome task'. Protracted it may have been due to the interruptions of Parliament, but the task itself was addressed with efficiency and alacrity. For Baillie's comments on drawing up the *Confession*, see *Journal*, 2.325-326, 336, 344, 377; 3.11f. The best historical accounts relating to the *Confession*, are: Mitchell, *History*, 325-441; W.A. Shaw, *History of the English Church during the Civil War and under the Commonwealth 1640-1660*, 2 vols. (London, 1900); and Warfield, *op.cit.*; 'The Making of the Westminster Confession, and Especially Its Chapter on the Decree of God', *PRR*, 12. (1901), 226-283.

119 Mitchell, *History*, 146; Shaw, *History of the English Church*, 1.147-148.

120 'Solemn League and Covenant', in *The Confession of Faith*, (1976 ed.) 358-359.

121 On *Scots Confession* see: G.D. Henderson, ed. *The Scots Confession 1560*, (Edinburgh, 1960); Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.680-685; 3.437-485. On *Thirty-nine Articles* see n.108 above. On *The Irish Articles*, see Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.662, 697, 762; 3.526-544; Ussher, *Works*, 1.xxxi-1, 44-49, 166, 176-177; 2.465; 3.xii.

122 Baillie, *Journal*, 2.232. For a list of the 'best heads' see Mitchell, *Minutes*, lxxxvi-lxxxvii; Lightfoot, *Works*, 13.303-305, 308.

123 For reports of progress see *Minutes*, 110-114; 129-131, 150-151, 161-167, 171, 173, 192; 290, 308-309, 415-416; Baillie, *Journal*, 2.403; 3.2; *Journal of House of Commons*, 4.677, 739; 5.502, 608.

124 *The Principall Acts of the General Assembly convened at Edinburgh...in the year 1647*, (Edinburgh, 1647), 19-20; *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 6. pt.2. 161. The relevant section reads: 'They doe enact ordane and declare...that hee [i.e. the king] shall for himself and his successors consent and agree to acts of parlement

enjoying the Solemne League and Covenant and fullie establishing presbiterial government the Directorie of worships Confession of faith and Catechismes as they are approvyn by the Generall Assemblie of his Kirk and parlement of this kingdom'. See also *The Confession of Faith*, (1976 ed.), 14-17.

125 *Minutes*, 161, 163-164.

126 Baillie, *Journal*, 2.248. On the committee see *Minutes*, 13; Lightfoot, *Works*, 13.338; Baillie, *Journal*, 2.140.

127 *Minutes*, 321, 349-412, 474, 476-485; *Journal of House of Lords*, 9.488; *Journal of House of Commons*, 5.340. Cartwright, Ussher and Ball all had two.

128 *Journal of House of Commons*, 6.27; *Journal of House of Lords*, 10.511. On similar titles see Mitchell, *Catechisms*, lxxv-xci, where he lists catechisms of the period examined by him in various libraries.

129 For reports of progress see *Minutes*, 48, 91-94, 118, 258-259, 287-290, 304-318, 486-492, 493-512; Baillie, *Journal*, 140, 148, 306, 379, 415-416; *Journal of House of Commons*, 5.368, 530; *Journal of House of Lords*, 9.543; 10.240, 452.

130 *The Principal Acts of the Generall Assembly convened at Edinburgh...in the year 1648*, (Edinburgh, 1648), 4, 10; *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, 6. pt.2. 161.

131 Archbishop Laud himself had no doubts about where the reforming aspirations originated: 'in all ages; in all places the Church of Christ was governed by Bishops: and lay elders never heard of, till Calvin's new fangled device at Geneva', in Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, (1680), 2nd part, 383, cited by B. Hall, 'John Calvin: Humanist and Reformer', *Historical Ass. Pamphlets*, London, 1956), 25.

CHAPTER TWO

Sources and Covenantal Doctrine of The Westminster Standards

It is unnecessary here to list or draw biographical sketches of the members of the Westminster Assembly. Many have done so.' The derisory remarks and vituperative comments of the Clarendons and Miltons can be dismissed in view of the tributes of friends and foes to the greatness of the lives, learning and literature of the divines.² It is more important to know who shaped their thinking. But when their works are examined that becomes a task of monumental proportions. Listing sources was not common practice in the seventeenth century, but even where it does occur the range is breathtaking. For example, a survey of works quoted by Samuel Rutherford in his *Exercitationes Apologeticae pro divina gratia contra Jesuitas et Arminianos* (1635), is enormous in scope, especially when it is remembered that he was the minister of a remote parish in south-west Scotland. He showed himself at home with the Fathers, the schoolmen, the medieval canonists and conciliarists, the mystics, humanists and reformers. He was also so up-to-date that he could make detailed use of William Tisse's *Vindiciae gratiae potestatis et providentiae Dei*, published only three years earlier.³

Mitchell emphasized the influence of a native Augustinianism in English theological development in the fifty years or so before Westminster, 'without slavish dependence on the divines of any Continental school'.⁴ He criticised Marsden for 'undue deference to the views of Calvin and Bullinger' in his interpretation, and McCrie for finding the unmistakable 'stamp of Dutch theology'.⁵ This line of thought has been taken up and clearly overstressed by others.

One writer referred to such 'a native school' in

Scotland and England, independent of any similar development on the Continent, and that it was only 'much later that Dutch and French works of theology began to flow across the Channel, and that scholars such as Cameron...returning from the continental universities began to make their influence felt'.⁶ Cameron returned in 1621.⁷ To suggest the third decade of the seventeenth century as the commencement of the flow of continental literature and scholars, even those of an infralapsarian tendency, cannot be substantiated. There had been a constant coming and going of Scottish and English students and scholars since the Reformation.⁸ The flow of theological literature and ideas was enormous. English and Scottish divines were aware of the Arminian controversy even in its early stages.

It was clear from the debates in the Assembly and even more so from the writings of the divines (Twisse, Rutherford, etc.) that due consideration was given by them to Dutch theology, notably in its anti-Arminian stance. In this sense 'the stamp of Dutch theology' was amply in evidence. But much earlier models with equally 'sharp distinctions in logical forms and judicial terms' than the Dutch can readily be detected.⁹ Mitchell was right in his criticism here. As for Calvin and Bullinger, it would be difficult to give 'undue deference' to them. Calvin's works had gone through numerous editions in England, and were a constant source of appeal.¹⁰ Bullinger had taught at Cambridge, and his *Decades* were recommended reading for all clergy.¹¹ English clergy in exile crowded to him in Zurich, and his correspondence with them at home was prolific.¹²

That there was a traditional Augustinianism, tracable from Anselm and Bradwardine through the works of Tyndale and Frith is indisputable.¹³ The surviving strength and influence of this development by the time of the Reformation, however, is a moot point.¹⁴ The influence of

the continental Reformers on the other hand is everywhere present,¹⁵ so much so that by the time of Westminster there were such commonplace expressions of thought and lines of argument, which, while making source-tracing exceedingly difficult, bear the unmistakable stamp of Calvin and his Reformed colleagues. Warfield illustrated, for example, how Heppe's representative continental Reformed theologians could be regarded generally as possible sources for any single assertion of chapter one of the *Confession of Faith*.¹⁶ He concluded that 'the Reformed theologians, whether on the Continent or in Britain, did not write in ignorance or independence of one another'. He demonstrated that the *Institutes* of Calvin could easily have been the basis of this section.¹⁷ The fundamental source of the Westminster doctrines must be regarded as Reformed theology in general.

The proximate sources or framework for the formulating of the Westminster standards is not so difficult to ascertain. Since A.F. Mitchell detailed the correspondence between the *Irish Articles* and the *Confession* in 1886, this has generally been acknowledged by all scholars to be the main source.¹⁸ These *Articles of Religion*, embodying the *Lambeth Articles* and the *Articles of the English Church*, were agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops and the rest of the Irish clergy in a Convocation held at Dublin in 1615.¹⁹ James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, was the principal compiler of the *Articles*. His biographer noted, 'There is not anything contained in the *Articles*, which is not in strict conformity with the opinions he entertained at that period of his life'.²⁰ Comparison with three other of his works, which are equally important with respect to the Westminster documents, bears out this statement.

The first is *A Body of Divinitie*, which was published by John Downham in 1645 under Ussher's name. In a letter to Downham dated 13 May, 1645, Ussher disclaimed the work

as his own, but admitted to transcribing and compiling it from the works of others, notably 'Mr. Cartwright...Mr. Crooks and some other English divines'.²¹ It was consequently republished with Ussher's blessing and a prefatory note of explanation in 1647. The other two works are *The Principles of Christian Religion*, which was published in 1645, and again in 1654, with the addition of *A Brief Method of the Doctrine Thereof*.²² His preface explained that the latter was a 'more full declaration of some chief points...framed to the capacity of such as had made a further progress in the knowledge of these Heavenly truths'.²³ It is very possible that the Westminster decision to publish two catechisms for much the same reason found its springs here.²⁴ But a more important observation is the date when Ussher first compiled these documents.

It is difficult to pin down *A Body of Divinitie*, but the letter just referred to does imply that it had been widely circulated 'in scattered sheets' for some time before its publication.²⁵ In the preface to the 1647 edition, Downham stated that it 'was written and finished above thirty years ago'.²⁶ A note to the reader of the 1645 edition of *The Principles* is more helpful. Again Ussher indicated that many impressions of 'rude draughts...presented...in a very faulty manner' had been in circulation and that he was now revising them in order to publish them in 'more tolerable condition'. But he also stated that he drew up these works when he 'was about the age of two or three and twenty years'. and that he was now giving them his full approval 'when my head is grey'.²⁷

There are two conclusions to be drawn from these comments: First, if *The Principles* represent the mature views of Ussher, then he did not modify his Calvinism as much as Erlington sought to make out in his biography.²⁸ Secondly, Ussher was born in January, 1580,²⁹ which would mean that *The Principles* were penned around 1602/3. There

is also a good hint that the substance of them was used by Ussher before that date. Prior to his ordination in 1601, Ussher had already distinguished himself as Catechist in the Trinity College.³⁰ 'Every week he explained the pure principles of the Christian religion, as professed and maintained by the reformed Churches...this task he performed with such a display of accurate knowledge on the controverted subjects...that his friends anxiously pressed him to appear in the pulpit'.³¹ In the absence of any other catechetical material from Ussher's pen, it can only be assumed that it was the substance of *The Principles* that he used then.

If these documents then contain the essence of the Westminster covenantal theology, and provide the framework for the Westminster schema, then clearly the documents of Westminster were no panicky reaction to the Arminian controversy. These doctrines had been formulated and taught by Ussher in Dublin, perhaps not with the same precision, but just as clearly, at the turn of the century, long before the Dutch controversy got off the ground. And his model apparently was what was 'professed and maintained by the Reformed churches'. This piece of evidence adds weight to Mitchell's conclusion that 'With respect to the doctrine of the Covenants...there is nothing taught in the *Confession* which had not been long before in substance taught by Rollock and Howie in Scotland, and by Cartwright, Preston, Perkins, Ames and Ball in his two catechisms in England'.³²

Mitchell has also helpfully demonstrated the close correspondence between the chapter headings of the *Irish Articles* and the *Confession of Faith*, and the few not to be found in the *Articles* are supplied by *A Body of Divinitie*.³³ So detailed is the likeness that even singular cases are used in both where plural nouns might easily have been employed, and in the order of chapter headings these two works are set apart from most earlier

Reformed confessions with which they have doctrinal affinity.³⁴ Mitchell and Warfield have exhibited at length in columnar form some of the main chapters of the *Confession* alongside the corresponding statements of the *Irish Articles*, particularly those on Scripture and God's eternal decree.³⁵

Interestingly, no detailed comparison has been made between those sections in these respective documents which expressly state the different aspects of covenantal theology, apart from the general statement of Mitchell quoted above. This merits a fuller discussion.

Beginning with the *Confession's* statement on the creation of man, there is an immediate reference to the place and nature of law: 'God...created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the freedom of their own will, which was subject to change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil; which while kept, they were happy in their communion with God and had dominion over the creatures'.³⁶

Ussher conjoined creation and providence under the head 'Of the Creation and Government of all things'. He emphasized also man's creation in the image of God, which was principally seen 'In the perfection of the understanding; and the freedom and holiness of the will'.³⁷ He specifically designated 'the love engrafted in his heart' as 'the Covenant of the lawe...whereby God did promise unto him everlasting life, upon condition that he performed entire and perfect obedience unto his Commandments, according to that measure of strength wherewith hee was endued in his creation, and threatened death unto him if he did not performe the same'.³⁸

Both Ussher and the *Confession* stressed the freedom of man's will *pre lapsum*, and they identified the law of God as having a specific covenantal function in man's relationship with God in paradise. The *Body of Divinitie*, like the *Confession* spoke of the twofold manner in which Adam received the law. When the question was asked how the law could be given to Adam in his integrity, when it was said not to have been before Moses, the reply was that that was to be understood of the law only as Moses recorded it and God engraved it on stone, 'otherwise the same law (for the substance thereof) was imprinted in the beginning in the hearts of our first parents, and therefore it is called the Law of Nature'. This law given to Adam 'was chiefly written in his heart at creation, and partly also uttered to his *Eare* in Paradise'. Adam was therefore able to know good, but in addition he was 'inclined thereunto with the abilitie to performe it'.³⁹ This last phrase corresponds with those above which insist that man 'by virtue of his creation' had power or 'the measure of strength' to fulfil the law given to him, and thereby ensure 'the continuance' of divine favour and life.²²⁸ This was God's promise in the covenant he made with Adam, 'and in him with all mankind'.⁴¹

This reference to the covenant of the law given to Adam is as far as Ussher developed the covenant of works idea in the *Articles*, but in *A Body of Divinitie*, in *The Principles*, and particularly in *The Method*, before dealing with the fall, he set forth a more developed doctrine of the covenant of works as the first of a twofold covenant by which God ordered the state of man. The *Confession*, in chapter four, considered 'Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof' before the chapter entitled 'Of God's Covenant with Man'. Before examining this in detail, it would be appropriate to note some similarities with respect to the doctrine of sin and the fall.

In their sin our first parents were 'seduced by the

subtilty and temptation of Satan', or as Ussher said 'obeying rather the persuasion of the Devil'.⁴² 'They fell from their original righteousness', or were 'deprived of originall righteousness'.⁴³ Consequently, the *Confession* concluded that they 'became dead in sin, and wholly defiled' in soul and body, and the same guilt and death in sin was imputed and conveyed to all their posterity. For Usher, too, 'death went over all men', and sin infected 'all the powers of soul and body', and this guilt and corruption was not only Adam's, but that of 'every person that naturally is ingendered and propagated from Adam'. How sin was propagated from one generation to the next was not a matter for speculation. It was sufficient that there was evidence of the same sin in posterity.⁴⁴ The consequences of the fall in the corruption of man's nature, his actual transgressions and punishment show remarkable parallels. Both even have previews of this corruption as it relates to the regenerate almost *ad verbatim*: 'This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated'. Ussher's statement was the same, only that he omitted the words 'during this life', and inserted the word 'even' after 'doth remain'.⁴⁵ Both Ussher and the *Confession* were concerned to short-circuit the charge that God was the author of sin.⁴⁶

Like the *Confession*, Ussher defined sin as the transgression of the law, or a swerving from the law of God. Original sin consisted in man being dead in sin, 'having in him the seed of all sins'. This did not mean that the image of God was wholly destroyed in man. He was 'still a reasonable creature, and capable of grace'. His faculties remained, his understanding, conscience and will could still be exercised to some extent towards what was good, but fallen man had neither the power to recover his former estate, or to please God in any respect.⁴⁷

Pre-Fall Covenant

Chapters seven, 'Of God's Covenant with Man', and nineteen, 'Of the Law of God', in the *Confession*, are central to this investigation. Ussher and John Ball were the main sources here, and provide a contemporary understanding and interpretation of the more compressed confessional statements.⁴⁸

The *Confession* opened the theme by drawing attention to the great distance between God and man. While men owed obedience to God as their Creator, they 'could never have any fruition of him as their blessedness and reward', unless God of his own volition condescended to arrange such a relationship. This relationship God was 'pleased to express by way of covenant'.⁴⁹

Ussher began *A Body of Divinitie* from the premise that all men desire happiness and life. This was to be found in the true religion which acknowledged 'the onely God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent'. Knowledge of God was the secret of enjoyment of God. Following Calvin, Ussher described this knowledge as twofold: that revealed in the works of God which was insufficient for eternal happiness, and a saving knowledge revealed in the Scriptures.⁵⁰ The God whom Scripture revealed could only be understood very imperfectly in essence, but could be known by the properties and actions revealed in his name. No definition of God was possible as he was infinite, eternal and incomprehensible. No words could express what belonged to God, but the Holy Spirit 'condescended' to the weakness of human understanding by using terms known to men in order 'that we may understand as much as is expedient for us to know'. Ussher then discussed these properties and attributes at length, declaring that the covenant was the special order of government that God used towards man in this world and the next.⁵¹

Ball likewise referred to the 'huge and infinite disparity' that existed between God and man.⁵² This was

equally true of man in the state of innocency, and in order to acquaint man with his ways and purposes, 'God was pleased to condescend to man's weaknesse' by way of a covenant, with appropriate seals added. It was a covenant of which God alone was the author, not God and man. There was no equality of power or authority. God was sovereign. Man was bound to accept the conditions offered by the Lord. He could not 'indent' with God. The covenant was of God's 'free grace and favour'. The blessings and rewards in the covenant could be promised in justice and given in justice for man's works, 'yet it was of grace that God was pleased to bind himself to his creature, and above the desert of the creature: and though the reward be of justice, it is also of favour'.⁵³

Ball pointed out, as did the *Confession*, that obedience was already due to God. It was a debt of duty owed in respect of the Creator/creature relationship which obligated him to the Lord. It could have been required without any promised reward. God was not obliged to give man anything or to make him anything. 'It was of grace his happinesse should have been continued'.⁵⁴ In this condescension God first bound himself to reward the obedience of man, prior to binding man to himself in obedience, in order that man might yield cheerful and free obedience. Ball then added this comment: 'To will and to nill the same things is the sure bond of amity and friendship. Now because the communion betwixt God and us is of infinite disparitie, therefore his will is a Law to us, and our obedience is true love to him'.⁵⁵

It was against this background of a gracious condescension on the part of God that all which followed was to be understood. The arrangement made with Adam was essentially, in its wider context, a gracious arrangement. A proper understanding of any covenant between God and man was to be seen in this light. In human terms a covenant was usually an agreement between two parties in which they

mutually bound themselves to each other according to terms and obligations acceptable to each. There were different examples of such in Scripture, such as the peace treaty Abraham made with Abimelech or the friendship pact between David and Jonathan. There were of course other references to covenants between conquerors and conquered where the terms of agreement were imposed by one side, and the other side had little option but to accept.

It was the contention of Ussher, Ball and the *Confession*, however, that when God entered into covenant with man it was not like either of these. God was simply condescending to man's level, so that man as a reasonable creature would have a fuller enjoyment and communication of God's love and know what to expect of God. Man was in no way equal to God, and even as a created being under obligation to obey the will of his Creator and live for his glory, he had no inherent right to any further benefit or blessing which God could or may bestow upon him. When God condescended to treat with Adam 'by way of covenant', he was still not obliged to consult with Adam, but clearly the terms imposed reflected not those of a tyrant conqueror, but of a loving Father. They were, as Ball said, 'most suited to a reasonable creature'.⁵⁶ They were also most acceptable to Adam's will which 'was unquestionably cordially consenting to this divine constitution and all the terms thereof'.⁵⁷

This arrangement was described as 'a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience'.⁵⁸ The important thing to grasp is that this arrangement, while conditional and promising a reward on the basis of justice, was essentially a gracious arrangement. It had nothing to do with inherent rights or deserts. Man did not deserve the promised reward even by perfect obedience. His works therefore under the covenant only had value by virtue of the agreement. They had no

intrinsic meritorious value of their own.

The paramount importance of this opening statement of chapter seven of the *Confession*, and the contemporary understanding of it, cannot be stressed too strongly in view of the modern 'legalistic' interpretations which have been foisted onto the chapter. And Ussher's care in defining what was meant by 'grace' in this situation also needs to be observed. He showed three usages of the term in Scripture: First, it was used of comeliness, stature, meekness or manliness. Secondly, it was used of all kinds of gifts and graces, temporal or eternal, bestowed by free favour. Thirdly, it was used of free favour in the sense of pardoning injuries and recovering the offended party into favour again. The third of these properly referred to justifying grace or mercy, which was used of God's relationship with sinful man, but in the case of Adam *pre lapsu*, it was the second sense which was intended.⁵⁹

In *The Method*, Ussher described 'The Law, or the covenant of works' as the first of the covenants by which God ordered the estate of mankind in this life. In this covenant 'God promiseth everlasting life unto man, upon condition that he perform entire and perfect obedience unto his law'. In *The Principles*, he specifically stated that this covenant was not only with Adam, but 'in him with all mankind'. And in *A Body of Divinitie* he defined it as 'a conditionall covenant...whereby on the one side God commandeth the perfection of godlinesse and righteousnesse, and promiseth that he will be our God, if we keepe all his commandments; and on the other side Man bindeth himselfe to perform intire and perfect obedience to God's Law by that strength wherewith God hath endued him by the nature of his first creation'.⁶⁰

This law covenant was backed with the promise of everlasting life on fulfilment, and the threat of death on disobedience with all that that entailed for this and the afterlife. The covenant's significance of the Edenic

arrangement was further underlined by the writer's view of the trees in the midst of the garden as signs and seals of the covenant. They were 'sacramentall signes' to put Adam in remembrance of the covenant agreement. The tree of life could not give him everlasting life but was to be a means of comfort to him. When he sinned he lost what it signified and was therefore debarred from it.⁶¹ The *Confession* did not specifically refer to the trees in this way, but the *Larger Catechism* spoke of the tree of life as 'a pledge' of the covenant of life.⁶² The historical significance of this will be seen in the discussion of Calvin's theology of the covenant. He had already regarded the tree of life as a sacramental sign or seal of God's covenant.⁶³

Ball acknowledged that the word 'covenant' was not itself used in relation to Eden, but he affirmed, 'we have in Scripture what may amount to as much'. He also acknowledged that the provision or proposal of eternal life and happiness as a reward for obedience was not explicitly stated, but necessarily implied in the threat of death for disobedience. He defined the Edenic arrangement as 'The covenant which God made with our first parents, in that mutual contract or agreement, wherein God promised eternall happinesse to man upon condition of intire and perfect obedience to be performed in his owne person'.⁶⁴ This covenant, like all covenants made by God was made with the head or root and reached to all the branches and members. Since Adam was the root of all mankind, the whole of his posterity was liable to the consequences of his obedience or disobedience.⁶⁵

Ball's continuing concern in this section on the covenant with man in his innocency was to emphasize that while 'the form of this covenant stood in the speciall Promise of good to be received from justice as a reward for his work', yet the eternal life promised was not something earned under the covenant of works any more than under the

covenant of grace. Even man's 'intire and perfect obedience' could never have earned or merited it. Nevertheless, God condescended to promise it to man on this condition, even as he later promised it on condition of faith. While the covenant was made in justice it was of grace that such a free promise was made to give such great things to man for his obedience, just as were all the blessings, abilities and privileges he had already received from his Creator and Sovereign. He pointed out that even if man had continued in obedience, God would not have been unjust if he had ceased to bestow so much on man and do so much for him. It was entirely gracious: 'God was pleased to manifest his goodnesse to man continuing in obedience, no lesse than his justice, as formerly he had shewed himselfe exceedingly gracious to man, above other visible and corporall creatures'.⁶⁶

No mediator was necessary in this covenant either to bring man into favour and friendship with God or to procure acceptance of man's service. Man had not offended God at this stage. He bore God's image and his service was pure and acceptable to the God who loved him. The good promised in the covenant was like 'a perfect system of good' to be continued so long as obedience continued.⁶⁷ Ball warned at this point against speculation as to what would have happened if Adam had survived the probation, as there was no warrant in Scripture for supposing that he would have been translated to a state of glory in heaven. The reward of everlasting life and happiness was so-called because it would have continued in the eye of the Creator for ever. Continuance of life and communion with God was what was stressed: 'The continuance both of himself and his posteritie in that good estate'. This much could be said with certainty, but even then 'they had not deserved the continuance thereof: for it is impossible the creature should merit of the Creator, because when he hath done all that he can, he is an unprofitable servant, he hath done

but his duty'.⁶⁸

Ball differentiated between the natural and symbolic parts of the obedience Adam was to render. It was natural in as far as the law in his heart required love of God and his neighbour; it was symbolic in as far as the law was given for his probation and trial. What was abstained from was something indifferent in itself, but it became 'man's Homage-penny', or as Calvin had previously put it, 'the tree was still a tree', but when 'inscribed by God's Word a new form was put upon [it]'.⁶⁹ It began to be what it was not formerly. God was showing to man that in spite of his condescension, he was still Sovereign. Man would know that he was still inferior to and not equal with God. Man had formerly been given to eat of every tree; now one was reserved as a homage for God. This prohibition was a kind of seal to God's natural covenant with Adam, whereby Adam would be able to assess his performance and strengthen his obedience and that of his posterity in covenant.

Ball drew attention to another distinction which it is important to note, in view of later confusion. It concerned the question whether man's primal condition was natural or supernatural to Adam. Ball did not see that this posed any difficulty if the terms were rightly understood. The important thing to recognize was that such a condition in a fallen creature would certainly be supernatural. This is of vital significance when later writers speak of the covenant of works being fulfilled in 'the creatures own natural strength'. It is not always clear whether they are referring to natural strength *pre lapsus* or natural strength *post lapsus*. Clearly what was 'natural' to man before the fall, was far from 'natural' in his subsequent state. John MacPherson, in his notes on the *Confession* is an example of this ambiguous usage. He even went so far as to make the speculative suggestion that 'no special aids are promised or allowed', whatever he meant by that.⁷⁰ To speak of 'natural strength' in

unfallen man clearly reflects a condition entirely and gratuitously given and upheld by God. Obedience rendered by Adam was in complete dependence upon God. He was in no sense, or to any degree, an autonomous creature.

The question has been raised regarding this section of the *Confession* as to how the covenant of works related to the relationship referred to in paragraph one about an obligation of obedience or obedience without any covenant.⁷¹ The question only has relevance if there ever was a time when man was not in some form of covenant relationship with God. There is nothing in the *Confession*, or Scripture for that matter, to support such an assertion. The *Confession*, it may be argued, was merely pointing out that the nature of God was such that a natural obligation of obedience was due to him, apart from any other arrangement God might be pleased to make. It was mentioned to highlight the goodness and grace of God in condescending to make verbally an arrangement which involved promises, conditions and a penalty. The question is, was this covenant only made when the prohibition and penalty were stated? Ball suggested that man had a natural covenantal understanding with God, and that the prohibition was a visual and verbal seal of that - 'a special commandment to trie him'.⁷² This was very much in keeping with the confessional identification of the moral law with the law written in the heart of man as a covenant of works, and 'Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command not to eat of the tree of knowledge or good and evil'.⁷³

Was the term 'covenant of works' justified in describing the Edenic arrangement between God and Adam? It has been suggested that covenantal theology logically demanded it as 'the pre-condition of the covenant of grace'.⁷⁴ Covenantal theologians themselves have not always agreed on the question. A minority have preferred not to use the term of the prelapsarian situation. For

the others, the idea and not the term has been the important thing. They have seen in the arrangement what they regarded as the constitutive elements of a covenant (ie. two parties, certain stipulations and conditions with a penalty attached), and proceeded to use the term in what they considered a legitimate and scriptural sense in order to give unity and cohesion to their exposition. There was no theological necessity for calling the transaction a 'covenant of works', but the absence of the term in Genesis did not imply the absence of the idea. All the requirements of the idea were present.⁷⁵

Covenant of Grace

The *Confession* introduced the covenant of grace against the backcloth of the fall of man and the resultant incapability of ever obtaining life by the covenant of works. God was pleased to make this second covenant, 'commonly called the covenant of Grace'. In this covenant he offered life and salvation to sinners by Jesus Christ. The requirement on man's part was faith in Christ. But the covenant also included the promise 'to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe'.⁷⁶ This provision was re-emphasized in several chapters of the *Confession*: 'To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, *he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same...effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey*'. And again: 'The grace of faith, whereby *the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts*'.⁷⁷

Ussher had much the same description. After outlining the effects of the fall, he concluded that now 'by this covenant of the Law no flesh can be saved... Yet the Lord, being a God of mercy, hath not left us here; but entered into a second covenant with mankind...The Gospel or the covenant of grace; whereby God promiseth everlasting

life unto man, upon condition that he be reconciled unto him in Christ...the condition of the second is the obtaining of that righteousness which is without himself; even the righteousness of God which is by faith in the Mediator Jesus Christ'.⁷⁸

After consideration of the mediatorial work of Christ, Ussher dealt with the effectual communication of the grace of Christ to the elect. In receiving Christ 'there is required a lively faith bringing forth the fruit of true holiness'. He asked if it was within the scope of man's power to attain this faith and holiness, and answered negatively, affirming that it was the work of God in his children. Faith was 'a gift of God whereby a man being persuaded not only of the truth of God's word in general, but also of the promises of the Gospel in particular, applieth Christ, with all his benefits, unto the comfort of his own soul'.⁷⁹

The *Articles* carried the same message, with perhaps more stress on grace being effectual only in the elect: 'The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turne, and prepare himselfe by his owne naturall strength and good workes, to faith, and calling upon God'. None could presume to be saved now by framing their lives according to the law and the light of nature. Salvation was only in Christ, and none could come to him except drawn to him by the Father. But all God's elect would be 'in their time inseparablye united unto Christ by the effectuall and vitall influence of the holy Ghost'.⁸⁰ God's mercy and Christ's merits were embraced by faith, but Ussher was careful to state that this did not mean that faith 'doth of itselfe iustifie us, or deserve our iustification unto us (for that were to account our selves to bee iustified by the vertue or dignitie of something that is within our selves)...we must trust only in Gods mercie...and that by faith given us of God'.⁸¹

Fallen man, according to *A Body of Divinitie*, no

longer had power to recover his former estate or to please God in any way. Neither could the covenant of the law effect reconciliation for him, but it made way for reconciliation by another covenant, the covenant of grace. This covenant was defined as 'God's second contract with mankind, after the fall, for the restoring of him into his favour, and to the state of happiness by the means of a Mediator. Gal.3.21.22. and it containeth the free promises of God made unto us in Jesus Christ, without any respect of our deservings'. The foundation of the covenant was 'the meere mercy of God in Christ', and this was evidenced in the fact that God propounded this covenant to man in Eden before he pronounced the sentence of judgement. The entire performance of the covenant depended on Christ the Mediator.^{e2}

But the question remained: 'What is the condition on man's part?' Faith issuing in new obedience was the answer, but again with the stress that 'this also is by God's grace'. The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to work saving faith in the hearts of the elect, so that the gospel not only offered, but conferred, what it required. It required and conferred faith, not only as 'a hand to lay hold on Christ, but as a chief *vertue*, working by love in all parts of obedience', in the elect.^{e3}

Ball's exposition was more full. He described the first covenant with Adam as 'a covenant of friendship, not of reconciliation; being once broken it could not be repaired; it promised no mercy or pardon, admitted no repentance, accepted no obedience, but what was perfect and compleat'. For Adam to think he could heal the breach would have been presumptuous. The fall terminated the first arrangement which manifested God's wisdom, bounty, goodness, and justice as a covenant of life. But fortunately for man that covenant was not peremptory; it was not final or immutable. It made way for a manifestation or revelation of God's rich grace and

abundant mercy.⁸⁴

Ball defined the covenant of grace as 'that free and gracious covenant, which God, of his meere mercy in Jesus Christ, made with man a miserable sinner, promising unto him pardon of sinne and eternall happinesse, if he will return from his iniquity, embrace mercy reached forth, by faith unfained, and walke before God in sincere, faithful and willing obedience, as becomes such a creature lifted up into such injoyment, and partaker of such pretious promises'.⁸⁵

The nature of this covenant was the opposite of the first. The covenant of law was given in justice and contained no promise of mercy and forgiveness and could not give life - that stood in the mercy of God alone. It was impossible for one person to be under both covenants simultaneously. The free gift of reward, however, was common to both covenants. This had always been of grace and was never tied to the law. But the covenant of grace was not given in justice, but in grace and mercy to those who deserved to be cast off. God was covenanting not now as a Creator, but as a Saviour. It was a covenant of reconciliation. Its cause lay solely in the love, favour, and mercy of God, and not in any worth or merit of man, not even in his misery. The covenant was made in Christ, since there could be no reconciliation, but by a Mediator. It stood in the gracious, free promise to repair and restore and augment with 'a restipulation of such duties as will stand with free grace and mercy. For the Covenant of Grace doth exclude all conditions, but such as will stand with grace'.⁸⁶

For Ball the covenant of grace was conditional although it was of grace. What was required in order to embrace the promise was a lively, unfeigned and working faith. He went on to describe this faith as 'the necessary and lively instrument of Justification, which is amongst the number of true causes, not being a cause

without which the thing is done, but a cause whereby it is done'. If it is asked whose instrument faith is, 'it is the instrument of the soule, wrought there by the Holy Ghost, and is the free gift of God'. After showing the relationship of faith to repentance and good works in the matter of justification, Ball explained what was meant by conditions of the covenant: 'if by condition we understand what is required on our part, as precedent, concomittant, or subsequent to justification, repentance, faith and obedience are all conditions: but if by condition we understand what is required on our part, as the cause of the good promised though only instrumentall, faith or believe in the promise of free mercy is the only condition'.⁸⁷

In the covenant of grace man bound himself on the basis of God's promise to believe and rest wholly in God, however weak his faith. He also promised obedience which was both a debt of duty and a special prerogative, humbly asking God to be his protector and reward. The mercy offered was vouchsafed to those who believed and embraced it by faith, and the duty required by God and promised by man, was man's duty. Nevertheless it was given by grace. Grace effectually drew and enabled man to do what God commanded, because 'The Covenant could not be by grace, nor the good things covenanted, if man by his own strength did or could performe what God requireth'.⁸⁸

This idea of God giving what he required was a kind of swan-song in Ball's works. In *A Treatise of Faith*, he declared, 'In the covenant of grace, God giveth what he requireth: Man's duty is his free gift of grace'. Referring to the promises of perserverance, he said that the covenant was an everlasting covenant and was made effectually and would be kept assuredly, and in this 'Covenant or Testament God freely promiseth to give what he requireth of his people, and to effect in them what he calleth for at their hands'. The benefits of the covenant

were conditional to each other, but ultimately they were all effects of grace: 'Righteousness and life are promised upon condition of faith: but the condition of the covenant is promised in the covenant it self'.⁸⁹

Again with reference to the conditional aspects of scriptural texts, Ball insisted that they 'respect no conditions, as the cause of fulfilling these promises, but plainly affirme, that God himselfe doth promise, and give the condition which he requires'. And discussing the life of faith touching the commandments which God has given to direct the lives of his people, he declared, 'Looke what service the Lord doth expect and call for, that he will enable his people in covenant to performe'.⁹⁰

From the foregoing it can be clearly seen how this section of chapter seven in the *Confession* followed closely the pattern and content of Ussher and Ball, particularly the latter. Each point received due emphasis - the impossibility of life for fallen man under the terms of the first covenant; the establishing of the covenant of grace; Christ as the foundation of the second covenant; faith as the condition or requirement of it;⁹¹ and finally the promise that what was required would be given to the elect by the Holy Spirit so that the blessings of the covenant were secured to them. This latter point received special emphasis, particularly in Ball, and this emphasis was reflected in numerous chapters of the *Confession* other than chapter seven, already quoted.⁹²

A couple of other observations may help to reinforce the correspondence between the *Confession* and these contemporary works. First, both the *Confession* and the *Larger Catechism* used the phrase 'commonly called the Covenant of Grace'.⁹³ Is this a reference merely to widespread usage. This is possible, but then by the first half of the seventeenth century the term 'covenant of works' was equally in common usage. Another likely explanation is that the phrase is to be understood in the

context of paragraph one. There, the covenant of works was presented as a gracious arrangement, but here grace was manifest in a new and deeper way. This is what Ball stressed at great length. Formerly, grace was seen as God's condescension in showing kindness, help and benevolence, and in making promises to his creatures, who though unfallen were entirely dependent on him for all they were and possessed. But after the fall grace took the form of mercy to those who rebelled and lost communion with God, and in no way deserved any good from his hand, but rather actually merited punishment. This was most certainly now the common usage of the term 'grace'.

Secondly, by the time the *Confession* was drawn up, many theologians were already speaking in terms of three covenants - the covenant of works between God and Adam, a pre-temporal covenant of redemption between God the Father and God the Son concerning the salvation of the elect, and the covenant of grace between God and elect sinners. Others insisted on only two covenants: the covenant of works with Adam and the covenant of grace in Christ with the elect. Reformed opinion has been divided on this issue ever since, both sides seeking to substantiate their views from Scripture. It will have been noted that neither Ussher, Ball or the *Confession* expounded the three-fold view. The *Confession* did not even state explicitly with whom the covenant of grace was made, although the *Larger Catechism* was more forthcoming: 'The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed'.⁹⁴

The basis of the Westminster position was that Adam prefigured Christ who was the second Adam. There was not one covenant with Adam and another with his posterity, both with conditions to fulfil, but the same covenant included both. The covenant was made with Adam as the representative and head of all his posterity, and was therefore made with them in him. In the same way the

covenant of grace was made with Christ and with his elect in him. It was possible to speak of the same covenant as being made with one or the other.⁹⁵ On the other hand when all the provisions of Christ's work as Mediator and Redeemer, and the provisions which bear upon the application of that work to his people are included under the one covenant, it was always necessary to distinguish constantly between them.⁹⁶ The idea of the third covenant facilitated that distinction. It did not reflect any fundamental theological divergence. The compilers of the *Confession* were fully aware of the three-covenant view, but were content to follow the two-covenant presentation without so much as a hint of division in the debates.⁹⁷

Covenant or Testament?

In the next section of chapter seven, the Westminster divines showed themselves to be well aware of the importance of the linguistic aspects of covenantal thought, when they referred to the fact that the covenant of grace was 'frequently set forth in scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed'.⁹⁸

This was not considered important enough to be included in the Catechisms, and there is no mention of it in Ussher. Ball, however, devoted the opening chapter of his *Covenant of Grace* to 'The Signification of the Word Covenant', in a manner reminiscent of Bullinger's *De Testamento*.⁹⁹ It was not a word coined by sixteenth or seventeenth-century theologians, but had a much more ancient pedigree. Ball discussed the various usages in the Old Testament. *Berith* was used of two parties entering a mutual agreement with mutual promises and this was usually ratified by a solemn feast or sacrifice. He pointed out the differing circumstances surrounding covenants in the Old Testament, and concluded that the word

had a general signification which must be considered according to the circumstances of the place. The Greek rendering of *berith* was invariably διαθήκη, rather than συνθήκη, and in the divine/human covenantal relationship, Ball saw two parts necessary to a covenant proper: First, an absolute covenant or promise of God, and secondly, a covenant with stipulations attached. For him a covenant was '*quiddam complexum*, implying two things...one covenanting, the other restipulating or accepting. As also two parts covenanted. First the giving of some future good. Secondly the retribution of some performance... When two persons upon these two parts concur, it is that we call a covenant properly: though tropically sometimes the Promise, and sometimes the stipulation only is noted by the covenant...and sometimes the seal of the covenant is called the Covenant'.¹⁰⁰ The fulfilling of the first part of the covenant (ie. the absolute covenant) flowed from one; the fulfilling of the other part (ie. the covenant with stipulations annexed) depended on the other. Ball, therefore, saw the one covenant as a unilateral covenant of grace, that is, a disposition of the sovereign love and mercy of God, but in its administration he saw it as a bilateral covenant with stipulations attached. He found no incongruity in this position, since the fulfilling of the stipulations was also promised and provided for the elect in the covenant.

Ball also noted the places in the New Testament where διαθήκη was translated 'testament', and maintained that the passages concerned were arguing not the simple signification of the word, but the circumstances of the covenant in a way similar to Calvin's argument in his *Commentary on Hebrews*. He said that both 'testament' and 'covenant' there was 'an ordination and disposition of things according to pleasure, and the Greeke phrase in the New Testament doth follow the received interpretation of the Septuagint; although in this the Covenant of Grace is

like to a Testament, that it is not established but by the death of the Mediatour as of a Testator'.¹⁰¹

Complete synonymity was not claimed by Ball for the words 'covenant' and 'testament'. Rather, the point he was making was that the same idea embodied in the scriptural use of the term 'covenant', could be conveyed by either word, but in certain circumstances of the covenant one could be more appropriate than the other. As another writer of the period put it: 'So is the covenant of grace a testament, because the same things which the covenant requireth from us as conditions to be performed on our part, the same things are bequeathed to us among Christ's goods, which by His testament and latter will He disposed and left to His people absolutely'.¹⁰²

Unity of the Covenant

The remaining two sections of chapter seven in the *Confession* outlined the differences in the administration of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament economy, styled 'the time of the law', and under the New Testament, or 'the time of the gospel'. But it was strongly emphasized that these were 'not therefore two Covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations'. There was but one covenant of which Christ was the substance, though he was exhibited under the gospel. The differences could be summarized as follows:

1. Under the Old, Messiah was promised; under the New, Christ was exhibited.
2. Under the Old, Christ was prefigured in sacrifices, sacraments, types and ordinances; under the New, he was set forth in the preaching of the word, and the sacraments.
3. The New was less complicated, and had fewer and less ostentatious ceremonies.
4. The New was a fuller, clearer revelation and was more efficacious spiritually.

5. The Old was given only to the Jews; the New, to Jews and Gentiles of all nations.

All this was not to say that the Old was ineffectual. Such revelation as was given was adequate for the times, and for the calling and instruction and strengthening of the elect by the Holy Spirit. Salvation and remission of sins was given through faith in the promised Messiah. Believers in Old Testament times were saved by faith in Christ every bit as much as those of gospel times.¹⁰³

Practically every theological handbook since the time of Calvin carried similar comparisons and contrasts.¹⁰⁴ Ussher followed the tradition. In *A Body of Divinitie* he asked: '*Hath the administration of the Gospell been alwaies after the same manner?*', and replied: '*For substance it alwaies hath been the same: but in regard of the manner proper to certaine times, it is distinguished into two kindes; the Old and the New*'. The usual differences concerning the restrictions and obscurity of the one and the fullness and clarity of the other followed.¹⁰⁵

These distinctions and similarities were not specifically listed in *The Principles*, but they were included or implied in the various statements on justification, sanctification, the mediatorial work of Christ, the sacraments, and the communication of the grace of Christ.¹⁰⁶ The fuller explication of the *Method*, however, followed the pattern of *A Body of Divinitie*, repeating the questions and answers almost *ad verbatim*.¹⁰⁷ The *Articles* were the same with a particular section entitled 'Of the State of the Old and New Testaments', and a special emphasis that everlasting life was offered in both Old and New by Christ, who was the only Mediator between God and man. Therefore, those who 'faine that the old Fathers did looke onely for transitory promises', were not to be listened to, because 'they looked for all benefits of God the Father through the merits of his Sonne Iesus Christ, as we now doe; onely they beleaved in Christ

which should come, we in Christ already come'.¹⁰⁸

When Ball's works on this issue are examined there is a sense in which his *Covenant of Grace* was in its two parts a massive comparison and contrast of its different administrations. In the first part he considered the old administration of the covenant as promised to Adam immediately after the fall, how it was made and manifested to Abraham, its manifestation under Moses, its renewal with David, and with the Israelites after the Babylonish captivity.¹⁰⁹ The second part dealt with the covenant being established in Christ the Mediator, and then with how Christians were brought into covenantal fellowship with him.¹¹⁰ But there were two prefatory chapters, entitled 'Of the Covenant of Grace in generall' and 'Of the Covenant of Promise'. The first of these included a summary of the agreements and disagreements between the covenant of nature and the covenant of grace, and the second a consideration of the different administrations of the covenant of grace from the promise to Adam to its promulgation and establishment through Christ.¹¹¹

Christ was the foundation and Mediator of the covenant, and was such under the old administration, not simply as God, but as the divine person who would take our flesh. The Old Testament saints were saved by the same covenantal grace as those under the New Testament. This was possible for while two aspects of Christ's mediatorial work - reconciliation and patronage - required his coming first in flesh, the third, that is, God making himself known to man by a Mediator, was done before the incarnation, and its fruit communicated by promise. Cause always preceded effect in natural things, but eternal things were not tied to this order. The fruit, effects and virtue of Christ's death were communicable by promise before the event itself as well as after. The term 'covenant of promise', therefore, had a particular significance for those before Christ, but it was still the

same covenant - the covenant of grace - 'the covenant whereby God of his meere grace and mercy in Jesus Christ to be exhibited in the fulnesse of time, did promise forgiveness of sinnes, spirituall adoption, and eternall life, unto man in himselfe considered a wretched and miserable sinner, if he should embrace and accept this mercy promised, and walke before God in sincere obedience'.¹¹² And here again, in defining the covenant of promise, Ball saw no absurdity in juxtaposing the unilateral promissory nature of the covenant with its bilateral conditional aspect.

The Covenant and Law

The first section of chapter nineteen, 'Of the Law of God', in the *Confession*, repeated most of the points already made in consideration of the pre-fall covenant. The law was originally given to Adam as a covenant of works, binding him and his posterity to perfect obedience. He was endued with power and ability in creation to render such obedience, and had the promise of life for fulfilment and the threat of death for disobedience.¹¹³ But what of the position of this law after the fall? The *Confession* went on to teach that it 'continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and as such was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments'. This was described as the moral law and was to be distinguished from the ceremonial and judicial laws which were given to Israel as 'a church under age'. In worship and moral duties the ceremonial laws had a typical significance, pointing forward to Christ who was the fulfilment of them. Consequently, when Christ came they were abrogated. The judicial laws were given to Israel as a nation or a 'body politick', and since the dissolution of the state, they imposed no further obligation other than the requirements of general equity.¹¹⁴

But the duty expressed both in the content of the

moral law, and in its divinely-given, creative authority, continued to rest as an obligation upon all. This included those who were justified through faith in Christ, for the gospel, rather than weakening or abolishing this obligation, actually strengthened it.''¹⁵ This did not mean that believers were justified or condemned by the law as a covenant of works. They were no longer under it in that respect. It was rather the Christian's 'rule of life'. It educated him in God's will and the duties of life to which he was bound and in which he was directed to walk. It also instructed him more deeply in the nature of sin, and thus worked in him a deeper spirit of repentance and appreciation of Christ and his work. In this way the law restrained the inner corruptions of the heart and prevented him from sinning. He could see more clearly what his sins deserved, although he had been freed from that curse. He also came to appreciate the blessings which God had promised to those who keep his law, although such promises were no longer vouchsafed to him under the terms of the covenant of works.

For the Christian, therefore, endeavour to keep the law was not to be construed as evidence of being under the law as a covenant of works. But a man under the covenant of grace should equally endeavour to keep God's law. There was no contradiction between the grace of the gospel and such usage of the law in the life of the believer. Grace and law were complimentary to each other, because it was the Spirit of Christ, given in grace, who subdued and enabled man's otherwise stubborn and rebellious will 'to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the law requireth to be done'.''¹⁶

Ussher's *Articles* had no section specifically on the law. But under the head 'Of the creation and the government of all things', he referred to 'the covenant of the law engrafted' in Adam's heart at creation with the promise of life, upon perfect obedience, and the threat of

death on disobedience, and that he was endued with strength and power to perform obedience.¹¹⁷ Since the fall, believers were justified through the merit of God's Son who fulfilled the law and fully satisfied God's justice. But God would still have his people walk according as 'he hath commanded in his holy Scripture', and although 'the regenerate cannot fulfill the lawe of God perfectly in this life', they still had their duty towards God and their neighbour to fulfill, for 'although the Law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites be abolished, and the Civil precepts thereof be not of necessitie to be received in any Common-wealth: yet notwithstanding no Christian man whatsoever is freed from the obedience of the Commaundements, which are called Morall.'¹¹⁸

The *Principles* and the *Method* expounded the commandments as the 'rule' or 'direction' of the new and sincere obedience which was the fruit of repentance in the life of the Christian. The *Method* also gave prominence to the use of the covenant of the law in the ministry of the word for the begetting of faith. In this way it stung the conscience with a sense of God's wrath upon sin, and showed the futility of self-created attempts to obtain eternal life, thereby preparing the heart for the promises of the gospel.¹¹⁹

In *A Body of Divinitie*, Ussher taught that after the fall there was still some evidence of the moral law that was written in man's heart at the beginning. This was seen in a guilty conscience, a desire to hide from God, and the way in which men by the light of nature were a law unto themselves. But since the fall this moral law was comprised in the decalogue and in the Scriptures generally. Ussher still regarded the law as a covenant, or at least still worthy of the name - 'although it be not able to reconcile us (which is the nature of a covenant), yet it doth make way for reconciliation by another covenant'.¹²⁰

The law or covenant of works and the covenant of

grace were both from God, therefore they both displayed one kind of righteousness. The differences were merely in the offering of the covenant to man. Where the law revealed and commanded good, it gave no strength, whereas the gospel enabled fallen man to believe and obey through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The law promised life only and required perfect obedience, whereas the gospel promised righteousness as well as life and required only the righteousness of faith. The law revealed and rebuked sin, but left fallen man in it, where the gospel revealed the remission of sins and freed man from punishment. The law ministered wrath, condemnation and death, whereas the gospel ministered grace, justification and life. The law was grounded in man's own righteousness, requiring perfect obedience in man's own person and eternal punishment for default; the gospel was grounded in Christ's righteousness, and admitted payment and performance by another on behalf of those who received it.¹²¹

Since both showed one righteousness, the covenant of grace did not therefore abolish the covenant of works, it rather accomplished and established it. But this accomplishment was not in the covenant of grace as it related to man, but as it related to Christ on man's behalf. Christ's work was essentially a law-work. It was he who met the requirements of the covenant of works, thereby fulfilling and establishing it, and enabling his righteousness to be offered in grace to man. Ussher discussed this extensively in the section on the mediatorial work of Christ.¹²²

There was no implication of any absolute dichotomy between law and gospel, or that the law had no further function in those under the covenant of grace. Although its requirements had been fulfilled in Christ, the law still worked with the gospel towards the end of doing God's will. Both together revealed God's will and the rule of obedience for man. If it should be asked how the gospel

could be a rule of obedience when it was a rule of faith, the answer was that when the law showed the obedience required, the gospel directed God's children in how to perform it, by offering and conferring the faith which it required, 'not only as a hand to lay hold on Christ, but also as a chief *vertue*, working by love in all parts of obedience, without which even the *Gospel* is *Law*, that is, a killing letter 2 Cor. 3.6., to the regenerate; and with which the *Law* becommeth as it were *Gospel* to the regenerate, even a law of *liberty* Iam. 1.25 & 2.12. For the Law saveth us not without the Gospel; so the Gospel saveth us not without the Law'.¹²³

Again Ussher distinguished the moral law from the ceremonial and judicial or civil law. The moral law was contained in the decalogue which he expounded in great detail. This became the rule of the Christian's new obedience in the work of sanctification. But this obedience was not performed by the force or conduct of nature, but by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, working in the elect according to the rule of God's known will, for God's glory, and for the assurance of election and the edification of others.¹²⁴

The good works of the regenerate did not merit eternal life, or contribute to justification in any way, since none of them was perfectly good or free from sin. Yet God accepted them as perfect and rewarded them in grace through the intercession of Christ. In other words, the works of the believer were also justified through the work of Christ.¹²⁵

Ball's position concerning the law deserves careful consideration. After discussing the covenant of promise (or grace) made with Adam after the fall, and the manner in which it was made and manifested to Abraham, his next chapter was entitled 'Of the Covenant of Grace under Moses'¹²⁶ He was immediately aware that the appropriateness of this title might be challenged, and that

some would want to place Moses under the covenant of works and the Old Testament only, maintaining that he was associated only with the law and did not manifest the covenant of grace. This would identify the Old Testament only with the covenant of works, and the New with the covenant of grace. Furthermore it would make a distinction between 'promise' and 'covenant', implying that any grace in the Old Testament was given by promise and not by covenant. For Ball this was unthinkable. It could not be proved, he said, 'that ever God made the covenant of works with the creature fallen'. God's dealings with man since the fall were always on the basis of the covenant of grace, and under Moses there was a clearer, and now national, expression of it.¹²⁷

It was wrong therefore to think of the Old Testament as a covenant which was subservient to the covenant of grace, acting only as a preparation for it, stirring men and giving them a thirst for what could only be satisfied by Christ's coming. To distinguish the covenants in this way made them to differ in substance rather than in degrees of administration. Even when holding that they differ only in degree, Ball counselled care about how such differences were listed, lest the impression be given of two *kinds* of covenant, because 'the Law was never given or made positive without the Gospel, neither is the Gospel now without the Law'. The designation of the Old Testament as law and the New as gospel, simply resulted from the respective predominance of law and gospel in each. Ball held that even the law given on Sinai was of the substance of the covenant of grace, because it was propounded not as a covenant of life, but as a means to discover sin and drive the Jews to seek the mercy of God in Christ and 'to be a rule of life to a people in Covenant, directing them how to walke before God in holinesse and righteousnesse, that they might inherit the promises of grace and mercy. This I take to be the truth...'.¹²⁸

Ball had his reasons for believing this was the truth. First, God was already in covenant (a marriage covenant Ex.19:4-5; Jer.11:2-4) with Israel, before the giving of the law. At its promulgation he proclaimed himself their Redeemer and Saviour (Ex.20:1). A covenant could not have been made between God and sinners without forgiveness and reconciliation; therefore while the giving of the decalogue was designated the covenant of the law, it must in substance have been a covenant of grace and mercy. Israel could never have been God's 'peculiar treasure' on the basis of the covenant of works.¹²⁹

Furthermore the sum of the law in the Old Testament was declared to be faith and love as much as in the New (Dt.6:16; Mk.12:29). God only commanded faith of fallen men for salvation. Since the fall life and salvation were only promised through faith in the Messiah. The law was given to instruct man in the way of faith, love and a good conscience. Indeed, reasoned Ball, while 'the condition of obedience, which God requireth and man promiseth' was the principal thing in the law, it also promised and proclaimed 'free and gracious pardon'. The problem with Israel was that they failed to perceive the grace that was promised even in the law and rested in the works: 'They...lightly following the letter, mistooke the meaning, not looking to the end of that which was to be abolished, whereunto *Moses* had a eye under the vaile'.¹³⁰

Again, the covenant established by mutual and willing consent after the giving of the law was referred to as a renewal of that sworn to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, after the transgressions of the people since then. It was the same in substance, in promises and requirements. It was often renewed in the history of Israel after times of decline. It could not therefore be a covenant of works, since a covenant of works once broken could not be renewed. It must be understood as a covenant of grace in which they knew God would forgive their sins and accept their

obedience though weak and imperfect.¹³¹ God bound himself to Israel solely out of love for them and not for any merit in them (Ex.16:8). He would never have done that if he was conditioning salvation with perfect obedience. The law required faith upon which obedience and love were built. Only by presupposing Christ could it ever bring men to Christ. Christ could not be 'the end of the Law, if the Law did not direct to Him, and require faith in Him.' But that was what the law did; it drove men away from all confidence in the works of the law in order to obtain righteousness by faith in Christ.¹³²

Ball countered the possible objection that there was no mention of Christ in the law by saying that he was prefigured in all the ceremonies and sacrifices which were appended to it. These taught faith in the Messiah and promised forgiveness and pardon. The life and salvation promised to those who kept the commandments was clearly not for their perfect obedience and works, but through God's free mercy and grace. The law, unlike the original covenant of works, admitted repentance and required faith in Messiah. This was the true sense of the law as expounded by the prophets.

The decalogue, therefore, as a summary of the law, was to the Jews a perfect rule of life, and as such was the substance of the covenant of grace in which God's people should walk.¹³³ Christ was always the scope of the law, although he was only fully revealed in New Testament times. The law was not opposed to, but subordinate to, the gospel. This was why when the Jews sought to justify themselves by works, Paul charged them with perverting the law (Rom. 10:4-6). Moses had taught them to look to Messiah for righteousness by faith, because justification was impossible to sinful man by the law.

When the apostle, therefore, opposed law and gospel, he was not positing an absolute opposite between the law and the covenant of grace. It was faith in Messiah that

established the law gave it force and sentence. The Jews took the law and separated it from faith. They did not want Messiah who was the life and end of the law. By seeking righteousness in the dead works of the law and resting in them for justification, they opposed both the law and its end. That brought death and bondage. Those who used the law properly were not enemies of the New Testament and its promises but subordinate allies, for then the law was the covenant of grace for substance, leading them to Christ. The difference lay not between law and gospel, but in the dispositions manifest towards the law.¹³⁴

Ball continued: 'The words "the letter killeth" are not to be understood absolutely of the Law, but as it was separated from Christ and the Gospell, of men who did rest in the Law, and sought to be justified by it'. The Jews had failed to perceive Christ as the end of the law, and consequently they perverted the true intent of the law and ended up not only guilty of hating Christ, but also the law itself. The law animated by Christ was pleasant and delightful, but separated from him it only wounded, terrified and killed.¹³⁵

The conflict between law and grace in the Epistle to the Galatians was only in those who trusted in the works of the law, or those who joined the law to Christ for justification, as if the law justified in part. This was contrary to the whole purpose of the law. God never intended it for justification; it was to be a rigid exactor of entire obedience and of God's handwriting against sin, and secondly to be a pointer to Christ and salvation and how to walk pleasing to God. The law opposed to Christ cursed all who failed to render perfect obedience. Given to those in covenant, it reproved and convinced them of their sin, but did not curse every violation of it because their sin was pardoned in Christ. To rest in the law for justification made void the promise contained in it,

whereas it ought to have established it.

Ball concluded: 'The covenant then, which God made with Israel, was one for substance with that he had made with the Patriarks, that is, it was a covenant of grace and mercy: though the Law to them that rested in the workes thereof, and perverted the right use of the Law, was a killing letter and a ministration of death'.¹³⁶

In keeping with his view of the 'infancy' of the church in the Old Testament, and that the nearer it came to Christ the less obscure the promises and knowledge of Christ and faith became, the renewing of the covenant under Moses, represented for Ball, a step forward in the unfolding expression of the covenant of grace.¹³⁷ For example, while the covenant at Sinai was made in Christ out of the undeserved love and mercy of God, in its administration Moses was the mediator as a type of the one true Mediator. In this capacity he prevailed with God 'for the suspending of his justice', and with the people to bind themselves in covenant with God. Again, strangers were not wholly excluded from the covenant, and the temporal blessings of the land were given to them as types of the spiritual inheritance in Christ.¹³⁸

The Siniatic covenant promised forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and called for the repentance of transgressors. The conditions attached to the promises (eg. 'Do this and live') were not antecedent conditions where the condition is the cause of the thing promised, but consequent conditions, which Ball described as 'annexed to the promise as a qualification in the subject, or an adjunct, that must attend the thing promised. And in this latter sense, obedience to commandments, was a condition of promise; not a cause why the thing promised was vouchsafed, but a qualification in the subject capable, or a consequence of such great mercy freely conferred'.¹³⁹

The condition of the covenant was faith in the promised Messiah. God could only be the God of Israel

through a Mediator, and Israel could only have God as their God by that means, which was the only way a sinner could trust in the Lord or please him. The true Israelite was justified by faith. Perfect obedience was still commanded, so that any who trusted in their own works for justification would realize their position - complete obedience or judgment. But for those in covenant a sincere obedience was accepted, for God's free pardon covered their sins. That was how those acquainted with the meaning of the law understood its spiritual sense. They knew that they could never perfectly keep the law, but they promised 'sincere, uniforme and impartiall obedience', knowing that their shortcomings were graciously forgiven in Christ.¹⁴⁰

A further advantage of the Mosaic covenant was the ordination of the ministry or priesthood for the administration of its national expression. Under these figures, and the ceremonies and sacrifices they performed, Christ and his work was preached and discerned by spiritual Jews. This 'pedagogie of Moses' was a school that the Gentiles lacked, though it did not come up to the university of the Christians!¹⁴¹ The effect of this was to maintain moral order in the nation. Even the spiritually discovenanted - the rejectors of the soul and end of the law - obtained outward blessings and were kept from notorious evil, while spiritual Jews received grace to salvation. All these blessings whether temporal or spiritual were not merited, but conferred freely according to the covenant of grace. True, Ball emphasized again, 'The promise is conditionall, if they obey, they shall reape the good things of the land, but obedience is not a causall condition, why they should inherit, but consequent, what they must doe when they should inherit the land'.

So, he concluded, 'herein there appears no intexture of the covenant of works with the Covenant of Grace, nor any moderation of the Law to the strength and power of

nature for the obtaining of outward blessings. But rather that God of his abundant goodnesse is pleased freely to conferre outward blessings promised in Covenant upon some that did not cleave unto him unfainedly, that he might make good his promise unto the spirituall seed, which by word and oath he had conferred unto the Fathers'.¹⁴²

In other words, there was no room in Ball's thinking for any blessing, whether temporal or spiritual, to be promised to, or received by man since the fall on the basis of the covenant of works. Even outward blessings enjoyed by the discovenanted were bestowed by the free bounty of God intent on making good his covenantal promises to the elect.

Summary

There are many other sections of the *Confession* which could profitably be outlined and examined following the method adopted here, but these are sufficient for the purpose stated. It is clear that the works of Ussher and Ball were very much to the forefront of those who compiled the Westminster standards. The use of similar words and phrases, and the pattern followed, are too numerous and exact to be coincidental, or the result of simply using common sources. Secondly, in the foil of the fuller explications of these writers, a clearer and more accurate view emerges of what was probably intended and implied in the more concise, nuggetory statements of the *Confession*. This avoids the temptation to interpret them in the light of later writers, rather than in the light of their own sources.¹⁴³ The more significant issues in these comparisons will now be drawn together.

First regarding the covenant of works: One really important aspect here is that the covenant of works was discussed within a wider context of grace. That is, when God entered into an agreement with Adam, while this agreement was based in justice and was therefore designated

a covenant of works or law, it was nevertheless a manifestation of God's goodness and care towards his creation that motivated his purpose. He wanted them to have a larger understanding of his ways with them, a more familiar relationship with him, and a deeper enjoyment of his company and blessings. The covenant was first and foremost a gracious 'condescension' on the part of God.

This cannot be lightly dismissed as something not taken seriously by covenantal theologians, so that 'by name a covenant of works has a very deadening effect on anything said about grace'.¹⁴⁴ Why should it? Or why should the idea of life promised to Adam on condition of obedience to God be thought objectionable or contrary to the goodness and grace of God? Only if the law of God is considered as something oppressive and undesirable would this be so. But the law of God as considered by these covenantal documents was intimately related to the will of God, and as such exhibited as an expression of the character of God. 'Be holy, for I am holy', was given as the basis of both law and gospel.¹⁴⁵ This law was not set forth in abstract, impersonal terms as a manifestation of cold sovereignty, either in the prelapsarian covenant of works, or in its later written promulgation by Moses. The sovereignty and awesomeness of God's being and ways were certainly manifested, but it was within a context of his fatherly love and concern for his people that they too should be holy, since it was only in the way of holiness that true happiness was to be found and fellowship with God was to be maintained. God's purpose throughout all his dealings with man was that he should have this 'fruition of himself', for that was where life and blessedness lay. Hence the covenant of works was a 'covenant of life' as long as that primal fellowship remained unbroken.

Again, it was noted that care was necessary when speaking of man's 'own natural strength' in relation to the covenant *pre lapsus*. It was repeatedly stressed that

man's power, ability or strength was a gift of God. Adam was dependent on the 'grace' of God for his continuance in obedience. The nearest parallel here of a similar sinless situation was that of Christ himself. The life of obedience which Jesus lived in order to fulfil God's law was one in which he was enabled and strengthened continually.¹⁴⁶ If Christ's obedience was not autonomous, how much less that of Adam.

In this connection it is necessary to be clear about what was meant by grace in paradise with respect to man unfallen, and grace in a world of fallen men. Rolston, arguing that the entire theology of the *Confession* was coloured by a primal covenant devoid of grace, said that 'Chronologically and logically for covenant theology grace came and comes only after sin... The whole understanding of divine grace has to be worked out as a second covenant introduced with the failure of the first. There is no real cause to speak of the grace of God until after man sins'.¹⁴⁷ This charge does not stand up. Considerable discussion and understanding of the grace of God prior to man's sin was encountered in this study, with the careful distinction, of course, that grace in this context has reference only to the gifts of God's favour in providing for, assisting and upholding man. If grace is considered in the sense of mercy, pardon and forgiveness, then certainly 'chronologically and logically' it comes after sin. This was so in the sequence of events. Salvation from sin could only follow sin. But theologically, in the context of the divine decrees and the purposes of God, it was not necessarily so. Rolston failed completely to make these distinctions. He appeared to work on the premise that man was always fallen, or else had never truly fallen, and was always in need of grace in one sense only.

Again, the relevance of grace in the context of the good or the reward promised in the covenant of works was observed. Man could 'merit' the continuance of life by

his obedience. By his conformity to God's revealed will, he could claim the promised reward as his due wage. God would be in his debt in this respect. But this could only be so because God in his good and gracious purpose had formerly bound himself to this by the terms of the covenant. So while it was a covenant of works which admitted the idea of merit in the divine/human relationship, yet there was an overarching manifestation of grace in the whole arrangement, since the very duty God promised to reward, was a duty owed by man apart from any covenantal arrangement. Considered in this wider perspective, the blessings promised were not something that man deserved by inherent right or which he could merit or earn apart from the prior goodness and grace of God in making such an arrangement.

One other feature that has emerged from this study in relation to the covenant of works concerns its status after the fall, with respect to man as a sinner. There was no evidence that God ever made or renewed the covenant of works as a means of life with man as a sinner. The idea was absurd. The covenant of works made no provision for repentance or forgiveness. Once broken, it could never again offer the promise of life to those who had broken it. This applied to all mankind, since all had broken the first covenant in Adam as their head and representative. All God's dealings with man were now under the covenant of grace.

This did not mean that the covenant of works was abolished. It still stood in a condemnatory role, demanding the punishment of man in accordance with its original terms. It could no longer be a covenant of life for man since he was no longer spiritually capable of rendering perfect obedience. Therefore, it was never made with man as such since the fall, though it still stood threatening death for disobedience. In relation to man, Ball was reluctant to refer to it as a covenant at all

since by it no reconciliation between God and man could be effected. Ussher did continue to call it a covenant of law, but qualified this by saying that it only merited the name of covenant now with respect to the part that it played in driving men to the covenant of grace, which was now the only way to life for fallen creatures.¹⁴⁸

But while the covenant of works no longer stood as a covenant of life, the stipulations of that covenant comprising the law of God were not thereby abolished or irrelevant. God was still the same righteous God. His holiness was unchangeable. His desire for the holiness of his people was unchanged. The righteousness revealed in the law was still the only standard of behaviour that pleased God. Therefore, while the law of God no longer stood as a covenant of life, it still remained as 'a perfect rule of righteousness'. It was 'as such', as the *Confession* made clear, that it 'was delivered by God upon mount Sinai'.¹⁴⁹

For unbelievers who could not observe the precepts of the law, it served as a restraint, helping to maintain some degree of moral order in society, and also as a constant reminder of the sentence of death under which they lived, and was therefore a goad urging them to seek life in another direction. For the believer, who had been reconciled with God again through the work of Christ, which had satisfied the demands of justice imposed by the broken covenant, the law served as a guide to the kind of life which was pleasing to God. While the believer was also incapable of keeping perfectly God's law in this life, he nevertheless desired to please and glorify God, and so as the expression of his new life in Christ he strove joyfully and sincerely by the enabling power of God's Spirit, to live according to God's law, with the assurance that all his shortcomings were freely forgiven in Christ.

Now concerning the covenant of grace: It is clear from the works considered that the covenant was unilateral

in its initiation. It was God who sovereignly took the initiative in proposing to enter into covenant with man. It was God who made the promises. It was God who chose those with whom he would engage in covenant. It was God who decided the terms of the covenant, and who imposed these upon the parties concerned. The covenant was *sola gratia*. This was so in the protoevangelion. It was stressed in each subsequent renewal of the covenant promises, including the Sinaitic transaction.¹⁵⁰

But the covenant was also bilateral in its administration, because that was the way God ordained it should be, and that was necessary to give it meaning as a covenant. The Deuteronomic passage referred to in the last note continues: 'Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments... You shall therefore be careful to do the commandments, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which I command you this day'.¹⁵¹

The insistence on making a rigid and absolute distinction between the unilateral and bilateral aspects as a presupposition to the study of the covenantal idea has caused much confusion.¹⁵² The very nature of a covenant implies that there is a two-sidedness to it. It is not a mutual agreement in which two parties come to terms by means of a compromise, but there is a mutuality of agreement on the basis of stipulations which have been unilaterally imposed. The divine initiative calls for man's response. Man is responsible for exercising the repentance, faith, obedience and love required of him, but unlike a human covenant, what is required was also given in the covenant.

The promises of the covenant were assured of fulfilment with respect to the elect. God would be their God. God would have them as his people. There were nevertheless stipulations attached: 'Walk before me and be

perfect' (Gen.17:1). The repentance, faith and obedience of those called were the conditions required. But these were not conditions in any meritorious sense. They were, to use Ball's distinction, consequent rather than antecedent conditions. The conditions were included in the provisions of the covenant, therefore while man exercised himself in fulfilling them, this was not something which man contributed or which he had within his own power to achieve. It was the gift of grace which he exercised responsibly by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

That this could lead to the charge that 'the covenant was only nominally conditional', because it fulfilled its own conditions, did not seem to perturb these writers.¹⁵³ They were content to leave it at that, keeping in mind as they did, that the idea of a covenant between God and man was always a condescension to the weakness of man. It was to enable man to better understand God's ways with him. A human category was used, a category that man could understand, but like any human analogy it had its breaking point in illustrating divine truth. Rationally the covenant may only be nominally conditional, but experientially it was God's way of teaching his children about his ways so that they could glorify and enjoy him. In the purpose of God the conditions were meaningful and real within that developing relationship.

One other observation must be made. In all the writings considered there was a strong Christological orientation to the doctrine of the covenant.¹⁵⁴ The position of the subject in the schema as well as the content in each case led directly into the mediatorial work of Christ, which was then considered in great depth, and all following the same pattern. Christ was the Mediator of the covenant, chosen and ordained by God, fulfilling the offices of Prophet, Priest and King, in order to redeem, call, justify, sanctify and glorify those who were given to

him by the Father from all eternity. The true deity and humanity of Christ were stressed as necessary for this mediation, and through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, Christ willingly undertook and fulfilled the mediatorial work to which he was called by perfectly obeying God's law, and offering himself as a perfect sacrifice fully to satisfy divine justice, and thus purchase reconciliation and an eternal inheritance for all his people. All that Christ purchased was effectually applied by the Spirit to the elect in all ages, both before and after his incarnation.

Christ was the substance of the covenant. In him the covenant promises were fulfilled. In him the covenant of works and the covenant of grace harmonized. He satisfied the justice upon which the former was grounded by the payment of the penalty for its broken law on behalf of his people. And he manifest the fullness of the latter in the free bestowal of all the promised covenantal blessings upon his people, including the enabling of them to fulfil the conditions and stipulations required, with all that that meant for the Christian life.

NOTES: Chapter Two

1 For lists of members see: *Confession of Faith*, (1976 ed.); G. Gillespie, *Notes*, x-xv; Neal, *History*, 208-210 (has some errors); Mitchell, *Minutes*, lxxxix-lxxxv; *History*, xii-xx; Paul, *Assembly of the Lord*, app.1. 546-556. For biographical sketches see: *DNB*, passim; Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, 3 vols. (London, 1813); Neal, *History*, 211-212, 264ff; E. Calamy, *The Non-Conformists Memorial*, 3 vols. ed. S. Palmer (London, 1802-3) (This work is a record of those ejected from the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity (24 Aug. 1666), but many of the surviving members of the Assembly were involved); J. Reid, *Memoirs of the Lives and Writings of Those Eminent Divines*, 2 vols. (Paisley, 1811); 'Biographical Sketches of the Westminster Divines', *A History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, n.a. (Philadelphia, 1841); Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.731-747; D. Masson, *Life of John Milton*, 6 vols. (London, 1871-4), 2.516-524; Mitchell, *History*, 118-127; J. MacPherson, 'The Westminster Confession: The Character and Sources of its Teaching', *PRR*, 33. (1898), 239-260; Leith, *The Assembly of Westminster*, 45-49.

2 E. Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1816), 1.678-680; J. Milton, *The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols. eds. F.A. Patterson et.al. (New York, 1931-1938), 3.367-368; 10.321-323; 18.251-252.

3 MacPherson, 'The Westminster Confession', 249-250, 253.

4 Mitchell, *History*, 370.

5 Marsden, *Early Puritans*, 17, 209-211, 243n, 349; *History of the Later Puritans*, (London, 1872), 86; McCrie, *Annals of English Presbytery*, (London, 1872), 177.

6 W.M. Campbell, *The Triumph of Presbyterianism*, (Edinburgh, 1958), 134-135.

7 R. Wodrow, *Select Biographies*, ed. W.K. Tweedie (Edinburgh, 1845), 1.309.

8 K.L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Leiden, 1982), 9, 13ff.

9 McCrie, *Annals*, 177. McCrie wrongly states that the *Longer Catechism* was prepared after the *Shorter Catechism* as an amplification of it. P. Miller, *New England Mind* 1.266-372, for example, sees covenant theology developing as a response to the 'pressure of an Orthodox resolution' to the question imposed by Arminianism and Antinomianism, but he does have to admit 'the covenant theory developed in

England before Antinomianism became a great concern'. He could have made the same admission regarding Arminianism!

10 see Ussher, *Works*, 15.512-520. Ussher quotes Calvin more than any other of the Reformers. Norton had translated Calvin's *Institutes* as early as 1587.

11 Marsden, *Early Puritans*, 209.

12 *Zurich Letters*, passim; cf. also W.G.T. Shedd, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, 2 vols. (New York, 1864), 2.492. Shedd maintained: 'The connection between the Calvinism of the Continent and the Puritans of England...is very close and intimate'.

13 T. Russell, ed. *The Works of the English Reformers: William Tyndale and John Frith*, 2 vols. (London, 1831); C. Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Biographies*, 1.1-105; H. Rashdall, 'Wycliffe', *DNB*, 63.202-223; J. Gairdner, *Lollardy and the Reformation in England*, 4 vols. (London, 1908-1913); H.B. Workman, *John Wyclif: A Study of the English Medieval Church*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1926); K.B. McFarlane, *John Wycliffe and the beginning of English Nonconformity*, (London, 1952); W.W. Shirley, ed. *Fasciculi Zizaniorum magistri Johannis Wyclif cum trito*, (London, 1958); J.A.F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards 1414-1550*, (Oxford, 1926); J.F. Davis, 'Lollardy and the Reformation in England', *AFR*, 37. (1982), 217-236.

14 Strype, *Eccl. Memorials*, 1.pt.2.50-56, speaks of groups holding on to and propagating the doctrines of 'holie John' and his writings; R. Hilles writing to Bullinger 18 Sept. 1541, *Original Letters*, 1.221, asserts that a martyr burnt at the stake in London for holding Lutheran opinions, was really holding the views of 'our Wycliffe'; R.J. Poole, *Wyclif and the Movement for Reform*, (London, 1896), indicates that the tradition continued into the sixteenth century, but its influence was 'so slight and attenuated that it exercised no appreciable influence upon our later religious history'; Gairdner, *op.cit.*, 1.161, says this influence constituted no threat to the established church; Workman, *op.cit.*, 2.401, similarly emphasizes decline in the fifteenth century; H.O. Taylor, *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century*, 2 vols. (New York, 1920), 2.49, 128, sees some continuation of influence in laicizing of life and opinion as opposed to sacerdotalism or ecclesiasticism in the fifteenth century, and regards Latimer as standing in the tradition of Wyclif; Knappen, *Tudor Puritanism*, 9, maintains the Lollards were not taken seriously by the authorities: 'They contributed almost nothing except numbers and the memory of a great past'; Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*, concludes that 'The early English Protestant movement itself was determined by exiles', and it was only later that Tyndale's work was valued by prominent ecclesiastics; D.D. Smeeton, *Lollard Themes in the Reformation Theology of William*

Tyndale, (Kirksville, 1986), 151, places the origin of covenantal theology back with Wyclif, saying that Tyndale derived it from the Wycliffite bibles in circulation: 'Wyclif and his immediate circle contributed not only the terminology but also the theoretical bases for later elaboration of covenant thought'; cf. also A. Hope, 'Lollardy: The Stone the Builders Rejected', *Protestantism and the National Church* eds. Lake and Dowling.

15 Cremeans, *The Reception*, 29-43. While Cremeans wants to argue that 'the examples of Calvin's weight in English affairs...offer no proof of exclusive or even preponderant influence', when the evidence which he cites is followed up, it is sufficient to show that Calvin's influence was very considerable. Cremeans' chief interest in church government and church/state relations, obscures his view of the theological significance of Calvin in England. This was evident in all parties in English protestantism.

16 Warfield, 'The Westminster Doctrine of Holy Scripture', *PRR*, 4. (1893), 586-587; Heppe, *Dogmatics; The Reformers of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century*, trs. H. Schmettau and B.H. Cowper (London, 1859)

17 Calvin, *Inst.*, I.6.1-2; I.7.1.

18 Mitchell, *The Westminster Confession of Faith: A Contribution to the Study of its Historical relations, and to the Defence of its Teaching*, (Edinburgh, 1886), 8-12, 33-42. This pamphlet was the substance of a lecture on the *Confession*; cf. also *Minutes*, xlvii-xlvix; *History*, 372-385; Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.761-765; Warfield, 'Westminster Doctrine', 582-655; 'The Making of the Confession', 226-283; C. Briggs, 'Documentary History of the Westminster Assembly', *PR*, 1. (1880), 127-163.

19 Ussher, *Works*, 1.app.4.xxxi-1; Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.662-665; 3.526-544; Neal, *History*, 3.app.4.506-518; for the Lambeth Articles see Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.658-662; 3.523-525; for the English Articles see Schaff, *Creeds*, 1.611-657; 3.486-522; Neal, *History*, 3.app.7.519-524.

20 C.R. Erlington, 'The Life of James Ussher D.D.', *Works*, 1.43-44. Erlington was very critical of Ussher's Calvinism, and attempted to show that he changed his theological stance in later years. But there is sufficient evidence to indicate that this was not so.

21 Ussher, *A Body of Divinitie or the Summe and Substance of Christian Religion catechistically propounded, and explained, by way of Question and Answer: Methodically and familiarly handled*, (London, 1647); *Works*, 1.248-250 esp.249. It will be treated as his work throughout.

22 *The Principles of Christian Religion: Summarily sett down according to the word of God: together with A Briefe Epitome of the Bodie of Divinitie*, (London, 1645); *The Principles of the Christian Religion with a Brief Method of*

the Doctrine Thereof, (London, 1654). Both volumes are found in *Works*, 11.177-196, and abbreviated in Mitchell, *Catechisms*, 137-150.

23 *Works*, 11.179.

24 Mitchell, *Minutes*, 515n. The Shorter Catechism was 'part of the intended uniformity, to be a Directory for catechising such as are of weaker capacity'.

25 Ussher, *Works*, 1.249.

26 J.Downham, 'To the Reader', *A Body of Divinitie*, unpaginated preface.

27 Ussher, *Works*, 11.179-180.

28 See n.19.

29 Ussher, *Works*, 1.1.

30 *Ibid.*, 1.15; 15.571. Ussher was appointed Catechist and Proctor of Trinity in 1600, and in a letter to Laud many years later he says he had 'the honour of being the first proctor that ever was there'.

31 *Ibid.*, 1.17; 18-19.

32 Mitchell, *History*, 377. It is also interesting that for five years Ussher was taught by two Scotsmen, J. Fullerton and J. Hamilton, both apparently pupils of Melville in Glasgow and St. Andrews. The latter continued to tutor Ussher in the newly established Trinity College, where he was the first scholar, being then thirteen years of age. See Ussher, *Works*, 1.2-7; McCrie, *Life of Melville*, 2.291-294.

33 *Minutes*, xlvi-xlviii; *Contribution*, 6-8.

34 *Ibid.*, xlvi; *Contribution*, 7-8.

35 These can be found in Mitchell, *Contribution*, 8-12, app.A where some general doctrines are briefly compared, and 33-42 where predestination, the Mediator, the Lord's Supper and justification are treated more fully. In the *Minutes*, lii-liv, he repeats the section on God's Eternal Decree, and again in the *History*, 381-384. Warfield confines himself to the doctrines of Scripture and predestination with more detailed comparisons. In 'The Making of the Confession', 226-283, he follows an exhibit taken from Green, *The Thirty-Nine Articles*, 354-355, setting forth not only the *Irish Articles*, but the Assembly Committee's early draft proposal, alongside the final confessional statement, which also shows phrases taken from both the *Lambeth Articles* and *The Thirty-Nine Articles*. In his other article 'The Westminster Doctrine', 582-596; 598-610, he shows the correspondence with some earlier confessions and then with Ball's *A Short Treatise*, (London, 1656) and the works of Ussher.

36 *WCF*, IV.2. Editions of the *Confession*, are numerous. the English edition of 1647 with modernized spelling, together with the Latin edition (Cambridge, 1656), and the *Shorter Catechism*, are found in Schaff, *Creeeds*, 3.600-673; 676-673. One of the most recent editions of the entire standards is that issued by the Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (1976).

37 Ussher, *Principles*, 183; cf. *Articles*, 21.xxxvii. (For convenience the *Articles*, *Principles* and *Method* will hereafter be referred to under these headings with pagination as in the appropriate volume of the *Works*.)

38 *Articles*, 21.xxxvii; cf. *Method*, 205

39 *Body of Divinitie*, 124, 125.

40 *Method*, 205; *WCF*, XIX.1.

41 *Principles*, 184.

42 *WCF*, VI.1; Ussher, *Principles*, 185; *Method*, 205-206.

43 *WCF*, VI.1: Ussher, *Articles*, 23.xxxvii.

44 *WCF*, VI.2-3; Ussher, *Articles*, 22-23.xxxvii; *Method*, 205-206; *Principles*, 184; *Body of Divinitie*, 142-143; 145-146.

45 *WCF*, VI.5; Ussher, *Articles*, 24.xxxvii.

46 Ussher, *Articles*, 28.xxxviii; *Body of Divinitie*, 128; 141; 142; *WCF*, VI.1.

47 *WCF*, VI.6; Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 143.

48 John Ball (1585-1640) was educated at Brasnose College, Oxford from 1602-8. He served as a family tutor for a while before ordination, without subscriptions, by an Irish bishop in 1610. He was a Puritan Episcopalian opposed to the 'relics of popery left in the national Church'. Deprived of his charge by the Bishop of Chester, he suffered imprisonment and harassment for his non-conformity and private preachings. He was an outstanding scholar, well-versed in the Roman and Arminian controversies, but had to teach school to support himself. His works are difficult to date, but he wrote *A Short Catechisme contayning the Principles of Religion*, which had gone through twelve editions by 1628 and thirty-four by 1653. An exposition of this followed entitled *A Short Treatise contayning all the principall Grounds of Religion*, but this was soon produced in catechetical form also, and had gone through fourteen editions before 1632. *A Treatise of Faith* was an extremely popular work with editions in 1632 and 1637. He wrote several other works, most of them published posthumously, the most important being *A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace* (1645). For biographical details see: Brook, *Lives of the Puritans*, 2.440-444; A.B.

Grosart, 'Ball, John', *DNB*, 3.74-75; Mitchell, *Catechisms*, xli-xlii, 65-91; C.P. Williams, 'Ball, John', *NIDCC*, 98.

49 *WCF*, VII.1.

50 Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 3f, 5-6, 7-9; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, I.5.10-11; I.6f.

51 *Ibid.*, 30; 32; 123.

52 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 5.

53 *Ibid.*, 7.

54 *WCF*, VII.1; Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 7.

55 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 8.

56 *Ibid.*, 6.

57 A.A. Hodge, *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, (Philadelphia, 1869), 169.

58 *WCF*, VII.2; *Larger Cat.*, Q.20, 22; *Shorter Cat.*, 12, 16. The Catechisms use the term 'covenant of life' which was frequently used as a synonym, since it was life, or the continuation of life, that was promised to Adam on condition of obedience.

59 Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 64.

60 *Method*, 205; *Articles*, 21.xxxvii; *Principles*, 184; *Body of Divinitie*, 125.

61 *Body of Divinitie*, 125-126.

62 *Larger Cat.*, Q.20; cf. Ball, *Short Treatise*, 67.

63 Calvin, *Inst.*, IV.14.12,18; IV.19.2; see *Com. on Gen.*, 2:9 and *Com. on Isa.*, 38:7; and *infra*, 2.44-45.

64 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 6, 9; cf. *Short Treatise*, 67.

65 *Ibid.*, 11; cf. *Short Catechisme*, 71 (quotations from the latter are from Mitchell, *Catechisms*, 65-91).

66 *Ibid.*, 9.

67 *Ibid.*, 10.

68 *Short Catechisme*, 71; *Cov. of Grace*, 10; cf. Lk.17:10 and *WCF*, XVI.5.

69 *Cov. of Grace*, 10; cf. Calvin, *Inst.*, IV.14.18.

70 *Ibid.*, 11; J. MacPherson, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, (Edinburgh, 1966), 66-67.

71 *WCF*, VII.1; Hendry, *Westminster Conf. for Today*, 88.

72 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 10; *Short Catechisme*, 70; *Short Treatise*, 67-69; cf. G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, (Grand Rapids, 1959), 33ff, who interprets the covenant of works in terms of a pre-redemptive special revelation, presupposing a prior natural obligation to the moral law.

73 WCF, IV.2; XIX.1.

74 Hendry, *op.cit.*, 88; H. Martin, *The Atonement: in its Relation to the Covenant, the Priesthood, the Intercession of our Lord*, (Edinburgh, 1887), 35-36. Martin explains that the demand is more manifest 'from what is partly the analogy and partly the antithesis of the two covenants'.

75 D. MacLeod, 'Federal Theology - An Oppressive Legalism?', *BOT*, 125. (1974), 22.

76 WCF, VII.3; *Larger Cat.*, Q.30; *Shorter Cat.*, Q.20.

77 WCF, VII.8; XIV.1 (itals.mine); cf. XI.4.

78 Ussher, *Method*, 208.

79 *Ibid.*, 208-213 esp.213.

80 *Articles*, 25.xxxvii; 31-33.xxxix.

81 *Ibid.*, 36.xl.

82 *Body of Divinitie*, 145; 158; 160.

83 *Ibid.*, 159; 160; 203.

84 Ball, *Cov.of Grace*, 11; 12; 15.

85 *Ibid.*, 14-15; cf. *Short Treatise*, 144-145.

86 *Ibid.*, 15-16; 17.

87 *Ibid.*, 19; cf. *Short Treatise*, 102.

88 *Ibid.*, 23; cf. *Short Treatise*, 144.

89 *A Treatise of Faith*, 239; 272-273; cf. *Cov.of Grace*, 3, where Ball says, 'Covenant in Scripture sometimes signifies absolute power of God without any stipulation (eg. Noah Gen.9:16, Phinehas Num.25:12-13). Of this kind is the covenant wherein God promiseth that he will give his elect faith and perserverance, to which promise no conditions annexed can be conceived in mind, which is not comprehended in the promise it selfe. Heb.8:10'.

90 *Ibid.*, 275; 368; cf. *Short Treatise*, .

91 *Larger Cat.*, Q.32, speaks of 'requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him', while the *Confession*, VII.3, speaks only of 'requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved'. In both cases the 'instrumental' sense is to be understood. cf. *Larger Cat.*, Q.73 and WCF, XI.2.

92 WCF, VIII.8; IX.4; X.1,2; XI.1,2; XIV.1; XV.1 'an evangelical grace'; XVI.3; XVII.2; XIX.7.

93 WCF, VII.3; *Larger Cat.*, Q.30.

94 *Larger Cat.*, Q.31. Ball does refer in one place to the covenant which Christ made with the Father, but the thought is not developed, *Short Treatise*, 87.

- 95 For exposition see, R. Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, (Edinburgh, 1853), 88.
- 96 D. MacLeod, 'Covenant 2', *BOT*, 141. (1975), 26.
- 97 Mitchell, *Minutes*, 246, 359-360. Yet as Morris, *Theology of Symbols*, 359, points out, while the phrase was not incorporated in the symbols, 'the fact which the phrase is designed to describe, is clearly suggested in the confessional chapter on Christ the Mediator'.
- 98 *WCF*, VII.4.
- 99 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 1-6; Bullinger, *De Testamento*, 2b-3b, see *infra*, 1.279-280.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 3, 4.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 3; cf. Calvin, *Com. on Heb.*, 9:16.
- 102 [P]. Gillespie, *The Ark of the Testament Opened*, (London, 1661). This work was written by Patrick Gillespie, but erroneously attributed to George Gillespie.
- 103 *WCF*, VII.5,6.
- 104 Calvin, *Inst.*, II.9-11.
- 105 Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 409; 410.
- 106 *Principles*, 186-189, 193-194.
- 107 *Method*, 207-209.
- 108 *Articles*, 81-84. xlvii-xlviii esp. 82. xlvii.
- 109 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 36-47; 47-92; 92-143; 143-156; 156-166.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 194-323; 323-358.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 14-36.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 28; cf. *WCF*, VIII.6.
- 113 *WCF*, XIX.1; cf. IV.2; VI.2,3; VII.2.
- 114 *WCF*, XIX.2; 3-4.
- 115 *WCF*, XIX.5.
- 116 *WCF*, XIX.6,7.
- 117 Ussher, *Articles*, 21. xxxvii
- 118 *Ibid.*, 35. xxxii, 42-43. xli; 46-56. xli-xliii, 63-67. xliiv; 84. xlviii.
- 119 *Principles*, 189-192; *Method*, 213-215; 216.
- 120 *Body of Divinitie*, 124; 158.
- 121 *Ibid.*, 159.
- 122 *Ibid.*, 160-186.

- 123 *Ibid.*, 203.
- 124 *Ibid.*, 203-331; 337ff.
- 125 *Ibid.*, 340; cf. *WCF*, XVI.5,6. The chapter, 'Of Good Works', corresponds very closely to Ussher at this point.
- 126 Ball, *Cov. of Grace*, 36-47; 47-92; 92ff.
- 127 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 128 *Ibid.*, 101-102. Ball would probably have been wary enough about Ussher's list (see *Body of Divinitie*, 159).
- 129 *Ibid.*, 103-105.
- 130 *Ibid.*, 106.
- 131 *Ibid.*, 107-108.
- 132 *Ibid.*, 109.
- 133 *Ibid.*, 110-111; cf. *Treatise of Faith*, 113, 'The Law is the rule of obedience according to which people in covenant ought to walk', and *A Short Treatise*, 182, where he describes the law as 'a rule of life' for the believer.
- 134 *Ibid.*, 115-116.
- 135 *Ibid.*, 119-120.
- 136 *Ibid.*, 120-121; 122.
- 137 *Ibid.*, 122-143; cf. 32-34, and the *WCF*, XIX.3, expression of the 'church under age'.
- 138 *Ibid.*, 130; see Ex.12:4-8; Dt.23:15-16.
- 139 *Ibid.*, 133.
- 140 *Ibid.*, 137; *Short Catechisme*, 88.
- 141 *Ibid.*, 139.
- 142 *Ibid.*, 142.
- 143 eg. Rolston, *The Westminster Confession versus John Calvin*, 117-124. Out of 200+ references he does not quote a single contemporary work. His interpretation was based mainly on Turretin's *Institutio Theologiae elencticae*, (Geneva, 1688) and Witsius' *De Oeconomia Foederum Dei cum hominibus*, (Leeuwarden, 1677), with occasional reference to several nineteenth-century writers.
- 144 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 145 Lev.11:44-45; 1 Pet.1:15-16.
- 146 see Lk.22:44; Heb.5:7-8, 9-14.
- 147 Rolston, *op.cit.*,
- 148 Ussher, *Body of Divinitie*, 158; see *infra*, 74.
- 149 *WCF*, XIX.2.

150 see Dt.7:6-8 'For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chose you to be a people for his own possession out of all the people that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed your from the house of bondage'.

151 Dt.7:9-11.

152 Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, 1.

153 M. McGiffert, 'Grace and Works: The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism', *HTR*, 75.4 (1982), 494.

154 *WCF*, XIII.1-8; Ussher, *Articles*, 29-30.xxxviii; *Principles*, 186-188; *Method*, 208-211; *Body of Divinitie*, 160-186; Ball, *Cov.of Grace*, 203-347.

CHAPTER THREE

Historiography of Covenantal Thought: The Nineteenth Century

As the seventeenth century progressed, the use of the covenant as a unifying principle in theology increased in popularity, and eventually became known as Federal Theology, or 'that system of truth which is built upon the doctrine of the Covenants'.¹ ('federal' being derived from the Latin *foedus*) This federal theology was regarded as 'sufficiently comprehensive to embrace every department of theology and every point of doctrine pertaining to the fall and recovery of man'.² The idea was used primarily to describe the relationship of man with God in a soteriological context, but as Reformed thinking viewed that relationship as touching upon every area of life, so covenantal thinking came to be applied to all social and political relationships as well. The family, the church, and the nation were all viewed within the orbit of the covenant. God was seen as dealing with men on a covenantal basis in domestic, ecclesiastical, social and political affairs. This thought was worked out in a variety of ways according to the local or national context. In Scotland it saw the rise of the movement known as the Covenanters;³ in England it helped to provide the basis for the mid-seventeenth-century revolution;⁴ and when shipped to New England by the Puritans, it became 'the most coherent and most powerful single factor in the early history of America'.⁵

Theologically, covenantal thought became closely associated with the names of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669) and Herman Witsius (1636-1708).⁶ It is an indicator of the neglect of the subject with respect to earlier development, that nineteenth-century writers regarded Cocceius as the actual founder of the theology of the

covenant.⁷ Throughout the eighteenth century it remained largely the accepted mode of theological expression in the Reformed churches, interrupted in Scotland by the Marrow controversy. This debate raised a number of questions related to the covenants, such as the conditionality of the covenant, and the nature of assurance, but it was a controversy contained within a framework of the covenants, and the differences separating the protagonists were not so great as often imagined.⁸

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that articles taking a closer and more critical look at covenantal theology began to appear. Karl Sudhoff in 1857, in his biographical work on Zacharius Ursinus and Casper Olevianus, suggested that the latter's *De substantia foederis gratuiti* (Geneva 1585) gave him a place as 'der Gründer Föderal-Theologie', and that Cocceius had gratefully acknowledged this in his *Summa doctrinae de foedere et testamento Dei* (1648).⁹ Sudhoff stressed a strong Genevan influence in the work of Olevianus, who was a former pupil of Calvin.¹⁰ A few years earlier, however, Max Goebel had drawn attention to Olevianus as 'the forerunner of the Christian school of Cocceius and Lampe'.¹¹

In 1856 Ludwig Diestel traced the 'Föderal idee' to the same source.¹² I.A. Dorner of Berlin in his *Geschichte der Protestantischen Theologie* saw covenantal theology as a reaction to a revival of Aristotelian scholasticism and the doctrine of double predestination.¹³ Dorner also raised the question of the monopleuric or dipleuric nature of the covenant, ascribing the former to strict Calvinists for whom the covenant remained one-sided.¹⁴

One of the most significant works to emerge from mid-nineteenth-century Germany was Heinrich Heppe's *Die Dogmatik*.¹⁵ Heppe interestingly introduced his section on the covenant with a quotation from the *Westminster Confession*.¹⁶ He allowed Calvin and Beza a sentence on the violation of the covenant of works, but his treatment

of the subject was taken almost entirely from the Cocceian school.¹⁷ Hepe saw the covenantal school as standing in the stream of Reformed theology, which, much to the wonderment of Barth,¹⁸ he traced back through Herborn and Heidelberg to early German Reformed dogmaticians following 'the precedent of Melanchthon rather than Calvin'.¹⁹ The chief characteristics of this tradition, according to Hepe, were a milder view of predestination (he was critical of what he regarded as speculation on double predestination by Calvin and Beza),²⁰ a recoil from a scholastic arbitrary view of God's promises of life,²¹ and a fundamental concept of revelation in which the *foedus Dei* was the 'basic revelation of all revealed truths in Scripture'.²²

Hepe's work, however, does give the impression of a steady development of unity and continuity in Reformed thought leading to what was to become known as 'federal theology'. While he regarded Melanchthon as the 'father of Reformed theology',²³ he did trace many of his doctrines back to Calvin. In his later work, *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Reformirten Kirche*, he acknowledged that covenantal theology originated in Switzerland rather than with Melanchthon.²⁴ One weakness of Hepe's work was that his sources were mainly Dutch, German and Swiss writers, while the English Puritans, Scottish Presbyterians and French Reformed theologians were practically ignored. Ames, Perkins and Rollock only just get mentioned.²⁵

While most of Hepe's representative writers were later than the period covered by this study, it would nevertheless be worthwhile to note some of the salient features which emerged from them relative to the covenant. For example, man's natural duty of obedience was stressed so that apart from the virtue of the covenant Adam could never have merited anything from God.²⁶ The covenant was 'primarily a one-way covenant (*foedus μονόπλευρον*) made by God in the interests of communion with God. Man could

never make a covenant with God, but since God imposed conditions, events and the required response, it was in this sense mutual and διπλευρον. The covenant of works was also called a *foedus legale*, or a covenant of nature since it was based on the *imago Dei* of man's nature.²⁷ This nature reflected the righteousness of God's law set up in his inner being - 'Already in his ~~in~~ⁱⁿate moral consciousness man was given the full content of the law given later in the decalogue'.²⁸ Furthermore, Adam was a *persona publica* and all mankind was represented in him.²⁹ Added to this general law of love to God and neighbour was a 'test law' represented by the tree of knowledge, and the tree of life was a sacramental pledge of God's promise to reward obedience.³⁰

The covenant of grace which God then announced was, according to Heppe, in the nature of a testamentary disposition, or a promise concerning an inheritance for his children which was made by the Father to Christ who fulfilled all the requirements of a testator. Consequently the covenant of grace was not only a 'covenant', but primarily a testament, and 'since faith and holiness are the condition of membership of the covenant, in and for themselves they are nothing else but the benefits and gifts of it'. Even these conditions were bequeathed by the wish of the testator.³¹

The general view of the covenant exhibited in Heppe was a threefold one with the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son as the basis of Christ's mediatorial work.³² This was identified with the decree of election and was not something that came about only with the fall. Upon this the covenant of grace with the elect rested. It was emphasized that this covenant was with the elect in Christ and not with all men.³³ As to whether the covenant of grace was conditional or not, Heppe saw a general expression in favour of unconditionality, but he qualified this. The benefits of salvation were conditional, but in

such a way that the fulfilment of the conditions lay in the absolute promises of the covenant and not in the strength of *liberum arbitrium*. God claimed a response of faith, but it was he who aroused men to faith and 'undertook to supply the elect with this faith himself'.³⁴

Again, the covenant of grace was first published in the garden in the protoevangelion. It was always one and the same in substance, but its administration before and after Christ was to be distinguished after the manner of Calvin, Martyr and Ursinus.³⁵ Christ was the only Mediator of the covenant in all dispensations. Moses was an outward type in this respect.³⁶ The giving of the law to Israel was not to set up a new covenant of works, but simply to prepare the way for the confirmation of the covenant of grace in the death of Christ. The publishing of the law and its curse once again would increase the sense of guilt and point men to the Christ who would bear that curse. The law reminded man that actual atonement had not yet taken place, but that those who looked in faith to the promised Saviour would be regarded as *righteous*. The law therefore 'had an essentially evangelical character'. It established faith in the promise of grace. The Old Testament sacraments were guarantees of the promise; therefore they and all the other types and sacrifices were done away when Christ appeared.³⁷

Heppe had no separate section on the law of God, but under the rubric of sanctification, it was clear that the law was still relevant to the believer's life. The faithful were not in any way subject to its yoke, the Holy Spirit had not imprinted it upon their hearts, and they had it with the gospel in the word of God as a rule of sanctification. The law kept the Christian reminded of the obedience God required, while the gospel urged obedience to God his Redeemer out of 'thankfulness for the saved life bestowed upon him'.³⁸

In Scotland, William Cunningham was a firm

nineteenth-century upholder of the *Westminster Confession* as the embodiment of Calvinism.³⁹ He was well acquainted, therefore, with writings of covenantal theologians,⁴⁰ but he made little use of the concept in his own discussions of historical theology apart from seeing its usefulness in explaining the imputation of Adam's first sin.⁴¹ Thomas M. Lindsay was probably the first Scotsman to make a serious critical examination of 'The Covenant Theology' in an article of that title, although it was obviously a modified rerun of Dorner's views.⁴² On the question of origins he saw Cocceius and Witsius as the 'fixers' of a painful process of theological development that gave birth to federalism during the second quarter of the seventeenth century. He regarded Andrew Hyperius as the 'founder of federalism', who recalled theology from the supralapsarian, 'abstract philosophizing upon predestination, introduced by Beza', to the fact of the fall, which he made the central point in his theology. The other precursors listed were Olevianus, Raphael Eglin, Francis Gomarus and Robert Rollock.⁴³

According to Lindsay there were two distinctive features of federalism. One was the ruling place given to the idea of covenant, and the second was the peculiar relation which the one covenant bore to the other. He enlarged on this definition by explaining that federal theology rested on the special antithesis of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, which showed the plan of salvation in an aspect not presented in any other system, and secondly, that federalism regarded every single doctrine as a proposition implied in and logically deducible from these two covenants. The covenant between God and man differed from a normal covenant between two human parties in that it was one-sided (*μονόπλευρον*), but when it was made it became two-sided. By the covenant, man in fellowship with God was enabled to do his part, and in this sense it was dipleuric.⁴⁴ Lindsay noted also the

double aspect of the covenant of grace, that is, as embodying a covenant between God and Christ which was a proper, mutual covenant, and a covenant between God and the elect in the form of a testamentary disposition by which God bestowed salvation and its benefits upon them. He concluded that 'the fundamental ideas on which the covenant theology rests...[are] simply a statement of primary truths common to all systems of orthodox Reformed doctrine, the only difference being that these truths are strictly represented under the aspect of a contract or parties'.⁴⁵

This difference was important to Lindsay in the historical interpretation which he built around it. He distinguished between an early Scottish and Puritan use of the covenant idea, which was practical, romantic, experimental, and devotional, and the later definitive, logical precision it had in theology as represented by the *Westminster Confession*. He then distinguished between the *Confession* and federalism, saying that the former came into being before the latter. In the former the two covenants were viewed as command and promise; in the latter they were seen as two bargains or contracts implying mutual agreement. Federalists, he said, had a low, negative, and narrow view of God's covenant of grace, because they regarded it as an abrogation of the covenant of works.⁴⁶ But Lindsay failed here to distinguish between grace *pre lapsus* and *post lapsus*, and argued as though the theology of the covenant regarded grace as non-existent before the fall. This failure was further seen in his consideration of Rollock's work, where he saw the covenant of works as 'based on man's own unaided strength'.⁴⁷ Rollock did refer to 'the works...acted by the strength of nature', which were to be distinguished from works in the covenant of grace which proceeded from the grace of regeneration, but he was careful to show that the strength of nature was that 'holiness and righteousness and the light of God's law', with which God had beautified man's nature, so that

he could perform good works.⁴⁸

The rise of covenantal theology was viewed by Lindsay as a reaction against a tendency in Reformed dogmatic systems 'to make the decree a metaphysical instrument for explaining the relation of the Supreme Being to the universe, not an evangelical instrument whereby our Father in Heaven can lead back many sons unto glory'.⁴⁹ Calvin, he maintained, avoided this tendency by keeping the doctrines of creation and redemption close. Behind election, predestination, and the plan of salvation was the idea of the kingdom of God as the special end of creation, so that these were steps on the way to redemption. Later Calvinists (Beza, Wollebius, Alsted and Wendelin are those named), adopted an Aristotelian scholastic approach which allowed the metaphysical to override the religious element. Federalism, utilizing the idea of the covenant, sought to bring Reformed theology back from the heights of metaphysical speculation to deal with the historical development of God's plan of salvation.⁵⁰ Thus federalism served to put evangelical meaning back into the doctrine of predestination, and to draw attention again to the reality of the fall and sin, which supralapsarianism had thrust into the background. It also reasserted the whole Bible as one and the same revelation of God's grace and paved the way for the idea of history in dogmatics.⁵¹

On the debit side, Lindsay saw federalism as lending itself 'readily to incipient rationalism'.⁵² It interpreted the word 'covenant' as 'contract', where the Puritans had regarded it as promise. Hobbes' use of covenant in *Leviathan* in order to explain the origin of society was one source listed for this use. Its use by Hugo Grotius and Samuel Puffendorff in order to build systems of public law was another: 'Covenant was the popular scientific term of the period... The rule of the idea of covenant marks the age when men were beginning to look at things in an historical way'. Federalists then

took this well-known word and employed it to demonstrate that God's salvation was not in the past only, but at hand. Hence, 'it was a first attempt at writing a history of redemption according to the principles of scientific criticism which were then in the air'.⁵³

Two comments must be made here. One is that Ball had used the words 'covenant' and 'contract' synonymously long before Cocceius and Witsius.⁵⁴ No one who has read Ball can accuse him of undermining the concept of grace by his use of 'covenant' or 'contract'. If Ball's theology was consistent with, and a proximate source of, the Westminster theology, then Lindsay would need to have included the *Confession* as a federalist document in the interests of consistency. Also in this connection he said that the Puritans interpreted the covenant of grace as 'above all things a sure and stable promise', whereas the federalists viewed it as 'a contract or bargain having contracting parties, and they reject the idea of promise as an improper use of the term'.⁵⁵ Whether this was so in the works of Cocceius or Witsius to whom Lindsay was primarily referring would need to be ascertained, but it was certainly not true of Ball who kept the idea of promise paramount. Ball could refer to the covenant as a conditional contract, but at the same time the conditions on man's side were included as God's gift to man in the promise which he made.

The second comment is that no account was taken of the rule of the idea of covenant in Scripture. The Reformation principle of *sola scriptura*, and especially the renewed use of the Old Testament, made inevitable a resurgence of the idea of covenant and its utilization as a unifying principle in theology, quite apart from the scientific developments of the time. That they used the word 'contract' does not imply *ipso facto* that they used it in any sense other than that of the word 'covenant' in Scripture. The use of 'covenant' in a transition from a

state of war to a state of peace, did not require the examples of Hobbes, Grotius and Puffendorff.⁵⁶ The Old Testament amply furnished them.

Two years later another Scot, Robert Rainy, wrote two typically judicious and perceptive papers entitled 'Federal Theology'.⁵⁷ Making some notes on its history, Rainy said that the Westminster divines used the covenant theology without hesitation, 'but with sobriety and moderation'. In the earliest Reformation theologians, however, this term had not yet appeared, and the concept it expressed had not yet begun to mould the system.⁵⁸ Rainy then reviewed a number of writers in tracing the twofold extension of the covenant idea in Reformed theology, (ie. the pre-fall constitution as a covenant, and the representation of the Son as being in covenant with the Father on behalf of his people), and how this made the idea of the covenant rather than the divine decree the guiding thought in their theology. The divine decree, not covenant, he said, was the presiding thought in Calvin's system, which introduced the idea of covenant chiefly in discussing the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. There was no reference to a covenant of works, but the condition of man under the first constitution was one in which a commandment was given to him with a reward or penalty for which he had to look. Believers were in covenant with God through Christ the Mediator, whose work was also described and its effects detailed, including, 'the conditions under which and interest in its benefits is offered'.⁵⁹

Rainy also mentioned Musculus' distinction between a general covenant made with Noah and the special everlasting covenant made with Abraham, and its different phases, before Moses, under Moses, and under Christ. Ursinus, he said, described *foedus* or *testamentum* in connection with reconciliation; God promising to be propitious and man binding himself in faith and obedience to God. Both terms were considered synonymous and the covenant one in

substance, but administered differently before and after Christ. Rainy regarded Olevianus as the first to select the covenant 'as the notion under which a sketch of Christian theology, as a whole, should be presented'. The gratuitousness of the covenant pervaded Olevianus' work with everything being established for man in the covenant, including faith which was believing acquiescence and not a restipulation.⁶⁰

Gomarus was the first theologian mentioned by Rainy who distinguished a covenant of works from the covenant of grace in 1594. Polanus in 1609 and Eglin in 1613 had a developed covenant theology, including a covenant of works in Eden with the two trees represented as its sacraments.⁶¹ Ames' *Medulla* (1620), while not distinctly asserting a covenant with Christ, did nevertheless, in discussing the application of redemption 'present all the essentials of the developed Foederal Theology'. Rainy contended that it was therefore a mistake to regard Cocceius, whose work was later than the *Westminster Confession*, as the father of federal theology simply because of the decisive place he gave to it in his construction and the 'novelties of speculation' which he added to it. He concluded then that federal theology did not necessarily represent a departure from Reformed doctrine. It awakened no important opposition on the part of Reformed divines; it was fitted to exhibit in a more striking manner many of the features of Reformed doctrine, and to defend some of these doctrines more successfully in the current Socinian and Arminian controversies.⁶²

Rainy's second article, taking Cloppenburg as an example, demonstrated the Reformed view of natural theology and the constitution of the covenant of works.⁶³ The latter was based on the law given in the former and added to it by divine appointment. This arrangement gave 'a temporary and mutable office' to the law as a means of gaining eternal life. The covenant constitution asked no

more of man than was his due by nature, but it provided a foundation for merit through God's promise to reward obedience. 'This constitution,' said Rainy, 'if not in the strict sense gracious, does at least express an emphatic Divine goodness; it adds a great wealth of benefit to the mere condition of nature'. Grace 'in the strict sense' is what was manifest in the new covenant, which took up into itself the unchanging, eternal obligation of the law and the penalty for its violation, and satisfied them 'in the appointment and substitution of a Surety'.⁶⁴

Rainy also carefully explained the relationship between the covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption in a way important to understanding historical developments. Early Reformed theology spoke of a covenant of grace between God and man as a relationship entered into by faith. Perkins distinguished between a general covenant concerning the provision of eternal life on the fulfilment of certain conditions, and the covenant of grace in particular, which was the promise of Christ and the blessing which he brought, and the requirement of faith and repentance in man. When Christ began to be considered not only as the Mediator of the covenant, but also as a party in the covenant, the provisions of the covenant in this respect became known as the covenant of redemption. 'Covenant of redemption and covenant of grace were distinct stages of the same great transaction.'

A tendency developed, however, to identify these, emphasizing the representative nature of Christ's work. It was one covenant, 'which was first a covenant with the Mediator, and then with His members in Him'.⁶⁵ The importance of this emerged in the Marrow controversy in Scotland, when the Marrowmen would not regard faith as a covenantal condition since it was provided in the covenant. This was opposed by the advocates of Neonomianism, who regarded faith, repentance, and works as practically unqualified conditions of the covenant.⁶⁶ By treating the

covenant of grace and the covenant of redemption as one, the Marrowmen hoped to prevent faith being considered as a covenant condition. But, said Rainy, 'they were too apt to impute Neonomianism to all who preferred the older phraseology'.⁶⁷ This tendency has clearly survived to the present day. The reason Rainy gave for the decline of federal theology is also interesting. He attributed it to the sacrifice of theological detail at a time of theological retreat, as a concession to the questioning, doubting spirit of the nineteenth century.⁶⁸

In 1882, Charles A. Briggs viewed the Westminster standards as the best expression of British Puritanism which used the covenant of grace as the unifying principle of a theology that was theoretical in 'the common Reformed sense', and at the same time intensely practical. He saw 'the covenant as the fundamental principle of the divine revelation' in the variety of forms it has in the Scriptures.⁶⁹

In the same journal an article by A.B. van Zandt was entitled 'The Doctrine of the Covenants Considered as the Central Principle of Theology'. He regarded the theology built upon the doctrine of the covenants as running through and illumining all the Scriptures, but needing the peculiar controversies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to bring it into prominence. (eg. Socinian objections to the personal substitution of Christ on behalf of sinful man, required the emphasis of stronger ties than those of flesh and blood between Christ and those he represented.)⁷⁰ Van Zandt saw 'the everlasting covenant' of Heb.13:20 as 'the central principle which unifies all the truths of religion - natural and supernatural - of law or of grace'. This he identified with the covenant of redemption, or the 'Godhead in Covenant' in the councils of eternity; therefore, no anthropomorphic representation of agreement or contract was to be attached to it. It was the 'harmonious concert and co-operation in the same purpose of Father, Son, and Holy

Ghost'.⁷¹ This everlasting covenant rooted in the divine decrees, covered *all* of God's dealings with man including the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Thus the covenant of works was an overarching gracious arrangement. It could not be viewed as an arbitrary act of power unrelated to future development. It was rather the initial manifestation of the one all-encompassing purpose of God expressed in the everlasting covenant. It was the first of a series of dispositions 'in which the plan of Redemption was successively developed'.⁷² There was no discontinuity as a result of the fall in the events purposed by God. The same end as that expressed in the covenant of works was still pursued on the basis of the same principles, but accomplished under different conditions. This difference did not represent a separate category for the covenant of works, but sprang out of the change in man's condition after the fall. It represented 'the progressive development in time of the grace purposed in eternity'.⁷³

There was a strong American school of covenantal theologians in the late-nineteenth century. One of these, Robert L. Dabney, held that the Adamic covenant was 'one of pure grace and condescension'. Perfect obedience in Adam could never have placed God in his debt. Therefore, God, moved by pure grace, 'condescended to establish a covenant with his holy creature, in virtue of which a temporary obedience might be graciously accepted as a ground for God's communication of himself to Adam, and assure him ever after of holiness, happiness, and communion with God'.⁷⁴ The same gratuitous goodness which led God to establish the covenant of grace was what led him to establish the covenant of works. In both, free grace was manifested, justification to life promised, and much more than man had earned was bestowed. The Edenic arrangement had all the constitutive aspects of a covenant - two parties, a voluntary acceptance of terms, a condition (the keeping of

God's command), the promise of life for obedience and death for disobedience, and a sign or seal of the covenant in the tree of life.⁷⁵ In this covenant Adam represented all mankind, thus limiting 'the risque of probation to one man'.⁷⁶

Dabney discussed the law between his treatment of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. God's law was based not only in his mere will, but in 'His own unchangeable perfection'. It was the same moral standard that was imposed on Adam, and given in the decalogue. But since the fall, the law could not be a covenant of life to man. But this did not abrogate the law as a standard of righteousness; it remained as 'the authoritative declaration of God's character'.⁷⁷ In it God revealed himself, and thereby revealed to fallen man his need of Christ, and also provided a 'holy rule of conduct' in the sanctification of those who had been redeemed by Christ.⁷⁸

The covenant of grace was God's remedy for man's fall. But this was no after-thought. It was part of the eternal plan whereby 'He purposed to permit man's fall and ruin', and then manifest his love and mercy in redemption.⁷⁹ The word covenant (πῶς), or διαθήκη, was used to refer to divine covenants with men, or compacts between individuals. From Old Testament usage the meaning of διαθήκη was usually an arrangement or disposition of matter, or covenant. Classical Greek etymology often gave it the meaning of 'testament', but Dabney demonstrated that this translation was supportable only in Heb.9:16. There were but two covenants, the covenant of works with Adam and the covenant of grace with various dispensations.⁸⁰ This covenant was made with Christ as the Second Adam for the redemption of believers, but a distinction was made between the provisions of the covenant as it related to the Father and to believers. The former was a covenant of redemption conditioned by meritorious obedience. The latter was an unconditional covenant of grace in which the sinner's faith

was no 'efficient merit', but rather an 'instrumental condition' required.^{e1} It was only a receptive agent with no moral merit attached. The strength to believe was given in the covenant itself. Faith was the only condition, though in an 'improper sense' the Christian's holy life could be so also, as 'the fruit and result of grace'. But neither were meritorious conditions.^{e2}

For Dabney, there was but one covenant of grace, administered differently under the Old Testament and New Testament dispensations.^{e3} The covenant of Sinai was not a covenant of works, otherwise it would be a recession rather than progress in the plan of revelation, and would not confer any honour on Israel as Scripture implied, since it would only be a covenant of death to them. The Sinaitic dispensation was the same as the Abrahamic one. It included a republication of the moral law, an expression of ceremonial ritual with a second sacrament added, the family church of Gen.17 incorporated into a theocratic commonwealth-church, and a more stringent application of the legal conditions imposed, so that the law would be a more energetic pedagogue leading to Christ.^{e4}

Dabney warned against drawing strong contrasts between the Old Testament dispensations and the New, and representing the former as intolerably harsh and a bondage void of spiritual blessing. Even Calvin's five differences were critically regarded. There was but one way of salvation for both Old and New Testament saints. There was a killing letter and a life-giving Spirit in both. The Old was necessarily inferior in clarity, fullness and liberality. The real difference was that one preceded Christ's work, the other followed it. This made it harder to view the work of Christ under the Old; therefore the voice of the law needed to be louder in directing men to Christ. There was more symbolism and ritual teaching under the Old, and prophecy was obviously less intelligible. The ritual teachings were also more

numerous, varied and laborious, and the Old was largely limited to Israel. Finally, the Old was temporary, whereas the New 'will last till the consummation of all things'.⁸⁵ Having cleared the ground of these issues, Dabney in typical Reformed fashion proceeded to discuss the mediatorial work of Christ.⁸⁶

W.G.T. Shedd followed the same pattern. He affirmed the gracious disposition of God in the covenant-of-works arrangement. 'A creature, from the very definition of a creature, cannot bring the Creator under an obligation, except so far as the latter by covenant and promise permits him to do so... The merit to be acquired under the covenant of works was pactional. Adam could claim the reward...only by virtue of the promise of God'.⁸⁷ Shedd affirmed but two covenants, 'the legal and the evangelical', but favoured a distinction as helpful between the covenants of grace and redemption, recognizing that 'The covenant of grace and that of redemption are two modes or phases of the one evangelical covenant of mercy'. The evangelical covenant of which Christ was the only Mediator was one and the same under both Old and New dispensations.⁸⁸ Faith was the 'unmeritorious, but indispensable condition of salvation, before the advent as well as after it', because 'Faith is the instrumental, not the procuring or meritorious, cause of justification'.⁸⁹

The Hodges, father and son, Charles and Archibald Alexander, traversed all this ground in similar fashion in their systematic works, and the latter in his commentary on the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.⁹⁰ The later works of Louis Berkhof can also be seen as fitting into the same school.⁹¹

Perhaps one of the most formidable minds from this school to express itself on covenantal theology was that of Gerhardos Vos. First, in a rectoral address entitled *De Verbondsleer in de Gereformeerde theologie*, then in two articles 'Covenant or Testament?' and 'Hebrews - the

Epistle of the διαθήκη'.⁹² Vos treated the doctrine of the covenants as the natural fruit of Reformed theology emerging in 'the period of richest development'. He traced the concept of covenant back through Heidelberg to Zwingli, Jud, and Bullinger. He allowed an organic development in Calvin, but not 'as a dominant principle', because he built his theology on the Trinity.⁹³ The significance of the English and Scottish developments did not escape his attention either. Rollock, Cartwright, Preston, Ball and Ussher were singled out for mention, leading up to the *Westminster Confession*. He also drew attention to another important, but often neglected, writer, Thomas Blake and his *Vindiciae Foederis*.⁹⁴

Taking Scripture as the source of covenantal doctrine, Vos approached the subject from the question: 'Why did the doctrine of the covenant flower in Reformed Theology and not in Lutheran?' He held that the root difference between these traditions was that one began with man and the other began with God and his glory. Therefore, in Reformed theology, God's work always preceded man's work and the latter must reveal God's virtues and reflect his image consciously and actively by way of understanding and will.⁹⁵ In this way the condescending goodness and mercy of God lay behind man's natural created condition and the covenantal relationship that followed. The command 'Do this' without the promise 'You shall live', would have been valid in the natural bond between Creator and creature, but the covenantal relationship incorporated it into something higher, a clearer expression and fuller joy of the divine image. When this covenant failed and was superceded by the covenant of grace, 'the participants are exempt from the demand of the law as being normative for their moral life'. 'Do this' still stood, but 'You shall live' had a different basis.⁹⁶

Since the Reformed principle of salvation, being exclusively the work of God, was interlocked with the

doctrine of redemption, Vos argued for an earlier development of the covenant of redemption than has often been assumed. He traced a full expression of the concept back to Olevianus,⁹⁷ and saw its springs, not in an effort to draw the covenant back into the decree, but in concentration on the mediatorial work of Christ, seeking 'to demonstrate the unity between the accomplishment and application of salvation in him, on the one side, and the various stages of the covenant, on the other'.⁹⁸

In the covenant of grace, again the work of God was applied in a way that 'best reveals the greatness and the glory of the triune God in the work of salvation'. The law still played an important part as 'the comprehensive norm for the life of man'.⁹⁹ But 'At Sinai it was not the "bare" law that was given, but a reflection of the covenant of works revived, as it were, in the interests of the covenant of grace continued at Sinai'. Thus a consciousness of the covenant was aroused in man and kept alive by the law, and became a reality by the exercise of faith: 'The covenant is neither a hypothetical relationship, nor a conditional position; rather it is the fresh living fellowship in which the power of grace is operative.'¹⁰⁰

The origin of this grace and the benefits enjoyed by those in covenant were always rooted in the election of God. In Reformed thought this was closely allied to the doctrine of perseverance. The evidence of the covenant of grace depended on God alone. He answered for both parties in the covenant, and worked both willingness and enabling in man by the Holy Spirit. Because the grace of the covenant was God's grace, it was therefore eternal and imperishable, and would never fail.¹⁰¹ It did not follow from this, however, that the administration of the covenant proceeded from election. Non-elect could stand in some relation to the administration of the covenant, but 'the essence of the covenant, in its full realization, is found

only in the true children of God, and therefore is no more extensive than election'.¹⁰²

In his other articles, Vos looked at the linguistic problem, whether διαθήκη should be translated 'covenant' or 'testament'. The tendency in recent times he saw as moving in the direction of the latter.¹⁰³ He considered the translators of the Septuagint as making 'a perfectly intelligent and most felicitous decision' in rendering the Hebrew *berith* as διαθήκη rather than συνθήκη. Neither *berith* nor διαθήκη could plausibly be regarded as the equivalent of 'last will'. Rather διαθήκη has the general meaning of 'disposition' and a more specialized meaning of 'agreement originating from a superior'. The word *berith* 'could be approximately covered by these two meanings, for *berith* is not everywhere a contract, but frequently a one-sided disposition made by God and as such promulgated to the people, and, on the other hand, that everywhere it has the meaning of "agreement" yet the content and terms of it are one-sidedly determined by God, so that man can only receive, but neither define nor modify them'.¹⁰⁴

The New Testament writers in using διαθήκη were not introducing a new concept, but dealing with what *berith* connoted in the Old Testament, and it was used to demonstrate God's sovereign disposal of religious affairs as well as his condescension in dealing with man as friend to friend. The concept was neutral and could be used for either of these, therefore it could accommodate a principle of law and works or a principle of promise and grace. 'The only thing that is uniformly present...is that God everywhere reserves to Himself and exercises the right independently of fixing the terms of the relation between Himself and man. That is an essential principle from a religious point of view. But the opposite principle, that Jehovah condescends to enter into a covenant with man, is no less important; it enshrines all the wealth and glory of the biblical religion as a religion of conscious fellowship

and mutual devotion between God and His people.¹⁰⁵ The Septuagint translation faithfully captured and transmitted both these principles. Having surveyed the New Testament usage of διαθήκη, Vos demonstrated that only in two passages, Gal.3:15-17 and Heb.9:16-17, was the technical sense of διαθήκη as 'testament' warranted. In the former passage to show the immutability and irrevocableness of God's dealings with Abraham, and in the latter 'to show the necessity and efficacy of Christ's death for securing the benefits of redemption'.¹⁰⁶ This incidental use did not warrant employing the term as the key to its use elsewhere in the epistle or in the New Testament.

One other nineteenth-century work is worthy of mention. In 1879, W. van den Bergh wrote a work entitled *Calvijn over het Genadeverbond*.¹⁰⁷ Van den Bergh associated Calvin closely with Bullinger and maintained that all the leading themes in Bullinger's covenantal thought were to be found in Calvin, that is, the covenantal unity of the Scriptures, the promises and conditions of the covenant, the centrality of Christ to the covenant, and its relation to infant baptism.¹⁰⁸ He held that the basic principles of covenantal theology in four specific areas were to be found in Calvin. First, it was a key vehicle for unfolding the history of redemption. Secondly, it was essential in understanding the relationship between the Old Testament and the New.¹⁰⁹ Thirdly, it explained Calvin's twofold view of calling and election in identifying the true children of the covenant. Fourthly, it stressed Calvin's view of the sacraments as seals of the covenant.¹¹⁰ It was Van den Bergh's conclusion that there was a strong element of continuity and development between Calvin and the later Calvinists and that Calvin was the 'legitimate forerunner of the theological system of the Federalists'.¹¹¹

NOTES: Chapter Three

1 A.B. van Zandt, 'The Doctrine of the Covenants Considered as the Central Principle of Theology', *PR*, 3. (1882), 29.

2 *Ibid.*

3 A vast amount of literature is available on the Scottish Covenanters, including many original papers and sermons. A lot of hagiographical material, based mainly on anecdotal evidence for popular consumption was produced by later generations, but from the more serious writings the following is offered as a guide: J. Beveridge, *The Covenanters*, (London, n.d.); P. Walker, *Biographia Presbyteriana*, (Edinburgh, 1827); *Six Saints of the Covenant*, 2 vols. (London, 1901); J. Aikman, *Annals of the Persecution in Scotland, from the Restoration to the Revolution*, (Edinburgh, 1842); *The Presbyterian's Armoury*, (Edinburgh, 1846); J. Dodds, *The Scottish Covenanters*, (Edinburgh, 1860); J.C. Johnston, *A Treasury of the Scottish Covenant*, (Edinburgh, 1887); *The Covenants and the Covenanters*, ed. J. Kerr (Edinburgh, 1895); J.K. Hewison, *The Covenanters*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1908); A. Smellie, *Men of the Covenant*, (London, 1908); J. Lumsden, *The Covenants of Scotland*, (Paisley, 1914); A.S. Morton, *Galloway and the Covenanters*, (Paisley, 1914); H. MacPherson, *The Covenanters Under Persecution*, (Edinburgh, 1923); W. Syme, *The Covenanters*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, n.d.); J.G. Vos, *The Scottish Covenanters: Their Origins, History, and Distinctive Doctrines*, (Pittsburgh, 1940); H. Watt, *Recalling the Scottish Covenants*, (Edinburgh, 1946); J. Barr, *The Scottish Covenanters*, (Glasgow, 1947); J.D. Douglas, 'The Scottish Covenanters 1638-1683: A Study in the Political Implications of their Theological Literature'. PhD Thesis (Hartford Seminary Foundation, 1955); I.B. Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters 1660-88*, (London, 1976).

4 From the many standard histories of the period, S.R. Gardiner's works are still among the finest: *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642*, (London, 1883-84); *History of the Great Civil War*, 3 vols. (London, 1886-91); *The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution, 1603-1660*, (London, 1888); ed. *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660*, (Oxford, 1906); See also W.A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil War and Under the Commonwealth 1640-1660*, 2 vols. (London, 1900); C.V. Wedgwood, *The King's Peace*, (London, 1955); *The King's War*, (London, 1958); 'The Covenanters in the First Civil War', *SHR*, 39. (1966), 1-15.

5 P. Miller, *The New England Mind: the Seventeenth Century*, (New York, 1939), viii; see also J.W. Gough, *The Social Contract*, (Oxford, 1957), 24ff; C. Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea: Its Origin and Development*, (Philadelphia, 1904).

6 On Cocceius see C.S. McCoy, 'The Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1956); 'Johannes Cocceius: Federal Theology', *SJT*, 16 (1963), 352-370; E.F.K. Muller, 'Cocceius', *NSHE*, 3.149-150; *RE*, 4.186-194; R. Koper, *LFK*, 2.1242; R.G. Clouse, *NIDCC*, 237-238. On Witsius see S.D. van Veen, 'Witsius', *NSHE*, 12.396; A. Ebrard, *RE*, 21.380-383.

7 K.R. Hagenbach, *Compendium of the History of Doctrine*, 2 vols. trs. C.W. Buch (Edinburgh, 1852), 2.183, described covenantal theology as 'a peculiar theological system established by J. Coccejus and more fully developed by his followers'. Also J.A. Dorner, *History of Protestant Theology Particularly in Germany*, 2 vols. trs. G. Robson and S. Taylor (Edinburgh 1871), 2.31, called him 'The founder of this school'.

8 The Marrow Controversy arose out of the condemnation by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1720 of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1645) which had been reissued in Scotland by James Hog of Carnock in 1717. The chief antagonist of the 'Marrowmen' was Principal Haddow of St. Andrews, and had it not been for a long-standing grudge he bore towards Hog, it is unlikely that the controversy would have reached the degree of intensity and division which it did. See T. McCrie, *The Story of the Scottish Church*, (London, 1875), 454-462.

9 K. Sudhoff, *C. Olevianus and Z. Ursinus*, (Elberfeld, 1857), 460, cf. 573-592. For an excellent review of this work see 'Lives of Ursinus and Olevianus', *BFER*, 8. (1859), 186-228.

10 *Ibid.*, 140ff, 321ff etc.

11 M. Goebel, 'Dr. Casper Olevianus 1535-1587', *Mercersburg Review*, 7. (1855), 294-306, quote 306. A complementary article had appeared in the same periodical by J.W. Nevin, 'Zacharius Ursinus', 3. (1851), 490-512. Both articles are biographical sketches with little assessment of their theology.

12 L. Diestel, *Geschichte des Alten Testaments in der Christlichen Kirche*, (Jena, 1869), 527-539, esp.532. D.A. Tholuck, *Das Kirchliche Leben des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1862), 2.222-227, follows the same path.

13 I.A. Dorner, *op.cit.*, 2.31,43; 41-42.

14 *Ibid.*, 2.36. Dorner, together with Diestel and Tholuck show indebtedness to the works of A. Schweizer, *Die protestantischen centraldogmen in ihrer Entwicklung*

innerhalb der reformirten Kirche, (Zurich, 1854); *Die Glaubenslehre der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche dargestellt und aus den Quellen belegt*, 2 vols. (Zurich, 1844-1847); and W. Gass, *Geschichte de protestantischen Dogmatik in ihrem Zusammenhänge mit der Theologie überhaupt*, 4 vols.in 2 (Berlin, 1854-1867).

15 H. Heppe, *Die Dogmatik der Evangelisch reformierten Kirche dargestellt und aus den Quellen belegt*, (Elberfeld, 1861). Quotations from English edition: *Reformed Dogmatics Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, trs. G.T. Thompson (London, 1950); *Geschichte des deutschen Protestantismus im Sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, 3 vols.in 1 (Gotha, 1857).

16 Heppe, *Dogmatics*, 281; quote from WCF, VII.1.

17 *Ibid.*, 301.

18 *Ibid.*, Foreword, vii.

19 *Ibid.*, 356, cf. 48, 57, 111, 233, 264, 312, 521, 572.

20 *Ibid.*, 150-189 esp. 166; cf. 146-147.

21 *Ibid.*, 296, cf. 288.

22 *Ibid.*, 42.

23 K. Barth, 'Foreword', Heppe, *Dogmatics*, vii.

24 Heppe, *Geschichte des Pietismus und der Reformirten Kirche*, (Leiden, 1897), 205-216. Here Heppe places an array of writers in the forefront of the development of 'Föederaltheologie'.

25 Heppe, *Dogmatics*, 395, 494, 524, 712. This is surprising since Heppe had already explored the relation between England and Germany in *The Reformers of England and Germany in the Sixteenth Century: Their Intercourse and Correspondence*, trs. H. Schmettau and B.H. Cowper (London, 1859).

26 *Ibid.*, 281, 296.

27 *Ibid.*, 282-283; 283-285.

28 *Ibid.*, 287, 291, 294; (quote from Olevianus' *De substantia*), 169.

29 *Ibid.*, 291.

30 *Ibid.*, 293-294, 296-298.

31 *Ibid.*, 374; 375.

32 *Ibid.*, 376-378.

33 *Ibid.*, 378-379; 382-383, 385.

34 *Ibid.*, 385-386.

35 *Ibid.*, 389; 391-392, 394-395.

36 *Ibid.*, 398.

37 *Ibid.*, 399-400; 403-405.

38 *Ibid.*, 567-569.

39 W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1864); *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, (Edinburgh, 1866), 578-581.

40 eg. his use of Witsius and Turretin: *Historical Theology*, 2.314,333,352 etc.

41 *Historical Theology*, 515; *Reformers*, 391f.

42 T.M. Lindsay, 'The Covenant Theology', *BFER*, 28. (1879), 521-538.

43 *Ibid.*, 522f; 530, 532; cf. Dorner, *History*, 2.36.

44 *Ibid.*, 523; 528; 525.

45 *Ibid.*, 527-528.

46 *Ibid.*, 522; 528-529.

47 *Ibid.*, 532.

48 R. Rollock, *De vocatione efficaci*, in *Select Works*, 2 vols. ed. W.M. Gunn (Edinburgh, 1844-1849), 1.36,34; *infra*, 2.263-264.

49 Lindsay, *op.cit.*, 534.

50 *Ibid.*, 530; 533-534.

51 *Ibid.*, 537.

52 *Ibid.*

53 *Ibid.*, 536; 538; cf. Dorner, *History*, 2.31,42.

54 Ball, *Covenant of Grace*, 24, 202 etc.

55 Lindsay, *op.cit.*, 535.

56 Puffendorff (1632-1694) is irrelevant here. His *De Jure Naturae et Gentium* did not appear until 1660 at The Hague (see J.B. Scott edition, Oxford 1934, 13a), and his *De officio hominis et civis juxta legem naturalem* until 1673 at Lund, Sweden (see Scott ed. Oxford 1927, 12a). Puffendorff was the standard bearer for lines of development opened up by Hobbes. But even Hobbes' *Leviathan* did not appear until 1651. Grotius (1583-1645) is the only really important figure here. Where Puffendorff abandoned any theological/dogmatic or humanistic/historical foundations of law, and looked for sources of a juridical system only in the laws of human reason and the nature of things (see *De Jure*, 11a), Grotius had worked within this framework at a time and in a country and city where the idea of the covenant was prominent in theology. It is just as conceivable, perhaps more so, to say that Grotius received his inspiration from the scriptural and theological use of covenant as to say that

covenantal theology owed its development to Grotius' system of public law. Covenantal theology was well developed before *De jure praedae commentarius* was written for the East India Company at The Hague in 1605, or *De jure belli ac pacis* in 1625 (see Scott ed. Oxford 1925, x,xx). Hobbes' *Elementorum philosophiae sectio tertia de cive*, (Paris, 1641), would be much more significant with regard to covenantal theology than *Leviathan*. This was the first of Hobbes' 'major original works to be put into print' (see H. Warrender ed. Oxford 1983, v). It carries reference to a 'Pactum inter Deum et Adamum' (pp 234-235), and an interesting account of the biblical unfolding of the history of the covenant as made with Abraham, with Israel at Sinai, with Israel's kings, with the people of Israel after the return from Babylon (pp 235-249), followed by an extended discussion of the 'pactum novum' (pp 249ff). This was precisely the pattern set out by Ball in his *Covenant of Grace*, which was written and circulated much earlier than 1641, though not published until 1645.

57 R. Rainy, 'Federal Theology', *CP*, 5. (1881), 427-434.

58 *Ibid.*, 341.

59 *Ibid.*, 342.

60 *Ibid.*, 342-344.

61 *Ibid.*, 343-345.

62 *Ibid.*, 348-349, 432-433.

63 John Cloppenburg (1597-1652) was a Dutch theologian who pastored churches in several towns before being appointed Professor of Theology at Harderwick and Franeker. See *Biographie Universelle*, 8.475.

64 Rainy, *op.cit.*, 428-429.

65 *Ibid.*, 430.

66 Neonomianism was the name given to those who held that in order to obtain eternal happiness the believer was bound to personal obedience to the moral law, with the qualification, however, that this obedience was not necessary to justification.

67 Rainy, *op.cit.*, 431.

68 *Ibid.*, 434.

69 C.A. Briggs, 'Biblical Theology', *PR*, 501-528, quotes 506, 526.

70 van Zandt, *op.cit.*, 29-30.

71 *Ibid.*, 35; 36.

72 *Ibid.*, 37.

73 *Ibid.*, 38.

- 74 R.L. Dabney, *Systematic and Polemic Theology*, (St.Louis, 1878; org. 1871), 302.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 303; 304-305.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 302, 304, 335ff.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 352-353.
- 78 *Ibid.*, 354-355.
- 79 *Ibid.*, 429-430.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 430-431.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 432-433; 437-439.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 438; 637-638.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 440f, 444.
- 84 *Ibid.*, 452-454.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 457-460; 461-462.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 464, 559.
- 87 W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, (Edinburgh, 1889), 151-153.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 360; 362-363.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 365; 343.
- 90 C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols.+ ind. (London, 1871-73). On the covenant of works see 2.117-129, and on the covenant of grace see 2.354-377. On the conditionality of the latter, he wrote, 'By condition we merely mean a *sine qua non*... There is no merit in the asking or in the willingness, which is the ground of the gift. It remains a gratuitous favour'. A.A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, (London, 1886), 309-314, 367-377; *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith*, (Philadelphia, 1869), 167-183, 336-343.
- 91 L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (London, 1958), 211-218, 262-301; C. van Til, 'Covenant', *TCERK*, 2 vols. ed. L.A. Loetscher (Grand Rapids, 1955), 1.306.
- 92 G. Vos, *De Verbondsleer in de Gereformeerde Theologie*, trs. S. Voorwinde and W. van Gemeren (Philadelphia, 1971; org.pub. Grand Rapids, 1891); 'Covenant or Testament?', *The Bible Magazine*, 2. (1914), 205-225. Both these works, together with 'Hebrews - the Epistle of the διαθήκη', are included in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R.B. Baffin jr. (New Jersey, 1980), from which all quotations are taken.
- 93 *De Verbondsleer*, 234; 236.
- 94 T. Blake, *Vindiciae foederis, a Treatise about God's Covenant made with Man, in Its Various Types and Degrees*, (London, 1633; revised 1658).
- 95 Vos, *De Verbondsleer*, 242.

- 96 *Ibid.*, 244-245.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 247-249.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 251.
- 99 *Ibid.*, 253; 254.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 255; 256.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 257-258.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 260.
- 103 'Covenant or Testament?', 400-401.
- 104 *Ibid.*, 404.
- 105 *Ibid.*, 405.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 406; 409.
- 107 W. van den Bergh, *Calvijn over het Genadeverbond*,
- (S'Gravenhage, 1879). This little known work is quoted by
Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 301, and is reviewed by P.
Lillback, 'The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the
Development of Covenant Theology', PhD Thesis (Westminster
Theological Seminary, 1985), 17-29, to which I am indebted.
- 108 *Ibid.*, 10-13.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 16-69, 70-107.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 108-117, 118-129.
- 111 Lillback, *op.cit.*, 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

Historiography of Covenantal Thought: The Twentieth Century

With the dawn of the twentieth century, a further crop of continental theologians showed an interest especially in the origins of covenantal theology. A.J. van t'Hooft, pointed the way with a discussion of Bullinger's theology. He regarded the covenant as central to it, and saw the idea originating with Bullinger without reference to Zwingli.¹ In 1908 Emmanuel von Korff looked again the question of origins, and traced the covenant idea to Zwingli, whose thought was developed by Bullinger, and who in turn strongly influenced the Dutch covenantal development.² E.F. Karl Müller saw the roots of federal theology lying in the Reformation, and its outline, through Calvin's influence, passing current in Holland by means of Hyperius, Olevianus and Bullinger.³

W. Adams Brown contributed a lengthy article to *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, early in the century. He saw the 'covenant theology' as originating technically among the German Reformed theologians in the latter half of the sixteenth century, but began with a definition of the covenant in solely legal terms as 'a type of theological thought which expresses the relations between God and man in the formula of a covenant or legal agreement, formally entered into by two contracting parties'.⁴ Consequently in explaining its nature, the covenant as the means of reconciliation between God and man is toned down, with the emphasis on it first as 'a ground of assurance' to reconcile God's sovereignty with man's assurance, secondly as 'the standard of Christian duty', and thirdly as 'a key to the Christian interpretation of history'.⁵

Brown's resume of the 'History of covenant theology' covers well the significant contributors in its

development, apart from the relegation of Perkins to a footnote and his claim that Irenaeus was the only early Christian writer who made much use of the covenant, and that Augustine made no use of it in his *Civitate Dei*.⁶ Basically Brown followed the general German interpretation of the theology of the covenant being 'designed as a protest against arbitrariness' in the exercise of the divine sovereignty.⁷

A helpful earlier work in the study of the covenant from a linguistic angle was Frederick O. Norton's *Lexicographical and Historical Study of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ*, but is confined to the early Greek and classical periods.⁸

The work of Gottlob Schrenk was a significant milestone in the historiography of covenantal thought. He followed von Korff regarding the origins of the covenant and held that Zwingli had taken the idea from the Anabaptists and turned it against them as the basis of infant baptism in his *De peccato originali* (1526) and *Elenchus* (1527).⁹ Calvin, he argued, followed closely the covenantal idea from Zwingli and Bullinger including its conditionality, but that Bullinger used the covenant to present a more moderate view of predestination.¹⁰ Schrenk also saw Bullinger as having influenced Melancthon, who in turn was responsible for the development of the *foedus naturale* from his view of natural law.¹¹ Otto Ritschl's *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus* also had a chapter on the covenant following Schrenk's approach.¹²

In 1932 Karl Barth began to publish his *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Building on Schrenk, the covenant concept soon became for Barth a prominent feature of his Christomonistic theology.¹³ 'Everything which comes from God takes place in Christ Jesus.' 'Apart from and without Jesus Christ we can say nothing at all about God and man and their relationship one with another.'¹⁴ Therefore Barth regarded the institution of the covenant in its primal decision as being in Christ. 'God elects that He

shall be the covenant God.'¹⁵ For Barth the covenant will and purpose of God (ie. Jesus) was the goal of history. Everything including creation and providence existed for it.¹⁶ This covenant was a covenant of grace which was the basis of God's dealings with man at all times both *pre lapsus* and *post lapsus*, and found its fulfilment in reconciliation between God and man.¹⁷ While broken by Israel and all mankind, this covenant was never repudiated or destroyed by God.¹⁸ Christ's atonement was the fulfilment of the communion which God willed and created between man and himself.¹⁹ The fall was seen only as 'an episode' in the unfolding of the divine will. Christ overcame man's sin in the atonement, but this was not the sole reason for his mediatorial work. Man unfallen apparently needed a Mediator also, and Christ came therefore as the original Word made flesh in fulfilment of the eternal covenant of grace and was not as a second or third-rate Saviour from the consequence of the fall.²⁰

Barth, therefore, questioned the 'established dualism' of seventeenth-century covenantal theology as positing a God behind Christ, who was righteous *in abstracto*, and not gracious from the beginning. 'Why,' he asked, 'was it thought necessary to see man in any other light than that of the pledge which God Himself had made for him in His Son even before he ever existed? Why was it thought necessary to see him in any other way than the one who in the eternal will of God was predestined to be the brother of His Son and therefore to divine sonship? Why is there ascribed to him a status in which he did not need a Mediator and therefore the fulfilment of the eternal(!) covenant of grace? Why was sin robbed of its true and frightful seriousness as a transgression of the law given to man as the predestinated brother of the Son and child of the Father, as a falling away from the special grace which the Creator had shown him from all eternity? Why instead was the grace of God made a second or a third thing, a

wretched expedient of God in face of the obvious failure of a plan in relation to man which had originally had quite a different intention and form?'²¹

The problem with the seventeenth-century theologians, according to Barth, was that they made the covenant of works their starting point, and that the covenant of grace was only developed negatively in relation to it. Consequently, the covenant of works, this 'strange spectacle of man in Paradise to whom eternal life is promised as a reward which has to be earned', determined everything that followed. It was 'the framework and standard reference for the covenant of grace'.²² Barth interpreted everything that followed as unmitigated legalism. The covenant of works, he maintained, was never effectively abrogated either. The relationship of *do ut des* still bound men. Man's relationship with God remained insecure. Man was still preoccupied with himself, his works, and the fear of punishment. Justification and sanctification were seen as a legal process.²³

For Barth, then, the covenant was one covenant of grace in Christ from all eternity, and was the basis of God's dealings with man at all times. It had been broken by Israel and by all mankind, but this did not make any fundamental difference to it, since 'in the first and eternal Word of God the sin of man is already met, refuted and removed from all eternity. In delivering and fulfilling this first and eternal Word in spite of human sin and its consequences, and He would in fact have delivered and fulfilled it quite apart from human sin, sin is also met, refuted and removed in time'.²⁴

In discussing the etymology and nature of *berith*, Barth concluded that 'it denotes an element in a legal ritual in which two partners together accept a mutual obligation'.²⁵ But in relation to God and his people the concept of mutuality must be elucidated. It did not imply a two-sided contract between equal partners, but a one-

sided decree. It was a *contract d'^dadhesion*. One party actively made the arrangements, the other passively agreed. 'In the covenant relationship - the true relationship between God and man according to the witness of Scripture - the initiative is wholly and exclusively on the side of God. But this initiative aims at a correspondingly free act, a genuine obedience as opposed to that of a puppet, on the part of man with whom the covenant is made.'²⁶

The covenant was to be maintained and fulfilled not only on God's side, but also on man's. But this fulfilment was accomplished in Christ, who as the Lord of the covenant, willed to be its human partner, and therefore he was the keeper of the covenant on man's side also.²⁷ This fulfilment was effected by the Holy Spirit 'as He associated with Christians'.²⁸

Barth maintained that 'the sense in which the Septuagint and the New Testament spoke about the διαθήκη brought out exactly the meaning of the Old Testament *Berith*'. God's arrangement was rightly described as *foedus μονόπλευρον*, but God dealt with men 'laying His hand, as it were, upon them from behind, because He Himself will turn them to Himself. To His faithfulness - He Himself will see to it - there will correspond the complimentary faithfulness of His people. The covenant - God Himself will make it so - will then be one which is mutually kept, and to that extent a *foedus δίπλευρον*'.²⁹

Barth's closely argued presentation of his covenantal theology corresponded in a number of points with what has already been observed in Ball, especially with regard to the nature of the covenant and its mutuality. But it also raises a number of questions. For example, Barth built his argument up entirely against Cocceius' system. While Cocceius has frequently been cast in the role of a yardstick for assessing covenantal theology from Heppe on, it is still questionable as to how far he can be regarded as typical of covenantal theologians. Those who preceded

him knew nothing of his obscure system of abrogations, and many of those who followed him, as Barth admits, disagreed with him.³⁰

Again, Barth's basic premise that apart from the knowledge of Christ as Saviour nothing can be known about God and man in their relationship with each other, while it has been taken up and even attributed to Calvin,³¹ is seriously open to question and cannot be substantiated.³² Furthermore, Barth was building his criticism on his own peculiar view of Scripture, which, while giving proper place to the character of the Bible as testimony, proclamation and evangel, nevertheless refused to regard the activity and revelation of God in a true historical sense,³³ and leaves a kind of mystical, all-embracing covenant history, not rooted in the actual events and affairs of men.

There is a resultant confusion regarding the nature of grace. For Barth, grace was the same both before and after the fall, since the covenant of grace would have been fulfilled in the Mediator becoming flesh apart from the fall altogether. This implied that there was no real difference in God's dealings with man before and after the fall. But what relevance then has the cross of Christ of unfallen man?³⁴ It seemed further to imply that the covenant was made with all men and that Christ was the head of all men in a covenanted sense and not only with the Church. Barth's position would also eliminate the idea of law-work relative to the death of Christ, which would be difficult to substantiate from the New Testament. All these issues require further consideration in view of the many scholars who have followed Barth's views.

But Barth was not the only scholar of the 1930s to give a considerable boost to the study of Reformed covenantal theology. Reference has already been made to the significance of Puritanism for early American history. In the early part of the century this theological aspect of

the American past tended to be something of an embarrassment, and was conveniently forgotten or regarded as a gross example of Reformation intolerance or bigotry.³⁵ Two essays by Perry Miller, 'The Marrow of Puritan Divinity' (1935), and 'The Puritan Way of Life' (1938), followed by *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939), changed all that,³⁶ and sparked off a revival of interest in both the theological and historical significance of the Puritans.³⁷ Consequently, a number of studies have emerged, mainly on the origins of the covenant idea, but these have been confined largely to the United States, or scholars from the USA studying in Britain.

Miller appears also to have been influenced by Schrenk.³⁸ He recognized the importance of the covenant concept in Puritanism, but he saw it as 'an imposition upon the system of Calvin', which the English Puritans were 'compelled' to add to their theology between 1600 and 1650, partly in order to repudiate Arminianism and Antinomianism, and partly to resolve 'ambiguities inherent in the doctrines of sanctification and assurance', but chiefly 'for social and economic reasons'.³⁹ The formulators of the idea he listed as 'Perkins, Ames, Preston, Sibbes, Ball, Baxter and Gale'. According to Miller, they took the common idea of social contract between men, and with the help of Ramist logic, fastened it upon God and man, in order to construct a 'legalized version of Biblical history'.⁴⁰ This was apparently designed to clarify 'the murk of Calvinism', by slyly substituting 'a juridical relationship...for the divine decree'. The good parson could arouse his people to human activity by presenting works as 'the condition of the covenant', and still retain the framework of predestination'.⁴¹ In this way 'sanctification became a very handy evidence of justification', and fulfilling the condition of the covenant became the way to gain assurance'. So while the parson exhorted his flock to perform the conditions of the

covenant in order to make the good of it their own and assure them of their election, 'the horrified ghost of Calvin shuddered to behold his theology twisted into this spiritual commercialism'.⁴²

This 'revision of Calvinism', Miller contended, was brought about entirely by 'skilful dialectic', intent on recovering an emphasis on man's responsibilities in relation to the 'incomprehensible, transcendent sovereignty' of Calvin's God, and on 'intellectualizing the faith' in order to exonerate it 'from the charge of despotic dogmatism'.⁴³ The Puritans were only Calvinists in the sense that 'they more or less agreed' with Calvin, but Calvinism was 'a much more dogmatic, anti-rational creed'. Covenantal theology was 'a substantial addition' to Calvinism by Puritans who also added their views to the Scriptures and then demonstrated that its content was comprehensible to reason.⁴⁴ 'Calvin,' he said, 'made hardly any mention of the covenant...but with Preston and his friends the word seemed to suggest one simple connotation: a bargain, a contract, a mutual agreement, a document binding upon both signatories, drawn up in the presence of witnesses and sealed by a notary public. Taking covenant to mean only this sort of commitment under oath, Preston proceeded, with an audacity which must have cause John Calvin to turn in his grave, to make it the foundation for the whole history and structure of Christian theology'. Miller then went on to say that 'the idea of mutual obligation' in the covenant, was an innovation imposed upon the theology of Calvin, who only stated 'the permanence of God's promises'.⁴⁵

Comment on Miller's views can await consideration of the covenantal theology of Calvin and the Puritans. Suffice to say at this stage that Miller's presentation of Calvin is little more than a caricature, typical of the times in which he was writing. His reading of Calvin seems to have been limited to selections from the

Institutes. Also, apart from a passing acknowledgment that the idea of the covenant figured in earlier Reformed writings, and a note in the appendix, that 'the fundamental idea of the covenant...is to be found in the Old Testament in a sense not too remote from that in which they took it', Miller's work gives the distinct impression that covenantal theology originated with the Puritans.⁴⁶ He found it difficult to believe that theological rather than sociological concerns could have priority in the elaboration of their doctrine, and failed to recognize the obvious Biblical origin of many of the ideas which he attributed to them.⁴⁷

In a useful study for its detailed survey and categorizing of sources, William W. McKee's thesis gave a fuller place to the Biblical origins of the idea of the covenant. The importance of Scripture for the Reformers was conducive to its development.⁴⁸ McKee saw little evidence of independent development in England, and regarded the English and Scots as informed by the continental theologians.⁴⁹ He noted wide use of the covenant by Calvin. This was a one-sided covenant depending utterly upon God's goodness, but yet demanding obedience. The idea of a two-way relationship ran counter to the undiminished rigour of absolute sovereignty in Calvin, and was therefore not whole-heartedly accepted. The covenant was in no sense central to his thought, yet 'Calvin's theology provided a framework within which an explicit theory of covenant could develop'.⁵⁰

McKee maintained that in England the idea grew from casual references to more elaborate treatments, and that there was a 'striking uniformity in the conception of covenant doctrine' in the presentation of the English writers.⁵¹ There may have been variations on the extent of acceptance and application of the idea, but no basic disagreement. McKee regarded covenantal theology as replacing predestination in the seventeenth-century

expositions of religion, because the former was felt to be too mechanistic.⁵² It tended to eliminate arbitrariness and capriciousness in God's action, and to heighten man's sense of importance, by personalizing the plan of salvation and presenting it as something 'mutually engaged in, rather than by divine decree', and requiring an active demonstration of faith in practical godliness.⁵³

It was this reinforcing of a sense of personal responsibility which McKee regarded as the chief aim behind the Puritan development of the idea of mutuality in covenantal theology. But, he insisted, in this they failed because 'The notion of mutuality hardly seems applicable to divine/human relations in view of God's primacy and sovereignty'.⁵⁴ Mutuality and joint acquiescence were not possible, yet 'Puritans persisted in describing divine/human relations in covenant terms, so that they were forced to modify both the idea of covenant and the theological doctrine'. But 'properly speaking', said McKee, 'according to the accepted definition of a covenant, the covenant of grace is not a covenant'. He saw this only as a rephrasing of the problem of divine sovereignty in relation to human responsibility, which it was attempting to solve. While responsibility was stressed, yet all was by God's enabling, so therefore the covenant was not strictly speaking conditional, but absolute.⁵⁵

The influence of Miller's thought on modern scholarship was clearly demonstrated in Leonard J. Trinterud's article 'The Origins of Puritanism'. He claimed that 'the essential genius of Puritanism was to be found in the rise and development of a 'covenant-contract scheme', which had its origins probably in the medieval natural law/social contract theory, and theologically in the works of Tyndale and Frith, who, while familiar with the thought of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, were not wholly dependent on them for the idea of the covenant.⁵⁶

Trinterud saw the development, between 1525-28, of a law-contract idea of the covenant in Basil, Zurich, and Strassburg, which was then utilized 'as an organizing principle of theology'. Indeed, he went so far as to say that 'the law-contract principle came quickly to be the organizing principle of the entire Rhineland reformation movement', and that it incorporated most of the medieval contract theories.⁵⁷

English covenantal thought, therefore, 'became fixed' from the time of Edward VI on, and was a blend of these two streams - the Tyndale tradition and the Rhineland reformers. Contacts with the latter were more numerous and influential than those with Calvin and Geneva.⁵⁸ Trinterud then proceeded to argue that two entirely different theologies of the covenant emerged from the Zurich/Rhineland theologians and Calvin in Geneva. For Calvin, God's promise was an unconditional promise, which he was obliged to fulfil. He fulfilled the promise in the work of Christ, and the sacraments witnessed to that fulfilment. The English and Rhineland covenant was a mutual pact or treaty in which God made a conditional promise, and required a response of obedience from man, which brought God's reciprocal reward. 'The burden of fulfilment,' insisted Trinterud, 'rests upon man, for he must first obey in order to bring God's reciprocal obligation into force'. Then, if the legalistic character of this statement is to be given its face value, Trinterud added a grand understatement: 'Theologically, of course, the difference between these two views is of the greatest moment'. This was to go beyond Miller, who, though he had spoken of being 'saved for trying', at least mentioned, if only briefly in passing, that for the Puritans the enabling grace to believe came from God and there was a distinction made between meritorious conditions and consequent conditions which were the evidence of faith.⁵⁹

For Trinterud, therefore, Calvin's influence was

minimal in Elizabethan England, and declined rapidly until 'the covenant theology had won its brief struggle for supremacy with the Geneva Bible and Calvin's theology'. Cartwright and Fenner he placed in the Rhineland stream, and Perkins and Ames were ignored altogether!⁶⁰ In later writings, Trinterud was much more cautious in his statements, and stressed that positive law was not to be identified with the covenant of grace itself, but was a 'guide to obedience in the covenant', evidencing man's attitude to the God of the covenant, and not a means of earning salvation.⁶¹ He still maintained, however, the Zurich/Rhineland/Puritan stream without any reference to Calvin,⁶² and viewed the theology of the covenant as a rather clever device, thought up to accommodate the social and political situations and debates on the nature of the law then prevalent in Europe. The notion of covenant filled the bill, without raising suspicion of novelty in doctrine since it 'pervaded the Bible, where it was associated with the concept of fundamental law, as well as with the oaths of allegiance, promises, testaments, alliances and sacraments'.⁶³

F.W. Dillestone is another writer who made much of the covenant theme in *The Structure of the Divine Society*. He placed the shift to a 'legalistic', bilateral concept of covenant back into the Scriptures, and saw 'all the great determinative happenings in Israel's history' as set in a covenantal relationship between God and his people.⁶⁴ Early on this was an intimate personal relationship brought about solely by a gracious initiative on God's part, but which deteriorated in the Deuteronomic writings into a legal contractual conception emphasizing 'obedience to a system of law rather than...a living faith in God's eternal purpose'.⁶⁵

Challenging this concept, we are told, Paul went to the other extreme, drawing a complete grace/law contrast between the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants, thus doing

despite to the full Old Testament revelation.⁶⁶ 'A true covenant must always contain within it the dialectic of grace and demand, of promise and requirement', and this relationship formed the basis of the church or covenant community.⁶⁷ But apart from Irenaeus, it was not until the Reformation that the idea of the covenant was extensively used: 'With the coming of Calvin the importance of the covenant conception as a basis for Reformed ecclesiology is no longer in doubt.'⁶⁸ Calvin maintained the law/gospel dialectic by use of 'the concept of covenant which ever retains the double-sidedness of the relation between God and man', and the same concept held a place of primacy in his doctrine of the church.⁶⁹ But Calvin's view of scripture as the sum of heavenly doctrine in written form, and his view of the church as a school-teacher to impart that doctrine narrowed the church's life into a formal and theoretical mould and led to the danger of his powerful covenantal principle being interpreted in formal, legal and contractual terms again. 'Calvin seems relatively unaware [of] all the warmth and emotion and the longing for personal relationships and the aesthetic sensitivities which also form a part of human life', and he regarded man as a creature who only needed to go to school to learn true knowledge and the principles of right conduct.⁷⁰

Dillestone held that a dialectical interpretation of covenant in terms of direct personal relationships did not lend itself to formulation, 'whereas a succession of contracts can be systematized within a legal framework', and this was precisely what the federal theologians did, the *Westminster Confession* being the classical expression of the system.

Dillestone regarded the *Confession's* view of the covenant of works with Adam as 'a fictitious invention', and represented no condescension on God's part whatsoever.⁷¹ It made the covenant 'in its essence an affair of strict conditions' which took the heart out of

the gospel, whereas the covenant with Abraham was one of pure grace, God coming to man just as he was and promising to be his God, to which Dillestone added, 'Such a Covenant must naturally involve conditions in its developed form, but the essence of the Covenant is not the ultimate conditional, but the initial, promise'. He then defined 'covenant' as 'To promise oneself without explicit conditions', and 'contract' as 'to promise a gift upon explicit conditions'. The *Confession* interpreted covenant as contract in the covenant of works and this interpretation was maintained with reference to the covenant of grace.

Dillestone did not miss the confessional references to the enabling grace promised by God for the fulfilment of the conditions, but this unconditional promise to the elect he interpreted as making the covenant of grace into 'a *deus ex machina* automatically bringing salvation to the elect'.⁷² This made the law/gospel dialectic into 'a dichotomy of contract and compulsion'. Life was offered conditionally in the first covenant and given compulsion in the second, and 'now there seems to be no possibility of man's response in faith'.⁷³

Several comments are in order here. First, Dillestone's view of the covenant as a personal relationship seemed to assume that this was anathema to any propositional aspect to it, but surely the less propositional it became, the less personal it became.⁷⁴ Secondly, he wanted to attribute to the *Confession* the transference of the idea of merit, which had a place in the pre-fall arrangement, to the covenant of grace in the definition which he applied to both - 'an affair of strict conditions'.⁷⁵ The *Confession* did not do this. Allied to this, his view that the covenant of works concept broke the dialectic between law and the gospel as it was in Calvin, and produced two successive eras in one of which God dealt with man one way and in the other another way,

thus endangering 'the vision of one personal living God who at all times and under all circumstances deals with man both in judgment and in grace'.⁷⁶ This leaves two questions unanswered: When did Calvin use the term 'gospel' with reference to the pre-fall situation? And what did God have to judge in man before the fall? Thirdly, by considering the enabling power of the Holy Spirit as leaving 'no possibility of man's personal response in faith', he clearly had a very different concept of fallen man from that held by the Reformers and the Westminster theologians. Fallen man, in Dillestone's view, still had the innate ability to believe and respond to God's pure grace. Fourthly, his use of the word 'compulsion' in a mechanical sense in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit, is entirely inappropriate in what was essentially the establishing of a redemptive relationship of love. Fifthly, his admission that the covenant of pure grace must still naturally involve conditions in its developed form was simply saying what the *Confession* had already said.

In 1954 Richard Niebuhr's paper on 'Covenant and American Democracy' looked at the idea in relation to human society, and interpreted covenant as a moral structure of loyalty that stands between the extremes of a mechanical, deterministic system on the one hand and a purely contractual one on the other.⁷⁷

In 1954 Lowell H. Zuck considered the covenant from the perspective of the Anabaptist revolution. The covenant, according to Zuck, played a wide role - personal, social and ecclesiastical - in this radical movement. He even traced 'a secret covenant of the elect fulfilling the will of God on earth' in the much earlier Bundschuh Revolt in Germany prior to the Peasant's War (1431).⁷⁸ Following Schrenk, Zuck saw some evidence that the early development of covenant theology 'arose as a defence by Zwingli and his associates against the radical covenant doctrines of their opponents, the Anabaptists'. But he did concede that

there was no evidence to prove whether Zwingli or the Anabaptists were the first to use the covenantal arguments.⁷⁹ But whoever was first, there was no doubt in Zuck's mind that 'the early Anabaptists were the covenanters *par excellence* in the early decades of the Reformation'.⁸⁰

Another theologian of the American conservative school, John Murray, wrote much on the covenant between the fifties and the seventies.⁸¹ Murray largely followed G. Vos, seeing the covenant as the key to the Scriptures. 'The covenant theology not only recognized the organic unity and progressiveness of redemptive revelation, but also the fact that redemptive revelation was covenant revelation and that the religion of piety which was the fruit and goal of this covenant revelation was covenant religion or piety.'⁸² Murray, however, emphasized 'the gracious, promissory character of the covenant' to the extent that he declined to refer to the idea of a covenant of works at all.⁸³ He began with the Noahic covenant as revealing the essence of 'covenant more than any other covenant in Scripture. It 'exhibits the features of divine initiation, determination, establishment, and confirmation'.⁸⁴ Even in cases of covenants between men or covenants between man and God which were initiated by men (eg. Josh.24:24; 11 Kings 11:17, 13:3; Ezra 10:3), Murray saw the idea of 'sworn fidelity...of one person to another', rather than the notion of mutual contract or stipulated terms of agreement as constituting the essence of the covenant. It is a 'solemn, promissory commitment to faith or truth on the part of the people concerned', and this agreement of consent or commitment must be distinguished from 'devising terms of agreement or striking an agreement'. The question of definition was crucial for Murray.⁸⁵

But while Murray held to 'the idea of the covenant as a sovereign dispensation of grace', he still spoke of

mutuality and of 'the fulfilment of certain conditions on the part of the beneficiaries'.⁸⁶ These conditions, however, were not to be considered as conditions of the covenant. He distinguished between conditions of bestowal and conditions of communicated fruition. In other words the establishment of the covenantal relationship did not await the fulfilment of any conditions, but the enjoyment of the blessings of the covenant required the reciprocal response of faith, love and obedience, because 'covenant is not only bestowment of grace, not only oath bound promise, but also relationship with God in that which is the crown and goal of the whole process of religion, namely, union and communion with God'.⁸⁷

Tracing 'The Idea of the Covenant in Scotland', G.D. Henderson also saw 'Federal Theology...as an attempt to escape the rigidities of Calvinism',⁸⁸ but admitted that Calvin himself had many references to covenant, even the idea of 'mutual obligation'.⁸⁹ He traced the idea back to Bullinger, making its way to Scotland via Heidelberg and Herborn where Robert Howie was a pupil of Olevianus. Howie's friend, Robert Rollock of Edinburgh University, was the first to present the covenant of works idea in print, although the use of 'covenants' had a much older pedigree in Scotland.⁹⁰

In a short article, 'Calvin and Covenant Theology', Everett H. Emerson took issue with some of Perry Miller's conclusions regarding Calvin, especially relative to conversion. Emerson wrongly attributed the authorship of *De Testamento seu Foedere* (1534) to Zwingli, but rightly held that Miller's comparison of the *Institutes* with Puritan sermons was not justifiable, and demonstrated that fuller use of Calvin's material, while not making Calvin out to be a 'covenant theologian', did show much more correspondence with the Puritans than Miller allowed.⁹¹

The following year, Elton Eenigenburg pursued the relation of Calvin and the covenant again.⁹² Accepting

the definition of 'covenant theology' as a theology 'controlled and directed by the covenant concept to the point of giving it a specific construction, as well as a quite peculiar content', he did not view Calvin as a covenantal theologian. Calvin, however, spoke of the covenant in great detail, but kept it in its biblical place, that is, as 'a constitutive, living component of the biblical expression of God's dealings with man'.⁹³

Ernest H. Trenchard's article 'Grace, Covenant and Law' joined John Murray in affirming the unilateral, unconditional, monergistic nature of the covenant, but he allowed that while repentance and faith were not contributions, they were 'simply the essential conditions for the reception of what is wholly God's in inception, operation and provision'.⁹⁴ For him, however, the giving of the law was in no way a part of the covenant of grace, but something 'special', an appendage added, which became obsolete with the coming of Christ. Any Christian instruction in righteousness from the law was only 'incidental and secondary, while the contrast between law and grace is fundamental'.⁹⁵

G.H. Lang challenged the unconditional aspect of Trenchard's view. He asserted that there cannot be such a thing as an unconditional covenant and that it is erroneous to insist that 'grace cannot impose conditions and remain grace'. He argued that 'man *contributes* nothing to the *benefits* provided by the covenant', but that his acquiring the benefits was conditioned by repentance, faith etc.⁹⁶

Joseph C. McLelland's re-evaluation paper stressed, like Eichrodt, that 'the clue to Old Testament history is the covenant', but that this was neglected in the church until rescued by the Reformers. He believed that Calvin used the covenant to express the manner of God's dealings with man, to illustrate the unity of Old and New Testaments, and that he related it to his supralapsarian scheme of double predestination.⁹⁷ Subsequent Calvinists,

beginning with Beza, concentrated on the latter aspect and produced the reaction of Arminianism and Amyraldism. Federal theology, 'the child of this debate', appeared as a hopeful way out, but posed deep questions regarding 'the extent of the atonement, the effective use of the means of grace, and the nature of evangelism'.⁹⁸

A further look at 'Calvin and Federal Theology' by Donald J. Bruggink followed the line of those who saw federal theology as a 'perversion' of Calvin's theology, rather than something inherent in his teaching, because it introduced a covenant of works into Adam's relationship with God, and then carried works into the covenant of grace.⁹⁹ This in turn led to individualism and the neglect of the doctrine of the church.¹⁰⁰ But here again there is confusion with regard to grace *pre lapsus* and *post lapsus*, and no consideration given to Calvin's theology of works in the context of grace. It is simply denied that he had such.¹⁰¹ Again, the evidence from the period under consideration shows no neglect of church doctrine. Rather, the debates of the time frequently centred on this (eg. English Puritanism and the Westminster Assembly).

The views of Barth on the covenant came in for a brief restatement at this time in works by Thomas F. Torrance. Seeing only a redemptive relationship between God and man from the beginning of creation, and not wanting to posit any real difference in this relationship before and after the fall, Torrance regarded the covenant of works and the covenant of grace as separating creation and redemption. The former 'was brought in from behind' the latter in order to interpret the moral law. For Torrance 'the Covenant idea is entirely subordinated to the doctrine of Christ', and God related to all men without exception through the one covenant of grace.¹⁰² According to Torrance the early Reformers, including Calvin, Bullinger and the Heidelberg theologians, held to this Christomonistic view of the covenant, but historic 'Calvinism' or

later federal theology, particularly as expressed in the Westminster standards, created the twofold presentation and thereby tended to over-shadow the person of Christ.¹⁰³ The same comments made concerning Barth's views are applicable here.

The following year, Hideo Oki, challenged Trinterud's presentation of the development of covenantal theology. He still maintained a 'typological difference' between the Rhineland and Genevan views, but called for a more careful assessment of the relation of the Reformers' theology of the covenant to the issues of the times. Trinterud, he said, based his view on theological premises but did not consider the historical evidence.¹⁰⁴ For example, no serious difference was observable in the Reformed view of the covenant in their united opposition to the Anabaptists. He pointed out that not only was there solidarity between Geneva and the Rhineland against the Anabaptists, but that Calvin had developed his view of the covenant in agreement with the Zwinglian and Bullingerian position. Schrenk had also maintained this, but Trinterud had overlooked it in developing Schrenk's thought.¹⁰⁵

In a thesis on 'The Life and Theology of William Perkins 1558-1602',¹⁰⁶ Ian Breward approved of Trinterud's attack on the virtual identification of Calvin and Calvinism, but disagreed with Miller/Trinterud theory that Puritanism was indigenous to England.¹⁰⁷ He saw a 'many-sidedness and continuing development' in English Puritanism. The marks of Puritanism were characteristic of Western Europe as a whole, and this included the important role that Calvinist theology played in 'the articulation of Puritan consciousness'.¹⁰⁸

In 1963, Jens G. Møller of Copenhagen adopted and expanded Trinterud's basic thesis in looking at the origins of 'Puritan Covenant Theology'.¹⁰⁹ He, too, posited a Tyndale/Zurich line and a Genevan line, but interestingly he placed the early Puritan systematic theologians

(Cartwright, Fenner and Perkins) in the Genevan line, claiming that their view of the covenant of works was 'merely interpreting Calvin's thoughts on the Law and the *foedus legale*, as expressed in the second book of the *Institutes*'. It was in the later Puritans that the Tyndale/Zurich emphasis on the ethical side of the covenant flourished with their general and particular covenants.¹¹⁰ While Moller said that Tyndale was in the Zurich tradition, he added that it was 'not possible to point to an explicit relation between Tyndale and Zurich'.¹¹¹

J. Rodman Williams provided a short appreciation of 'The Covenant in Reformed Theology' the same year. It added nothing to ground already covered and was inclined to the Barthian interpretation.¹¹²

William Clebsch, the following year, practically denied any reliance by Tyndale upon Zurich even though he was bound to have been familiar with Zurich writings. He maintained that 'the covenant-contract theology crystallized in Tyndale's mind' and that he thus 'gave to Puritanism its first English theological expression'.¹¹³ John F. New looked at Tyndale in relation to Calvin and concluded that Trinterud was exaggerating the difference in the Tyndale and Genevan traditions. He argued that the idea of mutuality was also present in Calvin's view of the covenant, though more emphasized in Tyndale. Calvin's insistence that the law had a distinctive place in the sanctification of the believer expressed the idea of reciprocity.¹¹⁴

A prolific writer on the covenant in the sixties was Meredith Kline.¹¹⁵ Kline emphasized the priority of law in covenant thinking. He regarded the Sinaitic covenant as the clearest example of 'the type of covenant God adopted to formalize his relationship to his people'.¹¹⁶ For him, a covenant was 'a sovereign administration of the kingdom of God', with emphasis on the stipulations required of the covenant recipients.¹¹⁷ According to Kline, there

were two covenant types - a law-covenant and a promise-covenant - unified by the principle of law. Law had priority since the Adamic covenant was 'strictly law', and the redemptive covenant merely 'adds promise to law'.¹¹⁸ The identification mark for readily distinguishing between these divine covenants in Scripture was the ratificatory oath. If God was to swear it was a promise-covenant, if man then it was a law-covenant.¹¹⁹ But Kline's efforts to establish consistently this distinction ran into difficulties when examples of both parties swearing in one covenant appeared (eg. the Abrahamic covenant. Gen.15 and 17).¹²⁰ He was forced to admit that the pre-fall covenant which he defined as a 'strict law-covenant', while not manifesting grace in the specific sense of restoration, had grace present in another sense, 'For the offer of a consummation of man's original beatitude, or rather the entire glory and honor with which God crowned man from the beginning, was a display of the graciousness and goodness of God to this claimless creature of the dust'.¹²¹

John von Rohr's article on the idea of covenant relating to the question of assurance in early seventeenth-century English Puritan writings, represented a careful reading of his sources. He viewed Perry Miller's presentation of assurance on the basis of the 'legal status' of those in covenant as merely one side of the Puritan view of divine covenantal action. The Puritan stress on human depravity and divine election meant that assurance through the covenant involved 'not only a bound righteousness given to faithfulness, but likewise God's unbound righteousness given to unfaithfulness'.¹²² For them the covenant of grace was both conditional and absolute: 'Faith is required as a condition within it antecedent to salvation, but that very faith is already granted to it as a gift consequent of election...This means that in the final analysis, even though the personal character of faith is never forgotten, the covenant is

God's act alone'.¹²³ He correctly concluded, therefore, that the Puritan handling of the covenant idea was, therefore, two-dimensional.¹²⁴ Von Rohr has just recently produced a fuller work, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought*, confirming the conclusions reached in his article.¹²⁵

Old Testament scholarship in the 1960s produced many works on the nature of the covenant. G.M. Tucker's 'Covenant Forms and Contract Forms' argued that 'contracts are private, legal and economic agreements', while covenants were distinguished by essential oaths involving a conditional self-curse.¹²⁶ He concluded that 'covenants and contracts have little in common beyond the very general fact that both are agreements'.¹²⁷ Tucker endeavoured to make this distinction by showing parallels between 'oath' and 'covenant', but failed to prove that covenants necessarily exclude any element of contract.

One of those whom Tucker accused of not distinguishing between 'covenant' and 'contract' was Denis McCarthy.¹²⁸ McCarthy proceeded on the ground that covenant reflected a treaty form involving law.¹²⁹ But in covenantal relationship between God and man, laws and stipulations existed only on a strict *quid pro quo* basis in order to guide and safeguard the relationship. The relationship, or personal union, pledged always had priority. McCarthy also acknowledged, in the case of David, the existence of 'an absolute covenant' which was 'not in form or content a covenant of the treaty type'.¹³⁰

Translations of Walther Eichrodt's works also made a significant contribution to Old Testament discussion of the covenant in the English speaking world.¹³¹ Eichrodt saw law as constituting 'an inalienable part' of the Old Testament idea - '*Covenant and commandment belong essentially together*'. To emphasize God's sole initiative in giving the covenant and its character as grace and to play this off against an obligation of the people in clear

commandments which corresponded to God's assurance of protection was to misunderstand ancient Oriental thought, which was based in concrete life situations. It was apparently no contradiction that a communal relationship with mutual rights and duties could be seen at the same time as a gracious benefaction of the superior partner'. This Old Testament covenantal commandment was not a slavery which was done away in Christ, but was the sign of God's people in both dispensations.¹³²

On the linguistic side, Eichrodt regarded the translation of *berith* by διαθήκη as stressing a one-sided testamentary disposition, but at the same time not eliminating the bilateral character, or 'element of human obligation' which was in the Hebrew *berith*. 'The term,' he added, 'has to cover twin lines of thought along which the meaning has developed. The first runs from 'covenant' through 'covenant relationship', 'covenant precept' and 'legal system' to 'religion', 'cultus' and 'covenant people'; the other from 'covenant' through the divine act of 'establishment', 'the relationship of grace' and 'revelation' to the 'order of redemption', 'the decree of salvation' and the final 'consummation of all things'.¹³³ Old Testament scholars are certainly agreed that the covenant concept is the foundational form of Old Testament religion, and that there is room within that one concept for both the idea of promise and the administration of law.¹³⁴

Peter Toon's work on *The Emergence of Hyper Calvinism in English Non-Conformity 1689-1765*, had an opening chapter on the relationship between Calvin and Calvinism which simply followed the path of Schrenk, Miller and Trinterud. Beginning with Beza, through the Puritans and Dort, a 'growing preoccupation with Aristotelianism', altered Calvin's position on the doctrines of predestination, original sin, atonement and justification.¹³⁵ Federal theology - a mixture of Reformation thought and Ramist

logic and method - was a form of protest against the rigidity of scholastic developments of the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century Reformed theology, but then hardened 'into an arid theological system'.¹³⁶ The orthodoxy of the seventeenth century was most comprehensively stated in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, which represented 'in essence, the developed teaching of Calvin together with the incorporation of Federal Theology'.¹³⁷

A study by C.J. Sommerville opposed the doctrine of conversion to the early Puritan view of the covenant of grace. He insisted that Calvin and the early Puritans believed in sacramental grace for salvation and only thought of the unbaptized, 'the Turks and other profane nations', as among the damned. The later Puritans not having grown up in this sacramentalism were engaged in a 'harrowing search for assurance within themselves'. Turning to 'conversionism' as the means of grace, they were, according to Sommerville, left in an ambiguous position regarding infant baptism, and so 'caught on to the covenant...to safeguard the rights of their children to citizenship in Christendom'.¹³⁸ But this position was again based on the Barthian view of one kind of grace and misunderstood both Calvin's view of the fall and of the reprobate, which could include church members externally related to the covenant.¹³⁹

Victor L. Priebe's dissertation on 'The Covenant Theology of William Perkins' denied Perry Miller's view of Perkins as a primary source of covenant theology,¹⁴⁰ and held that if Barth's construction of federal theology was at all valid, then Perkins must stand with Calvin and the early Reformers, since the substance of his covenant theology was essentially Christological, and that 'the covenant of works made with Adam at creation and the inter-trinitarian covenant of redemption, are not evident in Perkins' thought'.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, Priebe seriously

questioned the validity of Trinterud's thesis when he asserted that Perkins' theology did not conform to the conditional-contractual stream in which Trinterud placed the Puritans.¹⁴²

In 1967, Anthony A. Hoekema took a fresh look at the covenant theology of Calvin. He felt that while Calvin did not have the later elaboration of the idea of the covenant (ie. the covenant of works and covenant of redemption), the covenant of grace was, nevertheless, 'a significant aspect of his doctrinal teaching', and that the spiritual truths underlying the covenant of works were to be found in Calvin.¹⁴³ He found clear evidence that the covenant was the key to understanding several aspects of Calvin's theology, including the unity of the Scriptures, infant baptism, the history of salvation and the relationship between God and man.¹⁴⁴ Calvin's view, he said, revealed both the priority of grace and the responsibility of man, and that 'the covenant of grace is *monopleuric* or *unilateral* in its origin, but *dipleuric* or *bilateral* in its fulfilment'. Calvin's sermons in particular showed the mutuality and conditionality of the covenant, without in any way implying that such conditions were meritorious.¹⁴⁵

The same year, Richard Greaves produced the first of a number of articles on covenantal thought.¹⁴⁶ Greaves followed Trinterud's and Møller's dual tradition theory 'with regard to the necessity of the fulfilment of the covenant conditions on man's part and the ensuing ethical responsibility which participation in the covenant meant'.¹⁴⁷ He divided the Puritans in this respect on a Separatist/Non-Separatist basis. Representatives of the Zwingli/Bullinger/Tyndale tradition he listed as John Preston, Richard Baxter, John Ball, Thomas Blake, Stephen Geree, Anthony Burgess and Samuel Rutherford. Those in the 'strict Calvinist tradition were William Perkins, William Ames, John Owen, James Ussher, Thomas Goodwin,

Samuel Petto and Bunyan himself. Those of an antinomian persuasion included John Saltmarsh, Tobias Crisp, Vavosor Powell and Walter Cradock. He saw the two main streams as merging in Fenner, Cartwright, Perkins, and the author of the *Sume of Sacred Divinitie*, but diverging again with Ames who backed the Calvinist side, leading to Owen and his associates and eventually to the Antinomians. Preston, too, he claimed, had elements of both streams, but leaned towards the Zwingli/Tyndale side.¹⁴⁹

Greaves, however, acknowledged that for both schools 'man's response to God's offer of grace cannot be made without the assistance of divine grace'. But he made a subtle distinction between grace that 'moves' and grace that 'enables', quoting Owen and Bunyan as examples of the former, and Preston and Blake, on the basis of their references to the possibility of covenant-breaking, as proof of the latter.¹⁴⁹ This was to say, in the latter case, that fulfilment of the conditions was not part of the covenant itself, and men were only enabled to fulfil the conditions when they choose. Greaves then claimed that this distinction went back to the 'differing emphases of the Zwingli-Tyndale and Calvinist traditions'. The covenant for Zwingli, Oecolampadius and Bullinger was an agreement between God and man, whereas for Calvin it was God's promise to man. The former placed a responsibility on man which led to 'more or less legalistic vows taken in baptism', while the latter placed a distinction between law and grace.¹⁵⁰

Knox's development of the covenant, according to Greaves, was largely in a political context, and then transferred to the issue of baptism via the *Genevan Order of Baptism*.¹⁵¹ Knox, however, emphasized 'contractual responsibility', in keeping with the Zurich/Tyndale line, so Greaves endeavoured to establish links in this direction, but admitted that 'finality in determining those sources can never be achieved'. He refused to accept that

Calvin influenced Knox's *Admonition*, simply because Knox stressed fulfilment of obligation if man wished to remain in the covenant, whereas Calvin was concerned with promises.¹⁵²

In a study of *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, Brian Armstrong thought that the history of ideas behind *The Westminster Confession of Faith* had not been clearly considered, and sticking with the two traditions theory, he went so far as to say that the change of emphasis between Calvin and the seventeenth-century Calvinists was 'so pronounced that at many points the whole structure of Calvin's thought is seriously compromised'.¹⁵³ Armstrong interpreted the theology of Saumur under John Cameron (c1597-1625) and Moise Amyraut (1596-1664), as a reaction against orthodox predestinarian, metaphysical, speculative Aristotelian Calvinism and an attempt to return to the more humanistic, biblical approach of Calvin. The Salmurian theologians 'seized upon and employed' the covenant theology as a means of correcting 'the unhealthy emphases of orthodox Calvinism'.¹⁵⁴

Cameron's *De triplici Dei cum homine foedere theses* was presented at Heidelberg in April, 1608, and became 'the foundation of Salmurian theology'. Cameron distinguished between *foedus absolutum* (ie. an unconditional covenant with Noah), and what he regarded as a covenant proper, *foedus hypotheticum* (ie. a conditional covenant requiring duties of man, but also involving a gratuitous promise). In this covenant God acted for man when man fulfilled the conditions.¹⁵⁵ Cameron did say that the response to fulfil the conditions was the result of the antecedent love of God which was to be distinguished from the consequent of love of God. The problem arose for Cameron when he postulated two degrees of antecedent love. The first degree was love and mercy shown to all men and this included God's decree concerning the work of Christ, thereby suggesting a universal atonement or potential

redemption for all. The second degree was God's love and mercy in drawing the elect and giving them faith thereby uniting them to Christ.¹⁵⁶

Cameron had a three-fold view of the covenant within the *foedus hypotheticum*: the *foedus naturae* between God and Adam and based in justice and his view of natural law; the *foedus gratiae* in relation to fallen man and the *foedus gratiae subserviens* or *foedus vetus*, which Armstrong interpreted as comprehending 'what was usually discussed in terms of 'law'...the law/gospel distinction of Luther and Calvin'. This was only a temporary use of law to convict men and was abolished by the promulgation of the *foedus gratiae*. Cameron, according to Armstrong, saw the law only as a 'killer'.¹⁵⁷ The *foedus subserviens* then was a covenant of bondage, and Cameron, we are told, was making this strong emphasis on faith righteousness in contrast to 'the envisioned legalism of the orthodox'.

If this distinction was as strong as Armstrong suggests then we are left wondering why Cameron bothered to call it *foedus gratiae subserviens*. So, too, must Amyraut have wondered, for when he adopted Cameron's covenantal theology he simply spoke of *foedus naturale*, *foedus legale* and *foedus gratiae*.¹⁵⁸ He also dropped Cameron's distinction between the antecedent and consequent love of God, but held on to his view of universal atonement.¹⁵⁹ Amyraut's theology of the covenant was characterised by a strong duality. The covenant of grace was essentially spiritual, while the ministry of the Spirit was absent in the covenants of nature and law. God's mercy was not revealed under the latter at all.¹⁶⁰ He did hold, however, that the covenant of grace 'was initiated with Adam immediately after the Fall, though very obscurely indeed'. But the emphasis on obscurity does not resolve the tension between the presence of both the covenant of grace and the legal covenant in the Old Testament, since it was emphatically stated that 'these two dispensations

cannot exist together'.¹⁶¹

Three other theses may be mentioned briefly here in relation to Armstrong's arguments, though they do not specifically discuss covenantal theology. First, Roger Nicole studied the controversy of universal grace relating to Amyraut, and demonstrated that while Amyraut did not deserve some of the more extreme criticisms of his opponents, he nevertheless, did dilute the Reformed faith of the church in France, and that Amyraut's teaching in this respect did not fit into the pattern of Calvin.¹⁶²

Secondly, in a brilliantly argued thesis, Richard Muller discussed the idea that early orthodox development rejected the Christological focus of the Reformers, and said that the idea of orthodox systems as metaphysical structures founded on a central concept of the eternal decree was false.¹⁶³ He maintained that 'no one idea of doctrine was normative', and that a soteriological emphasis was predominant in the variety of formulations and systematic structures which emerged.¹⁶⁴ Modern scholarship, by focusing only on the place of predestination in Calvinistic systems, waxed eloquent on the differences between Calvin's warm piety and Calvinism's cold rationalism, but overlooked the fact that changes of structure and method to meet new situations and debates did not significantly alter content - 'The theologians of Protestant orthodoxy strove to remain in continuity with the insights of the early reformers...They are generally in agreement with the doctrines of that first phase of Reformation'.¹⁶⁵

In view of the weight of speculative argument that has been built around Calvin's simple change in the order of doctrine in Book III of 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, the saneness of Muller's argument can be appreciated. According to Muller, Beza did not replace the Christological centre of Calvin's theology with a predestinarian metaphysic; rather he 'subsumed

predestination under the doctrine of Christ', by placing it between the doctrine of Christ's divinity and the doctrine of the incarnate Lord.¹⁶⁶ The important point that Muller made was that the doctrine of God was often quoted in relation to predestination as though it had no reference to Christ, but 'Reformed soteriology succeeds in remaining Christocentric precisely because it insists on a theocentric causality'.¹⁶⁷

Thirdly, Ian McPhee's excellent study on the origin and development of Beza's thought, completely undercut Armstrong's basic presupposition that Beza was responsible for compromising Calvin's thought by introducing the 'scholastic bent' into seventeenth-century Calvinism.¹⁶⁸ He agreed that Beza reshaped Calvin's theology in certain areas of controversy into a more tightly argued, logically unassailable, body of doctrine, but argued that the biblical, Christological humanistic/rational, theocentric, scholastic dichotomy was too simplistic, since Calvin, too, was influenced by philosophical arguments, rational selection and organization, and Beza while more of a gifted dialectician and systematizer than Calvin, remained faithful to Calvin's religious emphases and insights.¹⁶⁹

William Stoever's thesis on the covenant of works in Puritan theology, while concentrating on the New England Antinomian controversy, had several chapters on the general nature of Puritan theology and the covenantal motif in Reformed theology in general. Stoever saw the covenant of works as 'the governing conception of the covenant theology, as preceding and determining the form of God's redemptive activity in the work of Christ and in the covenant of grace'.¹⁷⁰ This arose from the need to maintain the doctrine of salvation by grace alone, and at the same time have a basis for living responsibly in the created order. Stoever was critical of interpretations of Puritanism (Miller etc.) which considered it as hostile to created nature.¹⁷¹

Given the assumption regarding the covenant of works with which he began, Stoeber saw the work of Christ and the covenant of grace as necessary links in a succession of 'means' towards the fulfilment of God's original intention to establish a salvific relationship with, and a 'special government' of, his reasonable creatures.¹⁷² Consequently, the continuity of the moral law, and the conditionality of the covenant of grace were continuing important factors, because they were foundational in the covenant of works.¹⁷³ But this arrangement was not to be construed as entirely legal since there was an essential gratuity about both covenants through their foundation in the free will and absolute good pleasure of God in condescending to treat with man at his own level, by way of covenant. Furthermore, there was a difference with respect to the covenant of grace in that God himself undertook to fulfil man's obligations in it. While properly regarded as conditional, the act of fulfilling the conditions was the fruit of grace and was no sense meritorious.¹⁷⁴

In Scotland, J.B. Torrance contributed a number of articles beginning with 'Covenant or Contract?' in 1970. The subsequent articles are largely reruns of the first one.¹⁷⁵ Torrance simply married the Miller/Trinterud thesis to Barthianism, interpreting covenantal theology as the priority of law over grace,¹⁷⁶ the separation of nature and grace,¹⁷⁷ and the confusing of 'covenant' and 'contract'.¹⁷⁸ By 'covenant' he meant an entirely unconditional, unilateral arrangement of grace - 'a promise binding two people or two parties to love one another unconditionally'.¹⁷⁹ By 'contract' he implied 'a legal relationship in which two people or two parties bind themselves together on mutual conditions', making life conditional on obedience.¹⁸⁰ He accused the federalists of importing this latter concept from the social contract theories of the day and assumed that they used the word in exactly the same way,¹⁸¹ thereby changing the covenant-God

of the Bible into a contract-God.¹⁸² Torrance naturally adopted the Calvin/Calvinist dichotomy. The Calvinists, he held, departed from Calvin by employing Aristotelian logic, particularly in formulating the doctrine of limited atonement,¹⁸³ and by making election prior to grace,¹⁸⁴ as well as by adopting the conditional federal scheme outlined above. In all this 'Federal Calvinism has moved a long way from Calvin'.¹⁸⁵

The difficulty with Torrance's articles was that while he strove to produce a tidy theory of theological development from Calvin to McLeod Campbell, pigeon-holing the various theological groups along the way, there was an almost total lack of reference to the source material of these men. There was a danger of attempting to read back into Calvin the views of later men such as McLeod Campbell on the atonement,¹⁸⁶ or Barth's view of the headship of Christ as Mediator over all men.¹⁸⁷ While there was nothing new in all this, the significance of Torrance's articles was his desire to direct all these criticisms to the Westminster standards, and the extent to which this was carried was seen in his criticism that 'the *Confession* has so much to say about the *believer* (his effectual calling, justification, sanctification etc.)...but nothing about race relations!'¹⁸⁸

In one of Torrance's articles, however, he sought to explain the conditional passages or 'if' language of Scripture, arguing that they do not mean that 'faith confession and repentance are conditions of grace', having already implied that this was how 'federal Calvinism' regarded them.¹⁸⁹ Torrance said that there was a three-fold pattern in the biblical view of covenant - '(1) *Grace...* (2) *unconditional obligations...* (3) *consequences of obedience or disobedience*'. The 'if' language belonged to the last of these, and they were not 'prescriptive "ifs"' for the provision of grace, but 'descriptive "ifs"' outlining the consequences of love or infidelity.¹⁹⁰ Two

things must be said about all this. One is that in the covenantal theology examined in this research, nowhere ~~was~~ ^{now} faith, confession or repentance made prescriptions for grace, they were always the fruits of grace. Secondly it is difficult to see how Torrance's distinction between descriptive and prescriptive conditions differs from the distinction made by the covenantal theologians between consequent and antecedent conditions. The impression is given that they are being accredited a position of legalism which they did not hold, and then their own arguments are being used to correct them.

An even more scathing attack on the *Westminster Confession* along the lines of the Barthian arguments employed by the Torrances, came from Holmes Rolston III,¹⁹¹ who 'calls on the Reformer himself [Calvin] to refute the oppressive legalism of the Calvinists, and to free twentieth-century man for responsible life with a gracious God'.¹⁹² Behind the 'twin covenant tectonics' that dominated the substance of all later Reformed dogmatics, and which were 'totally absent from Calvin', lay the primacy of law in the covenant of works.¹⁹³ Thus 'a covenant of works has a very deadening effect on anything said about grace', because it brought the idea of meritorious obedience into the relationship between God and man. Therefore, God did not come to primal man in a relationship of grace. That was only necessary 'chronologically and logically' after man sinned, when the covenant of grace was added to the covenant of works.¹⁹⁴

Rolston did not define what he meant by grace, and made no distinction between prelapsarian grace and postlapsarian grace. He did mention the *Confession's* reference to God's condescension, but passed over it almost as irrelevant, and pointed to Macpherson's statement about man keeping the covenant in his own natural strength as 'all too typical', when it was anything but typical.¹⁹⁵ Herein lies the weakness of Rolston's method. He used all

post-Westminster works, especially Turretin, Cocceius and Witsius with a few references to nineteenth-century American writers, and then read them back into the *Confession*. There was scarcely any reference to contemporary theologians such as Ussher and Ball or their immediate predecessors. Rolston also wanted to make much of the fact that the covenant of works was 'still very much in force', giving the impression that it was still valid as a covenant of life, whereas the *Confession* made it clear that it only remained as 'a rule of life'.¹⁹⁶ Rolston insisted that in covenantal theology 'the burden of achieving life is laid squarely on his (man's) own shoulders'.¹⁹⁷ So while he did refer to one of the covenantal theologians as saying that eternal life could not be attained through conditional, meritorious obedience, that, in essence, was what he was accusing them of - a continuing 'oppressive legalism'.¹⁹⁸

Another study on the origins of covenantal theology, by Jack Warren Cottrell, is worthy of mention.¹⁹⁹ He again challenged the theory of Shrenck *et al.*, that Zwingli received his theology of the covenant from the Anabaptists and then turned it against them. He affirmed that 'Zwingli is the father of Reformed covenant theology', and that he related covenant and baptism in a significant way,²⁰⁰ but concluded that Zwingli's covenant thinking 'was developed in a context other than the defence of infant baptism', and that the most likely source was 'through his reflection upon Scripture itself'.²⁰¹ A significant feature of Cottrell's thesis was the attention he drew to Oecolampadius in relation to covenantal theology.²⁰² No study has yet been conducted in this area. Cottrell also criticized Trinterud for placing Zwingli in a Rhineland/English conditional tradition of the covenant. He saw Zwingli as teaching an unconditional covenantal promise, in which the pledge of the elect to serve the Lord was more the result of, and not a condition of, the

fulfilling of God's covenant.²⁰³

Kenneth Hagen, who had shown earlier interest in the idea of 'testament' in relation to the young Luther, extended this study, in what was clearly a back-up to Trinterud's view of Rhineland covenantal development, to take in Erasmus, Melancthon, Zwingli and Bucer up to 1527.²⁰⁴ Hagen saw what he regarded as 'Luther's clear indication that testament - sacrament, covenant, promise - denotes a unilateral gift on God's part...*Foedus, pactum, promissio* are read as a gratuitous and unilateral *testamentum*'.²⁰⁵ But this stress began to shift with the young Melancthon to an 'emphasis on the "correlative" necessity of faith in the promise, faith as accepting and assenting to God's action', ie. a 'correlative contract'.²⁰⁶ This movement continued in Zwingli where '*Testamentum* shifted to a two-sided covenant', or 'bilateral covenant'. By 1527 the other Rhinelanders, Oecolampadius, Capito, Cellarius, and Bullinger had defined their covenant theology as bilateral.²⁰⁷ (This interpretation, of Zwingli especially, was quite contrary to the findings of Cottrell.²⁰⁸)

The question of 'Covenant or Testament?' was renewed by K.M. Campbell in 1972.²⁰⁹ On the main Old Testament administrations of the covenant, he wrote, 'The free and gracious sovereignty of God's disposition to Abraham is indisputable, but a balanced appreciation of the Abrahamic covenant must also embrace the ethical obligation of Abraham and his descendents expounded in Gen.17:9-15. Similarly, the Mosaic covenant is not merely ethical or legal in nature, but is disposed in the context of divine grace (Ex.6:1-8,19-4 etc.)'.²¹⁰

Campbell went on to suggest that it was only reasonable to believe that the writer to the Hebrews and his readers were familiar both with the Old Testament concept of *berith* as disposition, and with the contemporary Greek usage of *διαθήκη*. For them the two words expressed

fundamentally the same idea. 'The author therefore did not have to *choose* between the two different concepts, nor did he have to use one word to synthesize distant or opposing ideas. He has in mind the death of the Mediator and guarantor of the new covenant which God has made with new covenant believers, and the effect of this sacrifice on the old covenant believers. They, with Him, have now entered their full covenant inheritance...The central feature of the covenant idea - sovereign disposition by grace - is insufficient to express the new relationship of believers to God by virtue of the atoning death of Christ...it is neither a digression nor a parenthesis: it is an *intensification* of his exposition of the covenantal significance of the death of Christ'.²¹¹

Three years later, Donald MacLeod contributed two very useful articles on the nature of covenant.²¹² Considering the biblical usage of *berith*, he cautioned 'that the element of sovereignty in the divine covenant must not be pressed to the point where its two-sidedness is lost sight of. The *berith* is bi-lateral by definition. The initiative is unilateral. But there is a necessary human response to that initiative...The DIATHEKE, even as the new covenant, contains not only promises but requirements'.²¹³ The covenant of works he saw as a gracious arrangement promising, not life, but the continuance of life to Adam.²¹⁴ The Noahic covenant he interpreted as 'a covenant of preservation or of common grace'...subordinate to the covenant of grace', and the covenant of redemption as underlying the covenant of grace.²¹⁵ The covenant of redemption comprehended the need for distinguishing between the provisions of the covenant of grace as bearing upon Christ and upon his people, and also the clear biblical evidence of a pre-temporal arrangement between the Father and the Son, emphasizing that for Christ himself the covenant of redemption was a covenant of works, the fulfilment by

Christ of the covenant undertaking broken by Adam.²¹⁶

An excellent paper by David Calhoun on 'The Covenant in Bullinger and Calvin', stressed that there was 'essential agreement' in the their doctrine of the covenant. It played an important and similar role in their theologies, not as a fundamental or organizing principle, but rather as a kind of 'golden thread' running through their thought.²¹⁷

An important work, not for its originality, but for its subsequent influence, was R.T. Kendall's thesis, later published as *Calvin and the Calvinists to 1649*.²¹⁸ Like Chalker, Kendall took up the question of assurance and faith in Calvin, but concentrated largely on the particularity of the atonement as the point of departure between Calvin and the Calvinists, including Beza.²¹⁹ This divergence ran through Perkins and the Puritans to the Westminster standards, with the conclusion that 'Calvin's thought, save for the decree of predestination, is hardly to be found in Westminster theology'.²²⁰

The Westminster theologians, Kendall maintained, were too busy trying to counter the Arminians on predestination, that they failed to see that they were holding Arminius's ideas on faith and assurance which had been imported into Reformed theology with Beza's limitation of the death of Christ to the elect.²²¹ The difference between Calvin and Westminster was that 'for Calvin faith as an instrument (ie. of justification) is *God's* act, opening blind eyes; for the Westminster divines, even though in the context of God's prevenient grace, faith is *man's* act'.²²² This argument was closely related to covenantal theology, since it made faith and repentance the conditions of the covenant.

Kendall read this to mean that perserverance in repentance and good works were the price of 'free' justification, and that the only difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, according to

the Westminster standards was 'that perfect obedience was required under the old covenant and doing our best is required under the new...making justification, or at least, the knowledge of it, the reward for doing our best to be holy and good'.²²³

Kendall's claims, especially that which insisted on Calvin teaching a universal atonement, provoked a quick reaction, and sparked off a lively debate which still continues. Tony Lane challenged both Chalker's and Kendall's presentation of Calvin's doctrine of assurance, and the following year, reviewed Kendall's overall arguments.²²⁴ He demonstrated that 'Limited atonement does not of necessity require a distinction between faith and assurance', as Kendall claimed.²²⁵ Lane wrote a further article, 'The Quest for the Historical Calvin', which took account of the covenantal aspects of Kendall's work. His conclusions were non-committal, but tended to see a qualified difference between Calvin and the covenantal Calvinists in the use by the latter of the concept of a pre-fall covenant of works, a more scholastic approach, and the development of the covenantal idea into an organizational principle for theology. On the question of conditionality, Calvin's position was considered as unclear.²²⁶ On the other hand, Lane rejected the Barthian interpretation of Calvin as also 'subsuming all of God's dealings with man under the category of covenant', and therefore also guilty of a scholastic approach. Calvin, he said, differentiated between God's dealings with man before and after the fall; and secondly, while Calvin taught one covenant, he did not teach 'that God relates to all men according to this covenant', but only with the elect. Calvin portrayed Christ not as Head of all men indiscriminately, but as Head of the Church.²²⁷

Others also reviewed Kendall's thesis critically, but the fullest treatment came from Paul Helm.²²⁸ He defended the view that while there was a degree of explication found

in the covenantal theologians, due to changes of style, training and situation, that was not in Calvin, yet there was 'essential agreement' between the two.²²⁹ 'The seed-ideas,' he said, 'and in some cases, the actual details of the leading ideas, of covenant theology (eg. the eternal pact between the Father and Son, the federal principle, and the covenant of grace) are to be found in Calvin'.²³⁰

Sherman Ishbell studied 'The Origin of the Concept of the Covenant of Works' in a 1976 thesis. He shared with Barth the view that the covenant of works was 'an idea of history which invaded and guided biblical exegesis'. He endeavoured to show that the dogmatic concerns of the late sixteenth-century Reformed theologians were manifest in their teaching on the covenant of works'.²³¹ He followed Althaus in seeing Melanchthon's natural law theory as underlying Ursinus's development of *foedus naturale*.²³² Fenner, he regarded, as 'The first Reformed theologian to print the phrase *foedus operum*, and Rollock as 'the first to use it in direct reference to Adam's state of innocency', at a time when the idea of the covenant was beginning to attain significance as an organizing principle of theology.²³³

An examination of the covenantal theology of Murray and Kline was undertaken by O. Palmer Robertson in 1977. While recognizing the essential general agreement in Murray and Kline, Robertson sought correct the imbalance due to Kline's emphasis on the place of law and Murray's on the place of promise. From a biblical perspective he did not think it possible to set one over against the other. The law was graciously provided by God, and embodied the grace of God, so that 'Both law and grace, arising out of the nature of God himself, will continue to manifest themselves throughout God's covenantal dealings'.²³⁴ Robertson has since published a fuller account of his balanced view of the covenants in a very fine work entitled *The Christ of the Covenants*, and in an expository article on Genesis

15:6.²³⁵

When Douglas Stoute took a further look at the origin and development of the covenant idea, he warned against the danger of overemphasizing Bullinger's writings on the covenant as these were essentially apologetic tracts.²³⁶ He agreed that Bullinger was important since he gave more coherence to the idea and with him 'a theology of the covenant' began to emerge as he focused attention particularly on the problems of the relationship of the Old and New Testaments and the relationship of graciousness and conditionality in the covenant. He did, however, see continuity between Bullinger and Calvin on the covenant. The latter not only used the covenant idea, but 'treated the topic with a clarity and precision that is unrivalled among his contemporaries'.²³⁷ Consequently, he was strongly critical of Trinterud and other scholars who placed Calvin in a unilateral slot. He maintained that there was a tension between unilateral and conditional aspects in Calvin's teaching on the covenant, and that it was an exaggeration to see a clear-cut distinction with his predecessors on this point.²³⁸

Following the questions posed by Chalker and Kendall, Robert Letham considered again the doctrines of faith and assurance in Reformed theology, and saw covenantal theology as one of the main influences in generating an emphasis differing from that of Calvin.²³⁹ In Calvin, faith was centred in the mind and associated with knowledge, persuasion or assurance, and assurance was 'an essential, normative, definitive component of faith'. In the other, faith centred in the will or heart and was an active trust or committal to Christ, with assurance as the fruit of faith, making sanctification the ground of assurance.²⁴⁰ But Letham found this distinction not so clear-cut as it seems, since Calvin himself, while not obscuring the objective ground of assurance in Christ, nevertheless regarded sanctification as a *signum* or *testimonium* of the

work of Christ in a secondary or subordinate way.²⁴¹

In a later re-assessment article, Letham challenged Kendall's interpretation of Beza's doctrine of faith and assurance, showing that Beza took care 'to ensure that sanctification as a testimony of our election is *not* given independent significance nor divorced from faith nor from Christ'.²⁴² But in his thesis, Letham identified the two emphases outlined above with the unilateral/bilateral views of the covenant. His placing of theologians in these groups, however, did not correspond to the neat Zurich, Rhineland/Genevan streams of Trinterud. In the first category Letham placed Zwingli, Bucer, Martyr, Calvin, Bucanus, Zanchius, Olevianus, Crocius, Dering, and a qualified inclusion of Beza, Greenham and Perkins. The second list included Capito, Bullinger, Oecolampadius, Musculus, Tyndale, Hooper, Knox, Ursinus, Junius, Gomarus, Fenner, Rollock, and Arminius, the latter with due qualification.²⁴³ He therefore concluded that the classification of 'Calvin against the Calvinists' was a 'misleading generalization'. He saw Reformed theology as having a broad consensus with 'considerable flexibility of expression and emphasis'.²⁴⁴

Sinclair Ferguson's treatment of federal theology as the background to a study of John Owen's view of the Christian life was more cautious in its approach. He appeared to consider the harmonization of federal theology and that of Calvin as within the realm of possibility. They may have had different starting points and methods of expression, but they did have a similarity of ideas.²⁴⁵ He gave the impression of following Torrance, however, in seeing some departure from 'the biblical mode of covenant' in seventeenth-century federal theology. Owen was seen as compromising 'the gracious relationship posited in Scripture with that of "contract"' and 'thinking of covenant in terms of the contemporary commercial model'.²⁴⁶ But Ferguson entered the caveat, that Owen recognized that

this was not the form covenant took in Scripture, even if it was the tendency which his own theology took. In other words, while 'he does not escape from thinking of the covenants in terms of their conditions', Owen still regarded the sovereign disposition of God as involved in the covenant, therefore he operated with much the same idea as Calvin.²⁴⁷

Coming into the present decade, Wayne Baker's *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant*, is perhaps the most detailed defence of the Trinterud theory to date.²⁴⁸ He presupposed a divergence of views between Zurich and Geneva on the Lord's Supper, predestination, and ecclesiology, and also suggested that they vied for leadership of the Reformed churches.²⁴⁹ At the root of these differences was a Calvinian, unilateral, testamentary view of the covenant, and a bilateral, conditional view which included the idea of testament and was initiated by Zwingli, but 'fully defined and to a large extent created by Bullinger'.²⁵⁰ According to Baker, Bullinger could not accept the Genevan doctrine of double predestination, but held to the view of a conditional covenant to election only.²⁵¹ These early differences, however, were papered over, and only re-emerged in later Reformed theological debates.

The historical justice of Baker's thesis is questionable. The evidence cited by him proves nothing more than differences of emphases. For example, his handling of the evidence on the question of predestination often avoided the context in which statements were used. Calvin could easily have used any of the statements quoted.²⁵² Baker's insistence that Bullinger's sermon on providence and predestination must be interpreted by the fact that he earlier affirmed a universal calling of God, and that God was not the author of sin, is suspect since neither of these points can be considered contrary to Calvin's predestinarian position.²⁵³ Neither do

Bullinger's warnings against contention or his view of faith as a sign of election imply the conclusions Baker drew from them, that is, that Bullinger thereby rejected a decree of reprobation.²⁵⁴ The same weakness is seen in Baker's work in the way he refused to give credence to any evidence from Calvin's works which did not fit the Trinterud framework within which he was working.²⁵⁵

'Calvin on the Covenant' was the subject of a paper by Eugene Osterhaven.²⁵⁶ Like Emerson, he regarded the unqualified refusal to see Calvin as a covenantal theologian as 'facile' and inadequate, and thought that the differences between Calvin and the covenantal theologians were not so great as often argued.²⁵⁷ This was particularly evident in the foundation, the historical unfolding, and the unity of the covenant.²⁵⁸

Lyle Dean Bierma's thesis on 'The Covenant Theology of Casper Olevian', supplemented by his survey of the 'two traditions' theory in covenantal thinking in the sixteenth century, are excellent and timely contributions to this subject.²⁵⁹ Olevianus' significance lay not so much in his employment of the covenant as the central theme of a theological system, or in his use of it as an organizing principle, but in that he shifted the focus of covenantal thought from being used to explain the continuity of salvation history in the Old and New Testaments and to defend infant baptism, to emphasizing its meaning for the believer with regard to his security.²⁶⁰

Bierma called into question Trinterud's thesis with respect to the early development of covenantal doctrine, especially the interpretation he regarded as normative for the Puritans. He thought that his hasty treatment of primary sources did not hold up under closer scrutiny of the texts.²⁶¹ Bierma saw Olevianus' covenantal theology 'dominated by, though not restricted to, the *foedus gratiae*', and 'all sixteenth-century Reformed theologians recognizing 'both a unilateral and a bilateral dimension to

the covenant of grace within the context of a monergistic soteriology'.²⁶²

The relationship of covenant and law was highlighted in a recent scholarly article by Mark Karlberg.²⁶³ Karlberg, who followed Murray's rejection of a prelapsarian covenant of works,²⁶⁴ surveyed the views of Reformed theologians from the Reformation to the present day, pointing out the crucial role that the law/gospel distinction played in the formulation of the doctrine of justification by faith and the doctrine of the covenants. He regarded English federalism as the first full exposition of a 'popular misinterpretation of the Mosaic law covenant', because of its attempt to put the Mosaic covenant into a context of pure grace without any element of works in its administration.²⁶⁵ Karlberg distinguished between a pedagogical-typical sphere in which the principle of works-merit was applicable in the life of Israel under the Mosaic covenant, and a spiritual-antitypical sphere in which it did not apply, but where the elect rested 'exclusively upon the meritorious work of Christ'.²⁶⁶

Another scholarly work by Richard Muller drew attention to the remarkable balance between the doctrinal emphasis and the piety of conscience in English Puritanism.²⁶⁷ This was particularly marked in the works of Perkins, Ames and John Downham. Their commitment to safeguarding the sovereignty of God's will in salvation and to 'high ethical norms was, according to Muller, achieved by having both the concept of *foedus monopleuron* and the concept of *foedus dipleuron* in their systems. These came together at the point of conversion, which was central to the Puritan experience.²⁶⁸

Three studies by Michael McGiffert appeared in the early eighties. In the first of these, McGiffert considered the *foedus naturae* or *foedus legalis* as 'the rationale for reform' both ecclesiastical and political. This use of the covenant he regarded as thought out, but

restrained, in the Elizabethan era, and only coming into its own by the time of king Charles.²⁶⁹ The second examined Tyndale's concept of the covenant.²⁷⁰ In this he countered Trinterud, Clebsch, Moller and Knox, who construed Tyndale's theology as 'legalistic'. He agreed that there was an ethical emphasis in a mutual or conditional covenant in Tyndale's thought, but 'the conditions of the covenant, as he (Tyndale) intended them, turn out to have meanings far removed from the legalistic realms where men 'contract' with God to work out salvation'.²⁷¹ Covenantal works 'were not *opera legalis* but *opera gratiae*'.²⁷²

McGiffert's third article traced what he called the rise and division of covenant divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism around the issue of grace and works.²⁷³ He suggested that 'the genetic explanation of the covenant was works', due to strains on the old single covenant *sola gratiae* scheme, that is, how to preserve this freedom from works and at the same time enforce divine discipline upon the people.²⁷⁴ The Puritans found the answer to this problem of restraining the law to hand in current contractual ways of organizing thought. It was only 'when the curse of the law was safely locked up in the covenant of works, puritans were freed to be as puritanical as they pleased...without running the risk of a bad conscience'.

Ingenious as McGiffert's argument is, it implies that the problem of the relation of grace and law was a new one in the late sixteenth century. He failed to recognize Calvin's view of Moses' covenant when he said that it hung solely on merit, while Abraham's 'flowed solely from mercy'.²⁷⁵ The Puritans, following Calvin, did not need to lock the curse of the law up in a covenant of works; it already was locked up in the covenant of grace. It would be a more simple and natural explanation of the rise of covenant-of-works terminology to locate it in the growing tendency to use the covenant motif as an organizing

principle in theological systems. It would then be entirely understandable that those who did so would have to relate it to the entire question of the law of God, both natural and revealed. The advent of covenantal theology does not need to be seen as a response to the drift of modern contractual theories or current controversies. Though challenged and aggravated by these, it can still be seen originally as no more than an effort to rephrase in covenantal terms the theological ideas inherited from the early Reformers.²⁷⁶

A recent article by Donald McKim on 'William Perkins and the Theology of the Covenant' was practically a repeat of Greaves' work on the English Puritans. He followed the two traditions view, but saw Perkins as bringing the two strands together, casting 'his lot fully with the Calvinian emphasis on the priority of grace as the context in which the Covenant of God is given and in which human obedience and response is made. There could be no obedience or no 'contract' entered into on humanity's part if God had not already in his grace chosen to make the offer of salvation available to humanity through his covenant'.²⁷⁷

A thesis by David Weir on the origins of federal theology considered lexicographical evidence on the use of 'covenant' in the sixteenth century but added little to previous studies on the genetic history of covenantal theology.²⁷⁸ He underwrote Torrance's view that the later reformed emphasis on conditionality of the covenant arose from a confusion of *διαθήκη* and *συνθήκη*, but went further to say that 'Federal theology arose precisely because of the conflict (not the confusion) between *diathēke* and *suntheke*'.²⁷⁹ He saw it as an attempt to explain 'God's two faces' (ie. predestinarian grace through sovereign decrees and conditional love), after a decade of discussion about Adam's sin and God's plan and how to reconcile this with the nature of God. The construction of a prelapsarian covenant with Adam was then combined with

Ramistic philosophy which made the covenant of grace appear as a foil to the covenant of works.²⁸⁰

The first in-depth study of Calvin's view of the covenant appeared while this research was in progress, and is a welcome addition to this entire field of study. Peter Lillback had already written three significant pieces related to the subject. One was on the relationship of Calvin to Heidelberg, and particularly his influence on Ursinus, and another was on Calvin's use of the covenant in his response to the Anabaptist view of baptism. The third was a Seminary paper on 'The Role of Predestination in the Development of Johannes Cocchieus' Covenant Theology'.²⁸¹

In his thesis, a meticulous piece of research, Lillback concluded that while Calvin was not its inventor, he nevertheless deserved to be regarded as 'the great architect of the Covenant Theology', since he was the first 'to integrate the covenant concept into the entirety of his theological system', not as an external organizing principle, but certainly as an internal one, thereby providing the foundation for his successors to build the federal system.²⁸²

Summary

This examination of secondary literature on the covenant is by no means exhaustive, as a glance at the bibliography will show, but it is sufficient to highlight the various issues and problems which have arisen in the field of covenantal studies. It also underlines the fact that Adams Brown's statement, made in 1911, concerning the need of research in this area is still applicable, when he said, 'A good monograph on the history of covenant theology is still a desideratum'.²⁸³

The need of further work in the subject is clearly reflected in the wide spectrum of opinion expressed with regard to covenantal thought in the historiography, and the lack of any sort of even general consensus on issues such

as the origins of covenantal theology, or what is meant by the term 'covenant', and how a 'covenant theologian' is to be identified.

The variety of opinion also makes any kind of classification of the historiographical material very general indeed. Two rough groupings can be discerned. There is on the one hand those who follow a more critical tradition with its origins in the last century; and on the other hand, more recent scholars who have challenged this tradition and who would have some affinity with older Presbyterian schools of thought both in the United Kingdom and America.

Much of the modern critical approach to covenantal theology has its roots in the mid-nineteenth-century German schools. Many of the basic controverted issues such as rigid monopoleuric/dipleuric principles of interpreting covenantal theology can be located here. So too can the protest view of the idea of the covenant. The suggestion of federal theology being a reaction against Aristotelian scholasticism and an attempt to bring theology down from the giddy heights of supralapsarian predestination is not of recent origin.²⁸⁴ It has only been popularized in the last two or three decades by writers like Trinterud, Kendall, Armstrong, Baker and others. Concepts such these have gained much currency amongst theologians and church historians during the last half-century.

It might help to attempt to sketch out a brief picture of the complex modern historico/theological interpretation of covenantal thought which is rooted in this German source. Attention must first be focused upon two scholars who have probably done more than any others to set the direction of studies in the history of covenantal thought during this century. One was the famous German theologian, Karl Barth, and the other the equally famous American historian, Perry Miller.²⁸⁵ Their influence is particularly significant for this study as both in

different ways posited a strong element of discontinuity between later seventeenth-century covenantal theologians and the early Reformers, and they have been widely followed in their respective fields.

Influenced largely by Heppe, Barth saw federalism as having its well springs in the natural law theory of Melanchthon, thus introducing into the Reformed tradition, by way of the covenant of works, a legalism which he claimed was foreign to the early Reformation emphasis on grace, especially in the theology of Calvin. This line of reasoning was seen to be closely followed by numerous writers, particularly J.B. Torrance and Holmes Rolston III.²⁸⁶

In *The New England Mind*, Miller viewed the theology of the covenant also as a later development, a rather clever sociological as well as theological device thought up by the Puritans in order to come to terms with the threat of Arminianism on the one hand and Antinomianism on the other.²⁸⁷ Apart from endorsement by one or two writers of the dispensationalist school, Miller's complete separation of Puritan covenantal thought from Reformation roots was too radical to be credible, and he later acknowledged himself that the idea was not unknown among some of the early Reformers.²⁸⁸ Those who followed Miller, (Trinterud, Greaves, Baker, *et.al.*) then traced the origins of covenantal thought back into the Reformation, but continued to portray federalism as a protest theology. They proceeded to develop the 'two traditions' theory.²⁸⁹

According to this theory, Calvin's rigid supralapsarian predestination could only accommodate a unilateral, testamentary view of the covenant, thereby establishing the nature of the Genevan tradition. Over against this, it was alleged that the milder predestinarian outlook of Bullinger and the Rhineland theologians led to a mutual, bilateral, conditional view of the covenant, and this was designated the Zurich/Rhineland/Tyndale tradition.

Another interesting movement is then discernible in the historiographical portrait. Miller having rehabilitated the Puritans, the time had come for the rehabilitation of Calvin, due largely to the influence of the Barthian school, who wanted, among other things, to claim Calvin as their own, and soften the traditional theocentric supralapsarian image of Calvin's predestination to an acceptable Christological mould. Someone else had to be found to take his place as the prime mover of Reformed orthodoxy. Beza filled the bill. His *Summa totius*, with its *Tabula*, provided a handy hitching post on which to fasten the cold, rigid, scholastic image, which could not now entertain any interest whatsoever in covenantal thought.²⁹⁰ Calvin's unilateral, testamentary view of the covenant was no longer the result of a rigid predestinarianism, but rather an expression of his incarnational, Christomonistic theology.

One other development completes the scenario. The theology of the covenant was said originally to be a reaction against a lofty Calvinian, and then Bezean, predestinarianism, in order to put a warmer, human face on to Reformed theology. But as the doctrine was inherited by the Puritans, the bilateral emphasis predominated, and this in turn hardened into a cold contractualism in which men made bargains with God for salvation. This, it was claimed, was the 'oppressive legalism' inherited and fostered by the theology of the *Westminster Confession*.²⁹¹ It was then spread throughout the home countries and shipped to New England to flourish in the wilderness, together with renewed attempts to soften it with more universalistic versions of covenantal theology.

This in brief is the confused picture of covenantal theology which, with a multitude of minor modifications in various writers, has been widely presented and accepted. It is a picture which takes from the Reformed tradition any real sense of unity and continuity, not only in the area of

covenantal theology, but also in several of its fundamental, related doctrines such as predestination, the nature of the law, the meaning of the fall, the relationship of law and grace, and the nature of the work of Christ. It has not, however, gone unchallenged. Through an increasing number of scholars, a re-examination and evaluation of source materials in different areas is producing a more unified outline and putting different shades on the picture.

Unanimity of opinion is by no means present in those who have revised the portrait. Many would see the idea of the covenant as present in the work of the early Reformers, but consider it as yet so undeveloped that it is undeserving of the name 'covenant theology'. In this view varying degrees of dichotomies still are drawn between the Reformers and their seventeenth-century successors.²⁹² Others have claimed to find in the works of the Reformers adequate grounds for considering them as 'covenant theologians'.²⁹³

Many of the differing views clearly arise from failure to agree upon a working definition of what constitutes covenantal theology, and so the conclusions reached are largely determined by the presuppositions with which the study begins. Often the criterion is the number of covenants in the system.²⁹⁴ Again it can be the place of the covenant in the organization of the system, whether it is the organizing principle of the theology or whether it is related to certain beliefs and areas of Christian life and practice.²⁹⁵ There is also much confusion regarding the definition of related words and terms. For example, what is the difference between a 'covenant' and a 'testament'?²⁹⁶ What is meant by 'bilateral'? Some writers are clearly thinking of it in terms of a meritorious place given to the part of man in the covenant. What constitutes 'legalism'? For some, any place given to the law of God in the economy of salvation appears to be

'legalistic'.²⁹⁷

Desirable as more detailed analysis of the historiography of covenantal thought would be, further interaction must await consideration of the primary sources themselves. All these issues will be carefully monitored and their place in the writings of the Reformers and their successors evaluated. But from the foregoing, one lesson should be obvious. Covenantal theology can only be properly evaluated by considering more carefully the doctrines which are an essential part of the covenantal relationship, rather than merely looking at structures and terms. Again, it was a self-confessed scriptural pattern that was being followed by the Reformed tradition. In view of this, adherence to the general use of the idea of covenant in Scripture, that is, as manifesting the unity of God's relationship and dealings with his people in all ages should be kept to the fore as a necessary criterion.

Lillback's working definition, based on Moltmann, sums up the essential factors to look for in Reformed covenantal theology: 'Covenant theology will be deemed that use of the covenant which expresses the soteriological relationship, preferentially in terms of the covenant or its synonyms, and uses the idea to express and defend the continuity of the Old and New Testaments'.²⁹⁸ Specific terminology, the number of covenants, and whether or not the covenant is the organizing principle merit attention, but they should never have priority in deciding who should be regarded as a covenantal theologian. The basic thing is whether or not the essential biblical *ideas* of the theology of the covenant are present in a pervasive and necessary manner in the theological system. This will be the method followed in the succeeding chapters.

NOTES: Chapter Four

1 A.J. van t'Hooft, *De Theologie van Heinrich Bullinger in betrekking tot de Nederlandsche Reformatie*, (Amsterdam, 1888), 40-43.

2 E.G. von Korff, *Die Anfänge der Foederaltheologie und ihre erste Ausgestaltung in Zürich und Holland*, (Bonn, 1908), 15ff.

3 K.F.K. Müller, 'Coccejus', *RE*, (Leipzig, 1896-1915), 4.186-194; 'Johannes Cocceius and his School', *NSHE*, (New York, 1908-1912), 3.149-150.

4 W.A. Brown, 'Covenant Theology', *ERE*, 4.216, 220.

5 *Ibid.*, 4.216-218.

6 *Ibid.*, 4.221, 219.

7 *Ibid.*, 4.223-224.

8 F.O. Norton, *A Lexicographical and Historical Study of ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ From the Earliest Times to the End of the Classical Period*, (Chicago, 1908).

9 G. Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund im älteren Protestantismus vornehmlich bei Johannes Cocceius*, (Darmstadt, 1967; org.pub. Gütersloh, 1923), 36-37; 'Bund: III. Föederaltheologie, Dogmengeschichtlich', *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 1. (1927), 1364-1367.

10 *Ibid.*, 47-48.

11 *Ibid.*, 48-49, 59.

12 O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, (Göttingen, 1926), 412-417.

13 K. Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, (Munich/Zürich, 1932-1967); *Church Dogmatics*, 5 vols. trs. G.T. Thomson, G.W. Bromiley, et.al., (Edinburgh, 1936-1969), 4¹.56.

14 *Ibid.*, 2².8; 4¹.45; cf. 4¹.36ff.

15 *Ibid.*, 2².9,94f; 2².11,53-54.

16 *Ibid.*, 3¹.43-44,94-96,98,228ff,333; 3².50,217,243; 3³.36,65.

17 *Ibid.*, 4¹.22-23.

18 *Ibid.*, 4¹.427; 4¹.167.

19 *Ibid.*, 4¹.36^s

20 *Ibid.*, 4¹.47-49,66-67.

21 *Ibid.*, 4¹.44-45,64-65. Barth is arguing against Cocceius in particular here.

- 22 *Ibid.*, 4¹.61,62.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 4¹.63.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 4¹.48; cf. 4¹.67-68,422ff; 4².167; 4³.372.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 4¹.22.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 4¹.24-25; 4².800-801.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 4².270; 43.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 4³.3; cf. 760.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 4¹.25; 32-33.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 4¹.60-61.
- 31 W.H. Chalker, 'Calvin and Some Seventeenth-Century English Calvinists'. PhD Thesis (Duke University, 1961), 12ff.
- 32 See A.N.S. Lane, 'The Quest for the Historical Calvin', *EQ*, 55. (1983), 108; 'Calvin's Doctrine of Assurance', *Vox Evangelica*, 11. (1979), 36-45.
- 33 Barth, *Dogmatics*, 4¹.55-56.
- 34 See J.L. Scott, 'The Covenant in the Theology of Karl Barth', *SJT*, 17. (1964), 196-197. Scott's article is sympathetic to Barth, but admits difficulty at this point.
- 35 eg. J.T. Adams, *The Founding of New England*, (Boston, 1921), 66, 174; V.L. Parrington, *The Colonial Mind 1620-1800*, (New York, 1927), 5, 15, 29.
- 36 P. Miller, 'The Marrow of Puritan Divinity', *Errand Into the Wilderness*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 48-49; org.pub. in *The Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 32. 1935, 247-300); *Jonathan Edwards*, (New York, 1949), 71-99; 'The Puritan Way of Life', *The Puritans*, 2 vols. eds. P. Miller and T.H. Johnston (New York, 1963; org.© 1938), 1-63; *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, (New York, 1939), has a sequel in *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1953). For a highly perceptive evaluation of Miller's works from a covenantal perspective, see G.M. Marsden, 'Perry Miller's Rehabilitation of the Puritans', *CH*, 39. (1970), 91-105. The direction of this present study received considerable encouragement from Marsden's article, particularly in the relationship of the Puritans to Calvin. An earlier article by Miller was 'The Half-Way Covenant', *New England Quarterly*, 5. (1933), 676-715.
- 37 A cursory look at the bookshelves shows the new respectability accorded the Puritans since Miller first wrote: eg. S.E. Morison, *The Puritan Pruncheon: England in the Seventeenth Century*, (New York, 1936). Morison's work helped to soften the way between Miller's first and later works. But the lack of real appreciation of Puritan theology is still very evident. Morison naïvely comments,

'Puritans regarded Jesus as very Son of very God... The human aspect of Jesus simply did not interest them... It was His word that counted...His 'personality' was a matter of no moment whatever' (166-167); R.B. Perry, *Puritanism and Democracy*, (New York, 1944); E.S. Morgan, *Puritan Dilemma*, (New York, 1958); *The Puritan Family*, (New York, 1966); P.N. Carroll, *Puritans and the Wilderness*, (New York, 1969); L. Ziff, *Puritans and America*, (New York, 1973); S Bercovitch, *The Puritans Origins of the American Self*, (New Haven, 1975); F.J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, (London, 1977).

38 Miller, *New England Mind*, 504. Schrenk is the only modern author to appear in Miller's bibliographical appendix, and a number of the arguments follow the basic direction set by Schrenk.

39 *Ibid.*, 366-367; 371; 397, cf. 'Marrow', 62-63.

40 *Ibid.*, 374, 376, 378.

41 *Ibid.*, 378, 383, 394; 'Marrow', 73; *Jonathan Edwards*, 30 'By this adroit and highly legalistic formulation, seventeenth-century New England found a way for human enterprise in the midst of a system of determinism'; 'The Half-Way Covenant', 706-707..

42 *Ibid.*, 388, 389; 395.

43 *Ibid.*, 396; 'Marrow', 51, 53, cf. 63 where he claims that God 'has transformed Himself in the covenant into a God very different from the inscrutable Divinity of pure Calvinism'; cf. also *Jonathan Edwards*, 77 'The covenant of grace came to mean...not what God was pleased to grant, but what He was obliged to concede'.

44 'The Puritans', 56, 57-58.

45 'Marrow', 60; 61.

46 *New England Mind*, 374; 502.

47 *Ibid.*, 397; see Marsden, *op.cit.*, 93-95. In addition to evidence cited by Marsden, perhaps one of the most glaring examples of this, is the way in which Miller says the Puritans devised the covenant idea so as to make 'sanctification a very handy evidence of justification' - a point which has dominical and apostolic warrant on practically every page of the New Testament.

48 W.W. McKee, 'The Idea of the Covenant in Early English Puritanism c.1580-1643'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1948), 6-8.

49 *Ibid.*, 2-3.

50 *Ibid.*, 14-19.

51 *Ibid.*, 3, 142, 135f.

52 *Ibid.*, 145.

- 53 *Ibid.*, 153, 155, 169; 182-192.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 320, 231. Part of McKee's problem is that he does not provide a working definition of a covenant. He appears to assume that it is a mutual agreement between equal partners, and that anything else is a modification of that idea, and not worthy of the name (cf. 6-7). He did not consider that possibly the Puritans were not attempting to solve this problem at all, but to maintain the twofold presentation of Scripture.
- 56 L.J. Trinterud, 'The Origins of Puritanism', *CH*, 20. (1951), 39-40, 55, 43.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 41; 42.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 45.
- 59 Miller, *New England Mind*, 384, 387.
- 60 Trinterud, *op.cit.*, 45, 50; 48-49.
- 61 Trinterud, ed. *Elizabethan Puritanism: A Library of Protestant Thought*, (New York, 1971), 310.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 303-312.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 307.
- 64 F.W. Dillestone, *The Structure of the Divine Society*, (London, 1951), 39.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 40-46, quote 42. This is similar to the approach of Joachim Begrich, 'Berit. Ein Beitrag zur Erfassung einer alttestamentlichen Denkform', *ZAW*, 60. (1944), 1-11. Begrich saw the idea of consent by the inferior party to any mutual rights or duties in the covenant as a later degeneration of an older form in which the superior party bound the inferior party to himself without making explicit demands.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 70-74.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 74, 84.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 117.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 122, 124.
- 70 *Ibid.*, 124-129.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 132, 133-134.
- 72 *Ibid.*, 134.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 135.
- 74 J.I. Packer, *God Has Spoken*, (London, 1965), 34.
- 75 Dillestone, *op.cit.*, 134.
- 76 *Ibid.*, 131-132.

77 R. Niebuhr, 'The Idea of the Covenant and American Democracy', *CH*, 23. (1954), 126-136. Numerous papers of this nature have appeared in recent years. The revival of interest in politics and the covenant is reflected in the publications of the Workshop on Covenant and Politics, based at Temple University, Philadelphia.

78 L.F. Zuck, 'Anabaptist Revolution Through the Covenant in Sixteenth-Century Continental Protestantism'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1954), 37-38.

79 *Ibid.*, 273, 274.

80 *Ibid.*, 275.

81 J. Murray, *The Covenant of Grace*, (London, 1954); 'Covenant Theology', *The Collected Writings of John Murray*, 4 vols. (Edinburgh, 1982), 4.216-240 (orig. pub. in *The Encyclopedia of Christianity*, ed. P.E. Hughes, Delaware, 1972); 'Covenant', *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas (London, 1962), 264-268; *Principles of Conduct*, (London, 1957), esp. 181-201; *Christian Baptism*, (Nutley, N.J., 1977); *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. (London, 1965).

82 *Cov. of Grace*, 4; 'Cov. Theology' 216.

83 *Ibid.*, 8.

84 *Ibid.*, 12-16; cf. 'Covenant', 264-265.

85 *Ibid.*, 10-11; cf. 'Cov. Theology', 216; *Christian Baptism*, 92, where he speaks of 'an embracing commitment'.

86 *Ibid.*, 18; cf. 'Covenant', 265-266.

87 *Ibid.*, 19, 31; 'Cov. Theology', 229; *Prin. of Conduct*, 197-198; *Christian Baptism*, 90-92.

88 G.D. Henderson, 'The Idea of the Covenant in Scotland', *The Burning Bush*, (Edinburgh, 1957), 66 (orig. pub. *EQ*, 27. 1955, 2-14). W. Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*, (New York, 1955), 18, took the same view when he spoke of the idea of the covenant being advanced 'in mitigation of the stark determinism of the pure doctrine of predestination'.

89 *Ibid.*, 55-56.

90 *Ibid.*, 68, 61-62.

91 E.H. Emerson, 'Calvin and Covenant Theology', *CH*, 25. (1956), 136; 137-142.

92 E. Eenigenburg, 'The Place of the Covenant in Calvin's Theology', *RR*, 10. (1957), 1-22.

93 *Ibid.*, 3-4; cf. Brown 'Cov. Theology', *ERE*, 4.216.

94 E.H. Trenchard, 'Grace, Covenant and Law', *EQ*, 29. (1957), 134.

95 *Ibid.*, 147-148.

- 96 G.H. Lang, 'God's Covenants Are Conditional', *EQ*, 30. (1958), 90-91.
- 97 J.C. McLelland, 'Covenant Theology - A Re-evaluation', *CJT*, 3. (1957), 183-184.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 184f; 182, 185ff.
- 99 D.J. Bruggink, 'Calvin and Federal Theology', *RR*, 13. (1959), 15, 22.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 21.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 18.
- 102 T.F. Torrance, ed. *The School of Faith*, (London, 1959), 11v-lv, cxii-cxiii; cf. *Kingdom and Church*, (Edinburgh, 1956), 156ff, cf. 163; *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, (London, 1949), 20-22.
- 103 *Ibid.*, lxii-lxv; see also Torrance's article 'Justification: Its Radical Nature and Place in Reformed Doctrine and Life', *SJT*, 13. (1960), 225-246, where he contrasts Calvin's Christocentric focus with the alleged anthropocentric emphasis of the Puritans.
- 104 H. Oki, 'Ethics in Seventeenth-Century English Puritanism'. PhD Thesis (Union Theological Seminary, 1960), 47-48, 53-54.
- 105 *Ibid.*, 54f; cf. Schrenk, *op.cit.*, 44.
- 106 I. Breward, 'The Life and Theology of William Perkins 1558-1602'. PhD Thesis (Manchester University, 1963); 'Introduction', *The Work of William Perkins*, ed. I. Breward (Abingdon, 1970); 'William Perkins and the Origins of Puritan Casuistry', *Faith and a Good Conscience*, Puritan and Reformed Studies, (London, 1962); 'The Significance of William Perkins', *JRH*, 4. (1966-67), 113-128; 'William Perkins and the Origins of Reformed Casuistry', *EQ*, 40. (1968), 3-20.
- 107 'Life and Theology', 14; *The Work*, 16-17, 64-65.
- 108 *Ibid.*, 14; *The Work*, 17.
- 109 J.G. Møller, 'The Beginnings of Puritan Covenant Theology', *JEH*, 14. (1963), 46-67.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 61; 66-67.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 51.
- 112 J.R. Williams, 'The Covenant in Reformed Theology', *Austin Seminary Bulletin*, 78. (1963), 24-38.
- 113 W. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants 1520-1535*, (Westport, Conn., 1980; org. pub. Yale, 1964), 199, 203.
- 114 J.F. New, *Anglican and Puritan: The Basis of Their Opposition 1558-1640*, (Stanford, 1964), 92ff.

115 M. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy: Studies and Commentary*, (Grand Rapids, 1963); 'Law Covenant', *WTJ*, 27. (1964), 1-20; 'Oath and Ordeal Signs', *WTJ*, 27. (1965), 115-139 and 28. (1965), 1-37; *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism*, (Grand Rapids, 1968); 'Canon and Covenant', *WTJ*, 32. (1969), 49-67, 179-200 and 33. (1970), 45-72; *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, (Grand Rapids, 1972).

116 *Treaty*, 17; cf. 'Law Covenant', 11-17; 'Canon and Covenant', 181ff; *By Oath Consigned*, 29-38.

117 *By Oath Consigned*, 36; 17; cf. 'Law Covenant', 17ff.

118 'Law Covenant', 7, 11, 13ff; *By Oath Consigned*, 7.

119 *Ibid.*, 3; *By Oath Consigned*, 16.

120 For a discussion of Kline's position here see O.P. Robertson, 'Current Reformed Thinking on the Nature of the Divine Covenants', *WTJ*, 40. (1977), 63-76. Robertson has also a more popular work dealing with the nature and unity of the divine covenants - *The Christ of the Covenants*, (Philipsburg, 1980). He defines a covenant as 'a bond-in-blood sovereignly administered', and as the title indicates Christ is the incarnational unity of all the covenant administrations (pp. 4,15,52).

121 Kline, *By Oath Consigned*, 29,36; 'Law Covenant', 11.

122 J. von Rohr, 'Covenant and Assurance in Early English Puritanism', *CH*, 34. (1965), 199.

123 *Ibid.*, 201.

124 *Ibid.*, 202.

125 von Rohr, *The Covenant of Grace in Puritan Thought*, (Atlanta, 1986), see 190-191. 126 G.M. Tucker, 'Covenant Forms and Contract Forms', *VT*, 15. (1965), 487, 491ff esp. 500-501.

127 *Ibid.*, 501.

128 *Ibid.*, 487.

129 D.J. McCarthy, *Treaty and Covenant*, (Rome, 1963; revised 1978), 4-5.

130 McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant*, (Oxford, 1972), 58.

131 W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testament*, (Stuttgart, 1959); trs. *Theology of the Old Testament*, (Philadelphia, 1961); 'Covenant and Law', *Interpretation*, 20. (1966), 302-321.

132 'Covenant and Law', 309-310; 320.

133 *Theology of the O.T.*, 1.65-66.

134 For a fuller introduction to Old Testament scholarly discussion of 'covenant', see L. Köhler, *Theologie der*

Alten Testament, (Tubingen, 1935); trs. A.S. Todd, *Old Testament Theology*, (London, 1957); T.C. Vriezen, *Hoofdlijnen der theologie van het Olde Testament*, (Wageningen, 1949); trs. *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, (Wageningen, 1958; revised 1969); G.E. Mendenhall, 'Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition', *The Biblical Archeologist*, 17. (1954), 50-76; *Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, (Pittsburgh, 1955); 'The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine', *The Biblical Archeologist*, 25. (1962), 66-87; 'Covenant', *IDB*, 4 vols.+supp. ed. G.A. Buttrick (New York, 1962), 1.714-723; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trs. A.W. Heathcote and P.J. Allcock (London, 1958); J. Bright, *A History of Israel*, (London, 1960); *Covenant and Promise: The Future in the Preaching of the Pre-Exilic Prophets*, (London, 1970); G. von Rad, *Theologie der Alten Testament*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1960-1961); trs. *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1962-1965); D.R. Hilliers, *Treaty Curses and Old Testament Prophets*, (Rome, 1964); *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea*, (Baltimore, 1964); 'A Note on Some Treaty Terminology in the Old Testament', *BASOR*, 176. (1964), 46-47; L. Peritt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*. *Wissenschaftliche Monographia zum Alten und Neuen Testament*, 36. eds. G. Bornkamm and G. von Rad (Neukirchen, 1969); J. Campbell, *Israel and the Covenant*, (Philadelphia, 1954); E. Kutsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz: Untersuchungen zum sogenannten 'Bund' im Alten Testament*, 131. (Berlin, 1973); *Neues Testament - Neuer Bund? Eine Fehlübersetzung wird korrigiert*, (Neukirchen, 1978); 'Bund', *RE*, 8.397-410; *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament*, (Berlin, 1986); W. Dryness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology*, (Exeter, 1979), 113-141); S.J. de Vries, *The Achievements of Biblical Religion: A Prolegomenon to Old Testament Theology*, (New York, 1983); J.A. Moyter, 'Covenant and Promise', *Evangel*, 1.1 (1983), 2-4; 'The Normative Covenant', *Evangel*, 1.2 (1983), 3-5; 'Covenant, Law and Sacrafice', *Evangel*, 1.3 (1983), 3-5; 'The Perfection of the Covenant', *Evangel*, 1.4 (1983), 3-5; E.W. Nicholson, *God and His People: Covenant Theology in the Old Testament*, (Oxford, 1986).

135 P. Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper Calvinism in English Non-Conformity 1689-1765*, (London, 1967), 13-17; 'The Growth of a Supralapsarian Christology', *EQ*, 39. (1967), 23-29.

136 *Ibid.*, 20, 22; 'Supralapsarian', 23-24.

137 *Ibid.*, 26.

138 C.J. Sommerville, 'Conversion versus The Early Puritan Covenant of Grace', *JPH*, 44. (1966), 180-181.

139 J. Calvin, *Inst.*, III.24.8-9; *Com.on Ezk.*, 13:2; *Com.on Zeph.*, 1:3; *Com.on Mic.*, 3:11; *Com.on Rom.*, 11:29.

- 140 V.L. Priebe, 'The Covenant Theology of William Perkins'. PhD Thesis (Drew University, 1967), 31,47,236-237
- 141 *Ibid.*, 39,32-36,46.
- 142 *Ibid.*, 69,72,183-185.
- 143 A.A. Hoekema, 'The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching', *CTJ*, 2. (1967), 131-134, 133.
- 144 *Ibid.*, 136, 137-138, 138-139, 140ff.
- 145 *Ibid.*, 140; 145-146, 155-159.
- 146 R. Greaves, 'John Bunyan and Covenant Thought in the Seventeenth Century', *CH*, 36. (1967), 151-169; 'The Origins and Early Development of English Covenant Thought', *The Historian*, 31. (1968), 21-35; 'John Knox and the Covenant Tradition', *JEH*, 24. (1973), 23-32. This article was republished, with edited notes, as chap. 6 in *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation: Studies in the Thought of John Knox*, (Grand Rapids, 1980); 'The Nature of the Puritan Tradition', *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent*, ed. R.B.Knox (London, 1977), 255-273.
- 147 'John Bunyan', 152; 'The Origins', 21.
- 148 *Ibid.*, 152; 'The Origins', 32.
- 149 'The Origins', 22-23.
- 150 *Ibid.*, 23; 25, 32.
- 151 'John Knox', 118,122.
- 152 *Ibid.*, 122-123,124.
- 153 B.G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy: Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France*, (Madison, 1969), xvii.
- 154 *Ibid.*, 142, cf. xviii-xix; 31-33, 269. On Cameron, see D. Irving, *Lives of Scottish Writers*, (Edinburgh, 1839), 333-346; R. Chambers, *Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, 1.273-275; R. Wodrow, *Collections upon the lives of the Reformers and Most Eminent Ministers of the Church of Scotland*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1848), 2.81-229; T.F. Henderson, 'Cameron', *DNB*, 8.295-296; R. Baillie, *Letters and Journals*, passim; *Biographie Universelle*, 6.476; C. Read, 'Cameron', *Encyclopédie des Sciences religieuses*, ed. F. Lichtenberger (Paris, 1877), 2.561-563; T.F. Henderson, 'John Cameron', *DNB*, ed. L. Stephen (London, 1886), 8.295-296; G. Bonet-Maury, 'Cameron', *NSHE*, 2.367-368; *RE*, 3.690-691; 'John Cameron: A Scottish Protestant Theologue in France 1579-1625', *SHR*, 7. (1910), 325-345; H.M.B. Reid, *The Divinity Principals in the University of Glasgow 1535-1654*, (Glasgow, 1917), 170-251.
- On Amyraut, see J. Quick, *Synodicon in Gallia reformata*, 2 vols. (London, 1692); *Biographie Universelle*, 1.623-624; E.F.K. Muller, 'Cameron', *NSHE*, 1.160-161; *RE*, 1.476-481; W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 2.323-370;

T.M. Lindsay, 'Amyraut', *ERE*, 1.404-406; B.B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*, (Grand Rapids, 1942), 31,92-96; L. Proctor, 'The Theology of Moise Amyraut Considered as a Reaction against Seventeenth-Century Calvinism'. PhD Thesis (Leeds University, 1952); R. Nicole, 'Moise Amyraut (1596-1664) and the Controversy on Universal Grace'. PhD Thesis (Harvard University, 1966). Most works of systematic theology usually have some reference to Amyraut with respect to the doctrine of atonement.

155 *Ibid.*, 48; 51-52.

156 *Ibid.*, 57ff.

157 *Ibid.*, 55, 56; cf. 231. Armstrong says that Cameron in this respect 'even seems to "out-Luther" Luther' (56 n.160).

158 *Ibid.*, 56; cf. 143-157 esp. 144

159 *Ibid.*, 143, 152-153.

160 *Ibid.*, 147-149, 151.

161 *Ibid.*, 153-154, 152.

162 R. Nicole, *op.cit.*, 122-128, 132; 13-21.

163 R.A. Muller, 'Predestination and Christology in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology'. PhD Thesis (Duke University, 1976), iii.

164 *Ibid.*, iv.

165 *Ibid.*, 2.

166 *Ibid.*, 227.

167 *Ibid.*, 438.

168 I. McPhee, 'Conserver or Transformer of Calvin's Theology? A Study of the Origins and Development of Theodore Beza's Thought 1550-1570'. PhD Thesis (Cambridge University, 1979)

169 *Ibid.*, 354-355, 357. The whole question of Beza's relation to Calvin, and his place in post-Reformation theological development has been the subject of much debate. It will be discussed later in relation to their covenantal thought (see *infra*, 2.50ff). Many in the past have advanced a wide gulf between Beza and Calvin, and while some writers still hold to this view, the swing in recent Bezan studies has been away from the idea of a deep-seated departure from Calvin.

170 W.K.B. Stoeber, 'The Covenant of Works in Puritan Thinking: The Antinomian Crisis in New England'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1970), iii, 209-210.

171 *Ibid.*, 9; 7.

172 *Ibid.*, 109ff.

- 173 *Ibid.*, 218-225, 232-251.
- 174 *Ibid.*, 234-239.
- 175 J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract? A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland', *SJT*, 23. (1970), 51-64; 'The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology', *SJT*, 26. (1973), 295-311; 'The Unconditional Freeness of Grace', *Theological Renewal*, 9 (1978); 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics', Paper presented at the Workshop on Covenant and Politics, (Philadelphia, Dec.1980); 'The Unconditional Freeness of Grace', *Theological Renewal*, 9. (1978), (The MSS of this article was supplied courtesy of the author); 'The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and Its Legacy', *SJT*, 34. (1981), 225-243; 'Calvin and Puritanism in England and Scotland. Some Basic Concepts in the Development of Federal Theology', *Calvinus Reformer: His Contribution*, (Potchefstroom, 1982), 264-286; 'Strengths and Weaknesses of the Westminster Theology', *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*, ed. A.I.C. Heron (Edinburgh, 1982), 40-54; 'The Incarnation and Limited Atonement', *EQ*, 55. (1983), 83-94.
- 176 'Stren.and Weak.', 49, 52; 'Unco. Freeness', 8-10; 'Incarnation', 89-90; 'Cal.and Pur.', 271ff; 'Contribution', 301.
- 177 'Cov.or Cont.', 67; 'Stren.and Weak.', 49-50; 'Incarnation', 88-89; 'Cal.and Pur.', 273; 'Contribution' 300-301.
- 178 *Ibid.*, 55; 'Cov.Concept', 239; 'Cal.and Pur.', 271; 'Contribution', 300; 'Unco. Freeness', 2ff.
- 179 *Ibid.*, 55; 'Cov.Concept', 228; 'Incarnation', 91; 'Cal.and Pur.', 266; 'Unco. Freeness', 5; 'Contribution', 300.
- 180 'Cal.and Pur.', 267; 'Unco. Freeness', 6; 'Cov.or Cont.', 54; 'Cov.Concept', 228; 'Incarnation', 90; 'Contribution', 300.
- 181 'Cov.or Cont.', 53; 'Cov.Concept', 233-235, 241; 'Cal.and Pur.', 278-279, 284; 'Unco. Freeness', 4-5.
- 182 *Ibid.*, 56; 'Cov.Concept', 230, 240; 'Incarnation', 92; 'Cal.and Pur.', 271; 'Unco. Freeness', 7.
- 183 'Incarnation', 84-86; 'Stren.and Weak.', 46-47; 'Cov.or Cont.', 68; 'Cal.and Pur.', 274-276.
- 184 *Ibid.*, 87f; 'Stren.and Weak.', 45.
- 185 *Ibid.*, 89-91; 'Cal.and Pur.', 272; 'Cov.Concept', 239; 'Unco. Freeness', 9; 'Cov.or Cont.', 57.

186 'Cov. or Cont.', 60, 68-69; 'Stren. and Weak.', 47; 'Cal. and Pur.', 273, 276; 'Contribution', 306-311; 'Unco. Freeness', 10.

187 'Cal. and Pur.', 272; 'Incarnation', 84; 'Stren. and Weak.', 49-50.

188 'Stren. and Weak.', 50.

189 'Unco. Freeness', 11.

190 *Ibid.*, 12-13.

191 H. Rolston III, 'Responsible Man in Reformed Theology: Calvin versus the Westminster Confession', *SJT*, 23. (1970), 129-156; *John Calvin versus the Westminster Confession*, (Richmond, Vg., 1972). For a critical review of Rolston, see D. McLeod, 'Federal Theology: An Oppressive Legalism?', *BOT*, 125. (1974), 21-28.

192 Cover blurb on *John Calvin v. the West. Conf.*.

193 *John Calvin*, 11, 14; 'Resp. Man', 129.

194 *Ibid.*, 17, 21-22; cf. 72-95 on 'The Righteousness of God', where Rolston implies that covenantal theology does not allow that God endowed man with any original righteousness, but that it was something he had to achieve.

195 *Ibid.*, 16-17; 'Resp. Man', 134; *infra*, 36.

196 *Ibid.*, 18; cf. *WCF*, xix.6.

197 *Ibid.*, 48; 'Resp. Man', 146;

198 *Ibid.*, 19, 90, 93.

199 J.W. Cottrell, 'Covenant and Baptism in the Theology of Huldreich Zwingli'. ThD Thesis (Princeton University, 1971).

200 *Ibid.*, 407; cf. 291-294; 403-404.

201 *Ibid.*, 17, 405.

202 *Ibid.*, 348-374.

203 *Ibid.*, 271-272.

204 K. Hagen, 'The Problem of Testament in Luther's *Lectures on Hebrews*', *HTR*, 63. (1970), 61-69; 'From Testament to Covenant in the Early Seventeenth Century', *SJT*, 3. (1972), 1-24.

205 'From Testament to Covenant', 10, 14; cf. 8.

206 *Ibid.*, 13, 15.

207 *Ibid.*, 17, 18; 23.

208 Cottrell, *op. cit.*, 271-272; see *infra*, 1.163.

209 K.M. Campbell, 'Covenant or Testament? Heb. 9:16-17 Reconsidered', *EQ*, 44. (1972), 107-111.

- 210 *Ibid.*, 110.
- 211 *Ibid.*, 111.
- 212 D. McLeod, 'Covenant 1', *BOT*, 139. (1975), 19-22; 'Covenant 2', *BOT*, 141 (1975), 22-28.
- 213 'Covenant 1', 21, 22.
- 214 'Covenant 2'. 22.
- 215 *Ibid.*, 24-25, 28.
- 216 *Ibid.*, 26-27, 28.
- 217 D.B. Calhoun, 'The Covenant in Bullinger and Calvin'. ThM Paper (Princeton University, 1976), 35-39, (I am indebted to J. Ligon Duncan III for supplying this paper).
- 218 R.T. Kendall, 'The Nature of Saving Faith from William Perkins (d.1602) to the Westminster Assembly (1643-1649)'. DPh Thesis (Oxford University, 1976); Published as *Calvin and the English Calvinists to 1649*, (Oxford, 1979).
- 219 *Calvin and the English Calvinists*, 13ff, 29ff.
- 220 *Ibid.*, 197-208.
- 221 *Ibid.*, 210-211.
- 222 *Ibid.*, 201.
- 223 *Ibid.*, 205-206.
- 224 A.N.S. Lane, 'Calvin's Doctrine of Assurance', *Vox Evangelica*, 11. (1979), 32-54; 'Book Review', *Themelios*, 6. (1980), 29-31.
- 225 'Calvin's Doctrine', 42ff; 'Book Review', 30.
- 226 Lane, 'The Quest for the Historical Calvin', *EQ*, 55. (1983), 106-107.
- 227 *Ibid.*, 112-113.
- 228 Kendall's work sparked off a lively debate. In addition to Lane, those critical of his thesis include: S.B. Ferguson, 'Review', *BOT*, 168. (1977), 16-21; S. Reid, *WJT*, 43. (1980-81), 155-164; P. Helm, 'Calvin, English Calvinism, and the Logic of Doctrinal Development', *SJT*, 34. (1981), 179-185; *Calvin and the Calvinists*, (Edinburgh, 1982); 'Calvin and the Covenant: Unity and Continuity', *EQ*, 55. (1983), 65-81; 'Calvin and Calvinism: The Anatomy of a Controversy', *Evangel*, 2.1 (1984), 7-10; 'The Logic of Limited Atonement', *SBET*, 3. (1985), 47-54; R.A. Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, (Philipsburg, 1983); R. Nicole, 'John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement', *WJT*, 47. (1985), 197-225; see also his earlier relevant article, 'The Doctrine of Definite Atonement in the Heidelberg Catechism', *The Gordon Review*, 3. (1964), 138-145, and W.R. Godfrey, 'Tensions Within International Calvinism: The Debate on the Atonement and the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619'. PhD Thesis (Stanford

University, 1974); 'Reformed Thought on the Extent of the Atonement', *WTJ*, 37. (1975), 133-171. Studies supporting Kendall's argument include: M.C. Bell, 'Saving Faith and Assurance in John Calvin and Scottish Theology'. PhD Thesis (Aberdeen University, 1982); now published as *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance*, (Edinburgh, 1986); 'Calvin on the Extent of the Atonement', *EQ*, 55. (1983), 115-123; J.B. Torrance, 'The Incarnation and Limited Atonement', *op.cit.*; C.D. Daniel, 'Hyper Calvinism and John Gill'. PhD Thesis (Edinburgh University, 1983), esp. app. 777-828. Significant earlier works in the same vein are P. van Buren, *Christ in Our Place*, (Grand Rapids, 1957), originally a PhD Thesis (University of Basel, 1954), and J.W. Anderson, 'The Grace of God and the Non-elect in Calvin's Commentaries and Sermons'. ThD Thesis (New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1976).

229 Helm, 'Calvin and the Covenant', 78-80; *Calvin and the Calvinists*, 72, 80-81.

230 *Ibid.*, 67.

231 R.S. Ishbell, 'The Origins of the Concept of the Covenant of Works'. MTh Thesis (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1976), 6.

232 *Ibid.*, 20, 23, 72.

233 *Ibid.*, 30, 50, 73.

234 O.P. Robertson, 'Current Reformed Thinking on the Nature of the Divine Covenants', *WTJ*, 40. (1977), 63-76, esp. 74, 76.

235 Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*, (Phillipsburg, 1980); 'Genesis 15:6. New Covenant Exposition of an Old Covenant Text', *WTJ*, 42. (1980), 259-289 (see n.121).

236 D.A. Stoute, 'The Origins and Early Development of the Reformed Idea of the Covenant'. PhD Thesis (Cambridge University, 1979), 151f.

237 *Ibid.*, 161; 191.

238 *Ibid.*, 230ff, 243.

239 R.W.A. Letham, 'Saving Faith and Assurance in Reformed Theology: Zwingli to the Synod of Dort'. PhD Thesis (Aberdeen University, 1979), 2vols.

240 *Ibid.*, 1.3f, 362ff; cf. x.

241 *Ibid.*, 1.368ff.

242 Letham, 'Theodore Beza: A Reassessment', *SJT*, 40. (1987), 35

243 'Saving Faith', 1.363f.

244 *Ibid.*, 1.371.

- 245 S.B. Ferguson, 'The Doctrine of the Christian Life in the Teaching of Dr. John Owen'. PhD Thesis (Aberdeen University, 1979), 54-64.
- 246 *Ibid.*, 483-484.
- 247 *Ibid.*, 486, 61.
- 248 J.W. Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant: The Other Reformed Tradition*, (Ohio, 1980).
- 249 *Ibid.*, on the Lord's Supper xxi, 8-9; on predestination xxii-xxiii, 27-54; on the church xxiii, 107-140; xxi.
- 250 *Ibid.*, xxii; see App. B, 'Covenant and Testament in Calvin's Thought', 193-198.
- 251 *Ibid.*, xxii, 53.
- 252 *Ibid.*, 29-30.
- 253 *Ibid.*, 30; cf. Bullinger, *Decades*, 3, 185ff.
- 254 *Ibid.*, 32-33.
- 255 *Ibid.*, 197.
- 256 M.E. Osterhaven, 'Calvin on the Covenant', *RR*, 33. (1980), 136-147; also in *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, ed. D.K. McKim (Grand Rapids, 1984), 89-106.
- 257 *Ibid.*, 136-137.
- 258 *Ibid.*, 137-147.
- 259 L.D. Bierma, 'The Covenant Theology of Casper Olevian'. PhD Thesis (Duke University, 1980); 'Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?', *WTJ*, 45. (1983), 304-321; see also his 'Olevianus and the Authorship of the Heidelberg Catechism: Another Look', *SCJ*, 13.4. (1982), 17-27.
- 260 'Cov. Theology', iv, v, 249-250.
- 261 *Ibid.*, 293 n.3; 'Fed. Theology', 309, 321.
- 262 *Ibid.*, 209; 'Fed. Theology', 321.
- 263 M.W. Karlberg, 'Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant', *WTJ*, 43. (1980), 1-57; which was a synopsis of 'The Mosaic Covenant and the Concept of Works in Reformed Hermeneutics: an Historical-Critical Analysis with Particular Attention to Early Covenant Eschatology'. ThD Thesis (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1980).
- 264 'Mosaic Covenant', 4-5.
- 265 'Reformed Interp.', 54,56; 'Mosaic Covenant', 5-6.
- 266 *Ibid.*, 55-56; 'Mosaic Covenant', 6.

267 R.A. Muller, 'Covenant and Conscience in English Reformed Theology: Three Variations on a 17th Century Theme', *WTJ*, 42. (1980), 308-334 esp.309-310.

268 *Ibid.*, 310. On this aspect of Puritanism see L.B. Tipson, 'The Development of a Puritan Understanding of Conversion'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1972). Tipson criticizes the earlier works of A. Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England*, (Chicago, 1955), and N. Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life*, (New Haven, 1966).

269 M. McGiffert, 'Covenant, Crown, and Commons in Elizabethan Puritanism', *JBS*, 20. (1980), 32-52 esp.32-33.

270 McGiffert, 'William Tyndale's Conception of the Covenant', *JEH*, 32. (1981), 167-184.

271 *Ibid.*, 171, 172.

272 *Ibid.*, 176.

273 McGiffert, 'Grace and Works: The Rise and Division of Covenant Divinity in Elizabethan Puritanism', *HTR*, 75.4. (1982), 463-502.

274 *Ibid.*, 466-468.

275 *Ibid.*, 475.

276 see J.S. Coolidge, *The Pauline Renaissance in England: Puritanism and the Bible*, (Oxford, 1970), 99-140, who was of the opinion that 'It is this mere rephrasing of the argument which constitutes the point of departure of a distinctive covenant or Federal theology' (p.102; cf. 150-151).

277 D.K. McKim, 'William Perkins and the Theology of the Covenant', *Studies of the Church in History*, ed. H. Davies (Pennsylvania, 1983), 85-101; see 89-92; 96.

278 D.A. Weir, '*Foedus Naturale*: The Origins of Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Thought'. PhD Thesis (St. Andrew's University, 1984), 16-70.

279 *Ibid.*, 69.

280 *Ibid.*, 187.

281 P. Lillback, 'Ursinus Development of the Covenant of Creation: A Debt to Melancthon or Calvin?' *WTJ*, 43. (1980), 247-288; 'Calvin's Covenantal Response to the Anabaptist View of Baptism', *Christianity and Civilization*, 1. (1982), 185-232; 'The Role of Predestination in the Development of Johannes Cocceius' Covenant Theology', (Post-Reformation Developments Course Paper, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1980). (I am indebted to J. Ligon Duncan III for this last paper).

282 Lillback, 'The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology'. PhD Thesis (Westminster Theological Seminary, 1985), 236, 496, 497.

283 Brown, 'Covenant Theology', 224.

284 eg. Dorner, *infra*, 102.

285 *Infra*, 130-134; 134-137.

286 *Infra*, 160-162; 162-163.

287 Miller, *New England Mind*, 366-367, 374 etc.

288 eg. F.C. Lincoln, 'The Development of Covenant Theory', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 100. (1943), 136; C.C. Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, (Chicago, 1965), 180.

289 eg. Trinterud, Greaves, Baker, *et.al.*, *infra*, 138-140; 154-156; 171-172.

290 eg. Toon, Kendall, and to a lesser extent, Letham, *infra*, 152-153; 166-167; 169-170.

291 Holmes Rolston, *infra*, 4, 162-163.

292 eg. Emerson, Eenigenburg, McLelland, Møller, McGiffert, *infra*, 145; 145-146; 146-147; 148-149; 174-175.

293 eg. van Zandt, the nineteenth-century American school, van den Bergh, von Rohr, Hoekema, Calhoun, Bierma, Lillback, *infra*, 113-114; 114-121; 121; 150-151; 154; 166; 172-173; 176.

294 Lincoln, *infra*, 134-135, would say there are three covenants in the covenantal system; McCoy, 'Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius', 59, and Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 54, would prefer to speak of two covenants; Moltmann, 'Föderaltheologie', 190 and Lillback, 'The Binding of God', 29, regard the idea of a single dominant covenant as all that is necessary to constitute covenantal theology.

295 Murray, *Covenant of Grace*, 3-4, would see an ethical content as necessary. Hagen, 'Testament to Covenant', 1-2, and C.J. Butler, 'Religious Liberty and Covenant Theology', PhD Thesis (Temple University), *passim*, see a political element required.

Vos, *The Doctrine of the Covenant*, 236, and Brown, 'Covenant Theology', 216, hold that it must be the organizing principle in the theological system.

296 eg. Vos, Eichrodt, Hagen, Campbell, Baker, Weir, *infra*, 120-121; 152; 164; 171.

297 eg. Trinterud, Dilleston, Greaves, Torrance, Holmes Rolston, Kendall, *infra*, 139; 142; 154; 160-161; 162-163; 166.

298 Lillback, 'The Binding of God', 29; cf. Moltmann, 'Föderaltheologie', 190.

PART TWO

FORERUNNERS

CHAPTER FIVE

The Covenant in the Church Fathers

It has sometimes been said that the introduction of the covenant idea as a theological category is a phenomenon of modern times. One writer of the dispensational school went so far as to state: 'Theologically the theory is of comparatively recent development. It was, of course, unknown to the apostolic and early church fathers, never taught by the church leaders of the middle ages, and not mentioned even by any of the great teachers of the reformation period itself. No reference is made to it in any of the great confessions of faith, either Lutheran or Reformed, until the time of the *Westminster Confession*.'¹

So before examining the works of the Reformers themselves, in order to test this assumption, it would be helpful to see if there are any guidelines or precursors among the church fathers or in medieval theology which might have influenced or informed Reformed theological thought at this point.

The acquaintance of the Reformed theologians with both the Greek and Latin fathers of the church needs no underlining. They ranged widely through their works. Calvin's writings are saturated with quotations from the patristic authors. They are his second major source after the Scriptures. No other reformer has such a wealth of patristic references. Calvin's acquaintance with some patristic writings depended on Eusebius and Cassiodorus and his knowledge of church councils and canon law, but many of them he knew first hand.²

One of the emphases in the Reformed use of the covenant was to demonstrate the unity and continuity or harmony between the Old Testament and the New. This was especially so in relation to the early Anabaptist

controversy, and was a continuing concern for Calvin.³ But this was an old issue. With the church under attack, first from Judaism itself, and later from Gnostic and pagan writers who sought to isolate Christianity from its Judaistic roots, the early Fathers were pressed to explain the relationship between the Old and New Testaments.⁴ The covenant was naturally seen as a unifying factor in the dealings of God with men throughout both periods.⁵

· Epistle of Barnabas

Before considering one or two of the fathers in more detail, there are two writings worth mentioning briefly in this respect. The basic argument of the first part of *The Epistle of Barnabas* concerned the Jews' violation of the covenant of the Lord received by Moses on Mount Sinai. Because they despised the promises in this covenant they lost it, and it became the possession of the Christian church. 'The covenant is ours' now, said the author, since the new covenant founded on the sufferings of Christ was the fulfilment of these promises.⁶ This was precisely the covenant announced again and again by the prophets.⁷ The Old Testament sacrifices and ordinances, including circumcision, were types of this new covenant and were designed to teach its spiritual realities, but since the coming of Christ they have now been abolished.⁸ New Testament baptism and the Cross of Christ were constantly prefigured in the old, and as the covenant belonged to those who, like Abraham, believed, the Christians, and not the unbelieving Jews, are now the heirs of the covenant.⁹ The Lord has given to them the covenant which he once gave to Moses. Christ suffered on their behalf in order that they might inherit the promises and be 'constituted heirs through him'. Christ was manifested so that he might redeem his people, and that 'He might by His word enter into a covenant with us'.¹⁰ In this way the church became the spiritual temple of the Lord.¹¹

Justin Martyr

Again, in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* the covenant played a similar major role in the discussion. Trypho, the Jew, admired the moral integrity of the Christians, but because they refused to observe the Old Testament festivals, sabbaths, and the rite of circumcision he accused them of 'despising this covenant rashly', (ie. the covenant of the law).¹² Justin replied with an exposition of 'the final law' or 'the new covenant' in contrast to all the temporal ceremonial observances and sacrifices of the Old Testament. He showed that the Christians were the true sons of Abraham, who had obtained righteousness and salvation through Christ.¹³ Enoch and the other Old Testament saints also received the spiritual circumcision of 'the everlasting law and the everlasting covenant', which was proclaimed by the prophets.¹⁴

Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus was one of the clearest expositors of the covenant amongst the fathers. He held that out of longsuffering to fallen man, God condescended to give 'more covenants than one' to mankind, accommodating them to 'the general scheme of the faith'.¹⁵ There were 'four principal (*καθολικαι*) covenants given to the human race' - one from Adam to Noah, a second to Noah after the flood, the third to Moses, and the fourth was the one which summed up all the others in the gospel, bringing renovation to men and translation to the heavenly kingdom.¹⁶

Irenaeus, however, referred more frequently to the two covenants, meaning that which was under Moses and the new covenant in Christ. While there were differences in these covenants 'fitted for the times', they nevertheless manifested unity and harmony, because God was their author and their mutual purpose was the benefit and salvation of men.¹⁷ It was the same gracious God 'who was announced by the law and the prophets, whom Christ confessed as His

Father'. Therefore, there could only be one end to both covenants.¹⁹ The new covenant was both 'known and preached by the prophets'. There was no contradiction.¹⁹ It was the spurious interpretation of the law by the Pharisees that Christ and the apostles opposed, since the law taught 'the necessity of following Christ'.²⁰ True keeping of the law was an inward matter and only possible through the love of God in the heart.²¹ Irenaeus clearly distinguished between the letter of the law and the Word which liberates the soul from bondage to the mere letter. The Word corresponds to the natural precepts or righteousness of the law and the love of God in the heart.

This same grace was available to those of old as well as to later Christians, though it was more obscurely revealed then.²² It was not by any observance of signs or sabbaths that they were justified then, but by believing God independently of the law of Moses.²³ The decalogue was given in covenant as an addition to the natural law inscribed upon men's hearts, because of their hardness and rebellion. Because the decalogue also reflected the righteousness of God, it has never been cancelled, not even by Christ, but remains in force. Christ has cancelled the bondage of the laws promulgated by Moses, but he has 'increased and widened those laws which are natural and noble, and common to all'. Christ's interpretation of the law remains as a reminder to those who have truly received the power of liberty' of their continuing accountability to God, and as 'the means of testing and evidencing faith', whether they will reverence, fear and love the Lord.²⁴ The temporal, Levitical ceremonial laws had a similar function. The true offering of sacrifices and oblations was not something that God needed *per se*, but was intended to discourage idolatry, and to be an expression of the love of the offerer and of his trust in what the sacrifices signified in the future. Men were not sanctified by the sacrifices, but the sacrifices were sanctified, as it were,

by the consciences of the offerers, and therefore were accepted by God as from a friend.²⁵

The faith of Abraham and the other Old Testament saints was identical with that of Christian believers. Christ came for one as much as for the other.²⁶ Both were justified by faith through Christ, who gathered 'into the one faith of Abraham those who, from either covenant, are eligible for God's building'. Abraham 'did in himself prefigure the two covenants, in which some have sown, while others have reaped'.²⁷

Here, then, in outline is the 'covenant theology' of one of the early church fathers. Several points are worth noting. Irenaeus regarded the covenantal relationship between God and man as a divine arrangement, involving a condescension by God to man's capacity and condition. He saw the covenant as the central factor in the unfolding of salvation history. While there were different expressions of covenant, the covenant in Christ was requisite for the saints of all ages, with one way of salvation for the church going back to the time of Adam. Irenaeus distinguished between the mere letter of the law and its spirit. He identified both the natural law, the moral law and the love of God with the righteousness of God. Ceremonial laws were abrogated with the coming of Christ, but the moral law continued in force and has a continuing function in the lives of those who have been liberated by the gospel as a means of testing the reality and strength of their faith. The covenant of grace, therefore, while unilateral in its initiation and accomplishment, had for Irenaeus a strong bilateral and ethical emphasis in its outworking in Christian experience.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria was another of the fathers to whom the reformers referred, and who also used the idea of the covenant.²⁸ Clement, in one place, spoke of four

covenants in the Old Testament. These were made with Adam, Noah, Abraham and Moses.²⁹ But Clement, like Irenaeus, more frequently designated two - the covenant made with the Jews of old, and the new spiritual covenant made with believers since Christ's coming.³⁰ He suggested that the two tables of the decalogue 'may be a prophecy of the two covenants', but that it was 'the same God who furnished both covenants'; therefore the difference was more dispensational.³¹ 'There is but one, true, ancient, universal Church, one in substance, and idea, in origin, in pre-eminence, and it collects into the unity of one faith those from both covenants, so that in fact there is rather one covenant manifest in different periods by the will of God'. Into this covenant all were gathered who were ordained or predestinated by God before the foundation of the world.³²

Not surprisingly, Clement devoted a lot of time to showing the relationship of law to gospel.³³ 'Both the law of nature and that of instruction [ie.Mosaic] are one,' he said, and these reflected the divine character in teaching righteousness. Obedience to the law, then, was an imitation of 'the divine character, namely righteousness'. Both covenants could be viewed as manifestations of one righteousness. In this way, Clement, in one place, interpreted the covenant as God himself, arguing that the word *θεός* (God) comes from *θεσις* ('placing', 'order' or 'arrangement').³⁴ A covenant, therefore, was an arrangement God made with man, and by dealing with man in this way, and thus expressing anger and love towards him, God was 'condescending to emotion on man's account'.³⁵

While the law was given *through* Moses, it was given and governed by the 'benign Word', that is, Christ, who was the 'first expounder of the laws', and whose name and office Moses predicted (Deut.18:15).³⁶ This meant that the law was more than a letter, it was a 'living law'.

The law had a spiritual or 'beneficent' purpose or action, and only those who sought and loved the Lord could truly understand it or benefit from it. This was where the Jews failed in the time of Jesus and Paul. They used the law wrongly, not recognizing that 'both the law and the gospel are the energy of one Lord, who is "the power and wisdom of God",' and that both beget salvation. Therefore, 'faith in Christ and the knowledge of the gospel are the explanation and fulfilment of the law'.³⁷

For Clement, there was a single end to all God's dealings with men, whether by law or by gospel. This he described often as 'assimilation to God' or restoration to the image and likeness of God, of which the Word (Christ) was the model.³⁸ Christ 'taught and exhibited...Himself as the Herald of the Covenant, the Reconciler, our Saviour, the Word, the fount of life, the giver of peace'.³⁹ Even Adam, Noah and Abraham who lived before the law, also lived according to the law, because they too sought this conformity to God's image and likeness.⁴⁰ This was the true aim of faith in Christ or 'that restitution of the promise which is effected by faith'.⁴¹ Like New Testament believers, those 'old Hebrew wanderers...learned by experience that they could not be saved otherwise than believing on Jesus'.⁴²

Since the coming of Christ, the Lord has invited all men to the knowledge of the truth and has sent his Spirit to bring men to that knowledge by working faith and love in their hearts. But this was an ancient message. Clement said, 'You have God's promise; you have his love, become a partaker of his grace. But do not suppose the song of salvation to be new... Error seems old, but truth seems a new thing.' The 'new song' was but a manifestation of the Word, and he was from the beginning. It was he who spoke through Moses.⁴³ The newness, Clement emphasized, was that of 'new minds, which have become newly wise, which have sprung into being according to the new covenant'.

These new or 'young' minds needed instruction in 'the Word, the milk of Christ', as to how they should conduct themselves in the world.⁴⁴ This consequent ethical obligation was the main thrust of the *Paedagogus*, and is to be compared with Calvin's emphasis on instruction, teachableness, and being in the school of Christ.⁴⁵

In one place, Clement seemed to make a more rigid dichotomy between the law given by Moses, and the grace and truth which came by Christ. The law, here, he said, was 'only temporary'.⁴⁶ But clearly this passage can only refer to the manifestation of the law in the Mosaic dispensation, since repeatedly Clement stressed the continuity of the law through Christ who is its fullest manifestation. The law was never abolished or invalidated. The law produced wisdom through the fear (εὐλάβεια) of the Lord. By working the knowledge of sin and repentance, it trained or instructed men to Christ, and then had a function of discipline, leading to the way of perfection in Christ.⁴⁷

There is a strong bilateral character to Clement's teaching at this point. He said that the command, 'The man that doeth them shall live in them'⁴⁸ had a two-fold function. For both the Hebrews and New Testament Christians, it 'declares at once their life and ours' which was 'by one covenant in Christ', and secondly it declared their correction and training.⁴⁹ Christian progress, therefore, was a healthy fear of the Lord producing faith, obedience and love. Hence, 'the works of the Lord, that is, his commandments, are to be loved and done'. For Clement, the paths of wisdom constituted the 'conduct of life, and variety that exists in the covenants'.⁵⁰ Clement's entire exposition of the true Christian gnosis was bilateral in character. Faith issued in the duty of fulfilling that 'perfect righteousness' in 'both practice and contemplation.'⁵¹ And that obedience was the evidence of true faith: 'The perfect propitiation, I take it, is

that propitious faith in the gospel which is by the law and the prophets, and the purity that shows itself in universal obedience, with the abandonment of the things of the world, in order to that grateful surrender of the tabernacle, which results from the enjoyment of the soul.'⁵²

Clearly, there was a dual emphasis in Clement's view of the covenant. On the one hand, he saw it entirely as the gift of God's grace, but at the same time, there was a strong ethical obligation enjoined. But the fulfilling of this obligation was also contained in the gift of grace, as demonstrated in this passage on the covenant from *Protrepticus*: 'It is that treasure of salvation to which we must hasten, by becoming lovers of the Word. Thence praiseworthy works descend to us, and fly to us on the wings of truth. This is the inheritance with which the eternal covenant of God invests us, conveying the everlasting gift of grace - and thus our loving Father - the true Father - ceases not to exhort, admonish, train and love us.'⁵³ So while Clement emphasized that the salvation of man was entirely the work of the Lord himself, he could at the same time, in the context of the covenant, employ the language of commerce and speculate on how much this salvation was worth if one wanted to buy it. He concluded that it was beyond price, inestimable, yet 'You may, if you choose, purchase salvation, though of inestimable value, with your own resources, love and living faith, which will be reckoned a suitable price. This recompence God cheerfully accepts', for the sake of Christ.⁵⁴

Here, in the second century, the very same issues were raised as came to the fore in seventeenth-century covenantal theology. Faith, love, obedience and good works are depicted as gifts of the grace of God, yet they are described as our 'own resources', underlining the duty of exercising them in Christian experience. Tollinton is quite right when he says, 'Clement adheres to the Biblical

conception of the Covenant as an agreement or compact between God and man...God enters into the relationship of His grace and goodness, man in the spirit of duty and obedience.' He could have added 'gratitude'.⁵⁵ It is quite obviously wrong to infer that there is no discussion of mutual obligations in the fathers' view of the covenant.⁵⁶ One other comment: The last quotation from Clement shows that it was not necessary to await the development of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century social contract theory in order to introduce mercantile language and illustrations into the exposition of covenant theology, simply because the idea of mutuality in the covenant was much older.

Augustine of Hippo

Of all the fathers, the favourite of the Reformers was Augustine. John T. McNeill says that 'Calvin's self-confessed debt to Augustine is constantly apparent' throughout the *Institutes*, and he proves his point in the 'Author and Source Index' by listing 730 references to the Bishop of Hippo's works.⁵⁷ It can be said that the entire Reformation developed within the Augustinian framework of the relation of human nature and divine grace. Luther emerged from the Augustinian tradition, but Calvin was Augustine's most ardent, though not uncritical, follower.⁵⁸

The covenant was important for Augustine, and for anyone to say that he 'makes only peripheral use of the covenant doctrine'⁵⁹ or that he 'makes no use of the idea in his *City of God*', is difficult to understand.⁶⁰ Augustine built upon the patristic position, with his main emphasis upon two covenants, the 'old' as manifested supremely in the Sin~~i~~atic arrangement, and the 'new' in Christ.⁶¹ But this distinction between the old and the new in terms of law and gospel was not so narrow and absolute as is often thought. Preus supported this view: 'Augustine,' he said, 'does not transpose the two-level

situation of the biblical letter into an absolute Old Testament/New Testament division, even though much of what he argues points in that direction.⁶² For example, Augustine did not confine the giving of the law covenant to Sinai. Discussing his favourite proof text on the subject of original sin (Gen.17:14), he claimed 'that even infants, not in consequence of the character of their own life, but because of the common origin of the human race, have all broken God's covenant by that one act in which all men sinned'.⁶³ He proceeded then to indicate that he considered the Sinaitic covenant to be 'a more explicit' form of a *pre lapsus* Edenic covenant made with Adam: 'Many covenants, to be sure, are called God's covenants in addition to the two chief ones, the old and the new, which all may learn by reading them. Now the first covenant given to the first man is really this "on the day that you eat, you shall die the death" (Gen.2:17). Now since a more explicit law (*lex evidentior*) has been vouchsafed later, and the Apostle says: "But where there is no law, there is no transgression" (Rom.4:15), how can the words we read in Psalms be true, namely: "I have reckoned all sinners on earth as transgressors"? (Ps.119:119). Only on the ground that all who are held in bondage by any sin are guilty of transgressing some law.

'Wherefore if even infants, as the true faith maintains, are born sinners, so they are also seen to be transgressors of the law that was issued in the garden of Eden...this since circumcision was a sign of regeneration and the act of birth brings perdition upon the infant through the original sin by which God's covenant was first broken, unless regeneration sets him free, these divine words must be interpreted as if they said: "He who has not been regenerated, his soul shall perish from among the people," for he broke God's covenant when in Adam, together with all mankind, he himself also sinned...since he [God] did not expressly state what sort of covenant the infant

has broken, we are free to understand it as referring to that covenant whose infringement could be attributed to the child".⁶⁴

Adam, according to Augustine, was made upright with 'no need for a Mediator'.⁶⁵ He could have continued in that uprightness, 'though not without divine aid,' or become corrupted by his own choice. Either way, God's will would be done, 'either by man, or at least *concerning* him.'⁶⁶ Augustine distinguished clearly between grace before and after the fall: 'Did Adam have the grace of God? Yes, truly, he had it largely, but of a different kind. He was placed in the midst of benefits which he had received from the goodness of his Creator; for he had not procured those benefits by his own deserving.'⁶⁷ Adam did not need grace for deliverance then, but grace for perseverance, the exercise of which was left to his free choice. And Augustine did not object to the idea of meritorious obedience in this context: 'That he willed not to continue was absolutely the fault of him whose merit it would have been if he had willed to continue.'⁶⁸ Adam was created neither wise nor foolish, but a rational creature, who could 'at least receive a commandment, which he ought to obey'.⁶⁹ Such obedience to the covenant, Augustine speculated, would have caused Adam to pass into the company of the angels with no intervening death, to 'a blissful immortality that has no limit'.⁷⁰

Augustine also stressed the unity of the race in Adam - in him 'appeared the entire plentitude of the human race', so that when Adam sinned, the entire race broke the covenant in him, and was 'to be held liable to the same penalty' - punishment by death.⁷¹ Speculation on the cause of sin beyond the human will was discouraged by Augustine. Sin was to be attributed to the will of man, for 'God is not the author of the evil a man does, though he is the author of the evil a man suffers'.⁷²

The term 'covenant of works' was not used by

Augustine, but this picture he presented of the divine arrangement with Adam in Eden before the fall, contained all the ingredients of such a covenant as later portrayed by the 'covenant theologians'. It was a bilateral arrangement whereby the promise of a 'rise to better things' would result from exercising the 'stewardship of righteousness',⁷³ and death would be the consequence of disobedience. Furthermore, this law or covenant was not only given verbally, but was an expression of the absolute and unchangeable eternal law which was 'stamped upon our minds'.⁷⁴ There was therefore continuity between the law given in Eden and that given on Sinai. Both were expressions of the eternal law. The 'more explicit' giving of the Edenic covenant at Sinai was necessary due to the corruption of sin.⁷⁵

Augustine argued that if human nature could fulfil the law of perfect righteousness, then it could be 'sure of its reward, that is, to secure everlasting life'.⁷⁶ But since the fall the condition of man has been such that this is utterly impossible. Everyone now arises from 'a condemned state' (*ex damnata propagine*).⁷⁷ Christ was the only example of anyone achieving moral perfection in this life.⁷⁸ Consequently, any good man can receive must be through grace: 'So he [God] manifest a new covenant of the everlasting inheritance, when man, renewed by the grace of God, might lead a new life, that is, a spiritual life.'⁷⁹ This grace, however, was not intended for all. It was a distinguishing grace rooted in divine predestination. Since the fall, no man could attain to eternal life, but God has chosen to elect some men to salvation from this lost and perishing mass.⁸⁰ And 'to those he has predestinated unto eternal death, he is also the most righteous awarder of punishment, not only on account of the sins which they add with indulgence of their own will, but also because of their original sin'.⁸¹ Augustine distinguished between a general and a particular election.

Israel was chosen as God's people, just as many Gentiles were later called to the marriage through the Word, but not all of these obtained the election of grace, that is. the special calling by which the elect are taught of God and receive the gift of faith in order to believe. This distinction is important, since, for Augustine, it corresponds to the covenant of the law at Sinai and the covenant of grace in Christ.⁸²

The covenant of grace was first made with Adam himself after the fall, for 'even Adam was delivered by the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ',⁸³ who is the second Adam and the One who answers to all that the first Adam lost.⁸⁴ Augustine said that there were four temporal, historical epochs or 'ages' in the history of salvation - before the law, under the law given by Moses, under the grace revealed by the coming of the Mediator, and after the resurrection. But he emphasized that the grace revealed through the Mediator 'was not previously absent from those to whom it was to be imparted, although in conformity to the temporal dispensation it was veiled and hidden'. It was through this grace that righteous men of old believed (eg. Job, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David), 'for none of the righteous men of antiquity could find salvation apart from the faith of Christ'.⁸⁵

Those who were righteous under the time of the law were also under grace. Christ was their Mediator too. Though his incarnation had not yet happened, the fruits of it still availed for the fathers. Christ was their head. They believed in his resurrection yet to take place, just as Christians *Anno Domini* believe in his judgments yet to come.⁸⁶ So the men of God in the Old Testament were 'shown to be heirs of the new'. The new covenant was actually more ancient than the old, though it was subsequently revealed. It was 'hidden in the prophetic ciphers' until the time of revelation in Christ. Abraham and those before and after him were therefore 'all children

of the promise and of grace'.⁸⁷

Also it was through the operation of the same Holy Spirit that the men of old belonged to 'the grace of the new covenant'.⁸⁸ So while there were different manifestations in the covenant corresponding to different ages, there was but one *testamentum aeternum* throughout all ages, entered by faith alone.⁸⁹ In every age, everyone, whether children or 'decrepit' old men, said Augustine, must come into the new covenant by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁰ Only by receiving the Holy Spirit, and not by any power of the human will, could any delight in, or love for, God arise in the soul and begin a movement towards perfection.⁹¹

This stress on the operation of the Spirit is crucial to understanding Augustine's doctrine of the law. He made a clear letter/spirit distinction. The mere teaching of the commandments without the presence of the life-giving Spirit was a letter that killed, and by this he meant teaching the actual precepts of the law and not just a figurative as opposed to a literal interpretation of Scripture. The commands of the law were good and praiseworthy, but when the Holy Spirit's aid was not given causing men to 'desire good' (*concupiscentia bona*), then evil desire would actually increase through the very prohibition, good as it was.⁹² This was the distinction Augustine made between law and grace. The law 'makes sin to be known rather than shunned', but grace shows forth 'the destruction of sin and the renewal of righteousness', which could not come to man by the letter of the law.⁹³ Only the righteousness of God, 'not the righteousness of man or the righteousness of our own will,' could justify a man before God, and this righteousness was the 'gift of God through the help of the Holy Spirit', bringing faith in Christ just as foretold by the prophets.⁹⁴

It was just at this point that the Jews failed. They received a law that was holy and just and good, and

which was a continuing testimony and witness to the unchanging righteousness of God as it had been to Adam. But they refused to appreciate that it could no longer justify and that the righteousness of the law (ie. their own efforts to keep the law) was totally inadequate. They thought that the letter could suffice them for life, and so they became doers of the law only and not seekers of divine mercy. They had an eye for the earthly promises alone and were ignorant of what the promises signified. They were moved by cupidity and carnal fear rather than faith working by love. These were the children in bondage, opposed by Paul in the fourth chapter of Galatians.⁹⁵

Augustine's references to the temporality of the law or the old covenant must be understood in this context. He distinguished between those in the Old Testament, who discerning the true spiritual nature and function of the law, used the law lawfully,⁹⁶ and those who desired to worship God for material benefits only - 'a carnal people living after the old man, and leading a carnal life, eagerly desired of the Lord God carnal rewards and received them as a symbol of spiritual blessings'.⁹⁷ For the former, the old covenant brought a knowledge of their sin and led them to Christ. They had therefore 'no further use for it' in relation to their salvation.⁹⁸ The latter failed to recognize that all those visible blessings which were bestowed upon them in the old covenant, and bestowed through the ministry of the patriarchs and prophets 'signified spiritual mysteries closely associated with Christ and the church of which even those saints were members, although they lived before Christ our Lord was born according to the flesh'.⁹⁹ The manifestation of the new covenant in Christ, which was only new in a revelatory sense, made 'the first covenant to be antiquated', in the sense that the spiritual blessings it pointed to were fully manifested, and the carnal or material use of it was abolished, although there is still 'a carnal multitude' in

the church today who stand in a similar relationship to the new covenant.¹⁰⁰ They may even have the signs of Christ, but they cannot enter the kingdom of God, because they continue in iniquity.¹⁰¹

The distinction, therefore, between the old covenant and the new, between law and grace, was not so radical in Augustine as is often assumed. The old covenant at Sinai also contained the heavenly promises, indeed it was established in order to present them to the people in veiled form. The law and the sacraments were 'to be spiritually understood'.¹⁰² The new covenant was contained in the old. This is what lay at the heart of Augustine's famous dictum: '*In veteri testamento est occultatio novi, in novo testamento est manifestatio veteris*',¹⁰³ or as he said again, 'the new covenant is foreshadowed in the old. For what is that which is called the old covenant but the veiled form of the new, and what else is that which is called the new but the unveiling of the old'.¹⁰⁴ What applied literally to the old covenant, also applied figuratively to the new.¹⁰⁵ The new covenant was actually revealed first, but veiled until Christ's coming within the old, which was later revealed at Sinai.¹⁰⁶

What has been considered so far would encourage the expectation of some idea of continuity of law under the full manifestation of the covenant of grace since both testify to the one righteousness of God. Augustine could speak of a sense in which the justified man had no further use for the law, and that the old covenant was antiquated, but he went on to explain that this did not mean that 'the law of works belongs to Judaism and the law of faith to Christianity'. The moral law belonged to both, just as faith belonged to both, because both magnified the righteousness of God.¹⁰⁷ Christ fulfilled and did away with the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament, and fulfilled and established the moral teaching or precepts of

the law as a duty in the lives of his people. Moral precepts were distinct from typical observances which prefigured Christ. The latter came to a close when fulfilled in Christ, but the former 'are fulfilled...by the accomplishment of what they promise', both in Christ and in his people.¹⁰⁸

The law of faith also brought the knowledge of sin since it contained the moral law, but the difference was that what one could only enjoin, the other granted to belief. No none could be righteous without the operation of God's grace, writing the law within the heart by the Holy Spirit. This Augustine saw as the essence of the new covenant prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31ff, as distinct from the old covenant not kept by the fathers, who looked for the earthly and material goods promised rather than 'the eternal and heavenly goods belonging to the new covenant'.¹⁰⁹ The new covenant fulfilled the same law which was in the old. The failure to keep it was through no fault of the law, but due entirely to the fleshly desires of the 'old man'.¹¹⁰ No man, whether the Jews who had the letter of the law written or Gentiles who were never confronted with the letter of the law from the old covenant, 'can claim credit for his own fulfilment of the law'. This was only brought about by the Holy Spirit writing the law in the hearts of the elect who were the seed of faith through Abraham.¹¹¹

Augustine said that it was only the man who was first justified who could begin to do the works of the law referred to in Leviticus 18:5, which 'If a man do, he shall live in them'. But the justified man did not do these works in order to win the favour of the Justifier. That was won through faith. But the faith that saved raised men up to live sober, righteous and godly lives. In this way faith did not make void the law, it produced a love of righteousness, and 'by the love of righteousness comes the working of the law', which men, saved by grace,

freely wanted to keep and live by.¹¹² The commandments could only be kept by the grace of God, which was 'indispensable for the observance of the precepts'.¹¹³

When Paul said that faith was the gift of God, Augustine insisted that he did not mean 'to deny good works or empty them of their value, because he also said that God rendered to every man according to his works; but he would have works proceed from faith and not faith from works'.¹¹⁴ True faith would produce good works, and a faith which did not was insufficient for salvation, so in this sense, Augustine argued that eternal life could be spoken of as a reward for service, although that service itself was the result of saving grace.¹¹⁵ These good works were guided by, and reflected, the righteousness which was in the law.

The law, said Augustine, was not only necessary for the people under the old covenant, 'but also is now necessary for us for the right ordering of life.... Who is so impious as to say that he does not keep these precepts of the law because he is a Christian and is established not under the law, but under grace?'¹¹⁶ The difference was that under the letter of the old covenant men sought to do these things in the hope of gaining happiness thereby; to believers under the new, through faith in the Mediator, 'a spirit of grace is ministered, so that they may do these things well', though never perfectly in this life.¹¹⁷ In this way the law that could not be fulfilled through law was fulfilled through grace, since 'the grace whereby God works within us to will what is good, he means nothing else than the law and the doctrine. For in the law and the doctrine of the holy scriptures are promised future glory and its great rewards'.¹¹⁸ The secret of this fulfilment of the law by the Christian was the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Thus the commandments of the law were not burdensome or grievous, as they were to the Jews, because they never are to God's love.¹¹⁹

The question now is: What was man's responsibility,

if any, respecting faith and obedience in this covenant relationship? Augustine certainly emphasized the priority of grace to all else in God's dealings with man. Salvation was a divine gift of mercy so that men could not arrogate to themselves anything concerning it as their own work. It was God 'who both prepareth the will to receive divine aid and aideth the will which has been prepared.... Why are we admonished to ask in order to receive, unless it be that he who grants us what we will is he through whom it comes to pass that we will'. God's mercy always 'predisposes a man before he will, to prompt his willing'.¹²⁰ Again and again, Augustine returned to this question of the priority of grace and the reality of human freedom, always affirming that the grace which was primary was also the ground and source of human willingness.¹²¹

Does this mean that men in spite of Augustine's disclaimer are 'insensate stones', without will and reason of their own?¹²² Augustine asked, whether if the gift of grace followed only upon faith: 'Is this faith itself placed in our own power?' In reply, he distinguished between 'willing' and 'ability': 'We sometimes will what we are not able to do', and *vice versa*. He then defined 'power' or 'ability' as 'the union of the will with the capacity to act'.¹²³ Augustine argued that it was absurd to say that a man can believe if he will not, since belief is consenting to the truth spoken. If consent is an act of will, then 'faith must be in our power'. But this power itself was from God and granted by him. Man 'believes when he will, and when he believes, believes willingly', but that belief is given by God himself and is not implanted in us by nature.¹²⁴

Augustine explained that God worked this power to will and believe in the elect by both external and internal means - externally by the preaching of the law and the gospel; internally by the Holy Spirit. In this way God sought to renew man's will without violating his nature.

Fallen man only willed evil, but God renewed that will while respecting its freedom. In fallen man, natural 'freedom of choice could produce no act of belief', so God worked by inducement and invitation to initiate consent. 'Assuredly then it is God who brings about in a man the very will to believe, and in all things does his mercy anticipate us, yet to consent to the calling of God or to refuse it, as I have said, belongs to our own will.' Beyond this Augustine would not go, but simply abandoned the somewhat roundabout argument by resorting, as he so often did, to the *O altitudo* of Paul (Rom.11:33).¹²⁵

It is clear from this and many other passages that Augustine did not regard the believer as totally passive in the process of experiencing salvation, both with respect to faith and obedience. In the progress to perfection those who were members of the *Civitas Dei* were frequently admonished to good works: 'It is on this account that numerous precepts are enjoined upon us concerning mutual forgiveness and the great care requisite for maintaining peace, without which no one will be able to see God.'¹²⁶ Commenting on such texts as Isa.1:19-20, Gal.3:19, and Rom.5:20, Augustine was able to affirm that the promises of God in both covenants were 'full of conditions of this sort', but always to the end that men may be driven to grace and faith.¹²⁷ The precepts of the moral law were still enjoined as a duty of life upon Christians, and were seen as an evidence of true faith.¹²⁸

Augustine frequently reminded his readers of their promises to this end in the covenant which they had made with God in baptism.¹²⁹ For him the idea of covenant not only had a unilateral element in which God sovereignly announced his intentions of grace concerning men, and what he had bound himself to perform in Christ the Mediator and Sealer of the covenant,¹³⁰ but it also had a bilateral element when God entered into an agreement with his people in which they bound themselves to walk according to his

precepts. In one place, Augustine offered a clear bilateral definition: 'Pactum est quod inter aliquos convenit'.¹³¹

It is pointless to claim that the Reformers accepted 'an Augustinian notion of unilateral testament, not a bilateral covenant'.¹³² Indeed, while Augustine usually used *testamentum* when referring to Christ and especially to his death, he made it clear that he did not think of the word only in unilateral terms. He said: '*Testamentum sane in Scripturis non illud solum dicitur, quod non valet nisi testatoribus mortuis; sed omne pactum et placitum testamentum vocabant*'.¹³³ For Augustine *pactum* and *testamentum* were used interchangeably, and *testamentum* carried the idea of mutual responsibility as well as the idea of unilateral promise.¹³⁴

Summary

Some conclusions can now be drawn from this brief outline of the use of the covenant in several of the church fathers.¹³⁵ First, they all used the idea of covenant to stress the unity, and explain the differences, between the Old and New Testaments. Secondly, they saw the covenant soteriologically as one eternal covenant in Christ manifest throughout all ages from the time of Adam. Thirdly, there was a dual emphasis in their presentation of the covenant. It was a unilateral promise of grace given sovereignly by God, but it also required a response of faith and obedience from man, though this response was only by divine enabling and not by any natural inherent power resident in fallen man. Fourthly, in the case of Augustine, there was a definite use of the idea of covenant in a legal sense, though still in a context of 'grace', with respect to Adam in his unfallen state. Finally, again in Augustine especially, there was a close association of the covenant with baptism, so that it is erroneous to locate the origin of the idea of the covenant in this connection in the

Zurich reformation.¹³⁶ Baker was far off the mark when he declared that 'Bullinger's idea of the covenant was not Augustine's. Augustine's was a theology of testament, not a notion of bilateral covenant,' and equally so when he went on to say that 'none of the church fathers, save perhaps Irenaeus, developed any sort of bilateral, conditional covenant notion. It was a theology of testament that Bullinger discovered in the fathers, not a theology of covenant'.¹³⁷ There was ample scope in the fathers, as in the Scriptures, for discovering both the idea of unilateral promise and bilateral covenant, and it would be more true to say that the reformers, including Bullinger, followed them in both.

NOTES: Chapter Five

- 1 Lincoln, 'Development of Covenant Theory', 136.
- 2 J.T. McNeill and F.L. Battles, ed. and trs. *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. LCC. XX, (Philadelphia, 1960). 'Author and Source Index', 2.1592-1634; see *Inst.*, 1.13.27, where Calvin gives a penetrating exposition of Irenaeus' *Adversus Haereses*, 111.61ff and 111.9.1; also W.N. Todd, 'The Function of the Patristic Writings in the Thought of John Calvin'. ThD Thesis (Union Theological Seminary, 1964), 156-157, 174, 203-204, 220ff.
- 3 Calvin, *Inst.*, 11.10-11
- 4 Marcion and Celsus were the main contributors here. On Marcion see: E.C. Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence*, (London, 1948); R.M. Grant, *Gnosticism and Early Christianity*, (Oxford 1959), ch.5; 'Notes on Gnosis', *VC*, 11. (1957), 145-151; W.H.C. Frend, 'Marcion', *Expository Times*, 80. (1969), 328-332; J. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament*, (Chicago, 1942). On pagan writers see: Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ed. and trs. H. Chadwick, (Cambridge, 1953); D. Winslow, 'Religion and the Early Roman Empire', *Early Church History*, eds. S. Benko and J.J. O'Rourke, (London, 1979), 237-254; S. Benko, 'Pagan Criticism of Christianity During the First Two Centuries AD', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, eds. H. Temporini and W. Haase 23.2. (Berlin, 1979), 1055-1116.
- 5 W.H.C. Frend, 'The Old Testament in the Age of the Greek Apologists AD 130-180', *SJT*, 26. (1973), 129-150; R.M. Grant, 'The Decalogue in Early Christianity', *HTR*, 40. (1947), 1-17; R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, (London, 1959); A. Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 7 vols. trs. N. Buchanan, (London, 1894-1899), 11.230-280; R.V. Moss, 'The Covenant Conception in Early Christian Thought'. PhD Thesis (University of Chicago, 1954), 155ff; W.C. van Unnik, 'H καινή διαθήκη - a Problem in the early History of the Canon', *Studia Patristica* 4, (Berlin, 1961), 223ff; Z.P. Thundyil, *Covenant in Anglo-Saxon Thought*, (Madras, 1972); E. Ferguson, 'The Covenant Idea in the Second Century', *Texts and Testaments*, ed. W.E. March, (San Antonio, 1980), 135-162.
- 6 *The Epistle of Barnabas*, 107-108, *ANCL*, vol.1, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, (Edinburgh, 1867).
- 7 *Ibid.*, 109-112.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 102-105, 112-115.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 120-125.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 125-126.

- 11 *Ibid.*, 128-130.
- 12 *The Writings of Justin Martyr and Athenagoras*, 99, ANCL, vol. 2, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, (Edinburgh, 1867).
- 13 *Ibid.*, 100ff.; cf. 248-253.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 140; cf. 150f, 254f.
- 15 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, ANCL vol.5, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, (Edinburgh 1868), 1.10.3.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 111.11.8.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 111.12.11-12.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 1V.5.1ff.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 1V.9.3ff.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 1V.12.1-5.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 1V.12.2.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 1V.13-14.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 1V.16.2. cf. 1V.25
- 24 *Ibid.*, 1V.15-16.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 1V.17-18.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 1V.21-23.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 1V.25.1,3.
- 28 McNeill and Battles, *Inst.*, 2.1608. It is hardly likely, however that Calvin knew Clement's works first hand. See Todd, *op.cit.*, 37. On Clement see: E. Molland, 'The Concept of the Gospel in the Alexandrian Theology', *Skrifter utgitt av Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi*, (Oslo 1938), 5-84, 16-30, 69-75; R.B. Tollinton, *Clement of Alexandria: A Study in Christian Liberalism*, 2 vols. (London, 1914); J. Wytzes, 'Paideia and Pronoia in the Works of Clemens Alexandrinus', *VC*, 9. (1955), 148-158.
- 29 Clement, *Eclogae Propheticae*, 111, 151. Text used is in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, 3 vols. and index, ed. O. Stählin, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der Ersten Drei Jahrhunderte*, vols. 12, 15, 17, 39. (Leipzig, 1905-1909, 1936).
- 30 Clement, *Stromata*, IV.5.327. Text of *Stromata*, *Protrepticus* and *Paedagogus* used comes from *The Writings of Clement of Alexandria*, 2 vols. trs. W. Wilson, ANCL, vols. 4 and 12, eds. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, (Edinburgh, 1867-1869).
- 31 *Strom.*, IV.16.383; IV.5.327.
- 32 *Ibid.*, IV.17.487. On predestination cf. I.12.388.
- 33 This has been noted by Molland, *op.cit.*, 16-30, and also by Wytzes, *op.cit.*, 154-155, although the latter has

failed to note the covenantal link between law and gospel. He refers to them as separate ways to God.

34 *Strom.*, I.29.470; II.18.48,51. See also V.6.244, where both covenants are seen as manifestations of one righteousness, and *Protr.*, I.20, where Clement uses the words 'order' and 'arrangement' in relation to creation.

35 *Paed.*, 1.8.163.

36 *Strom.*, 1.26.461-462, and *Paed.*, 1.7.153.

37 *Strom.*, 1.27.464-466; IV.21.201; cf. 11.18.53ff,191ff and *Protr.*, 11.101ff.

38 *Strom.*, 11.22.78; *Paed.*, 1.12.181.

39 *Protr.*, 10.99.

40 *Strom.*, 11.19.58f.

41 *Strom.*, 11.22.78; cf. IV.22.204ff.

42 *Protr.*, 9.82-83.

43 *Protr.*, 1.22.

44 *Paed.*, 1.5.127; 1.6.138.

45 see W.H. Neuser, 'Calvin's Conversion to Teachableness', *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Teologiese Tydskrif*, 26. (1985), 14-27. Neuser's lecture is useful in that it gathers together Calvin's use of 'docilitas', but it still requires much work in relation to the contexts in which it occurs.

46 *Paed.*, 1.7.153.

47 *Strom.*, 11.7.20.

48 *Leviticus* 18.5 and *Romans* 10.5.

49 *Strom.*, 11.10.29-30; 11.11.30-31.

50 *Strom.*, 11.12.33-35; VI.15.374.

51 *Strom.*, IV.16.184; cf. V.11.261ff.

52 *Strom.*, IV.25.213.

53 *Protr.*, 10.88.

54 *Protr.*, 9.82-83.

55 Tollinton, *op.cit.*, 2.204.

56 Stoute, 'The Origins and Early Development of the Reformed Idea of the Covenant', 23.

57 McNeill, *Inst.*, 'Intro.', 1.lix; 'Author and Source Index', 2.1593-1601; L. Smits, *Saint Augustin dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, 2 vols. (Assen, 1957-1958). Volume 2 contains every reference and allusion to Augustine; F. Wendel, *Calvin: The Origin and Development*

of *His Religious Thought*, trs. P. Mairet, (London 1963), 124-125.

58 *Ibid.*, 'Intro.', 1.lvii see especially n.59 where studies of Calvin and Augustine are listed, to which must be added B.B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, (Philadelphia, 1956), a series of scholarly articles edited by M. Kik.

59 C.S. McCoy, 'The Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius'. PhD Thesis (Yale University, 1957), 56.

60 W.A. Brown, 'Covenant Theology', *ERE*, 13 vols. (Edinburgh, 1908-1926), 4.219

61 A. Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, 104.7. Translations used are *The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo*, 14 vols. ed. M. Dods, (Edinburgh, 1872-1886); *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos*, trs. P. Levine et al, LCL, 1V-V, (London, 1966); *De Catechizandis Rudibus liber unus*, trs. J.P. Christopher, (Washington, 1926); *Expositions on the Book of Psalms*, 6 vols. Library of the Fathers, (Oxford, 1847-1857). Other texts consulted: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Hipponensis Episcopi Opera Omnia*, 11 vols. in 15. (Paris, 1836-1838); *Aurelii Augustini Opera*, in *Corpus Christianorum*, series Latina, vols. 27-57. (Turnholt, 1954-1984); *Augustine: Earlier Writings*, ed. J.H.C. Burleigh, LCC VI, (London, 1953); *Augustine: Confession and Enchiridion*, ed A.C. Outler, LCC VII, (London, 1955); *Augustine: Later Works*, ed. J. Burnaby, LCC VIII, (London 1955).

62 J.S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, (Cambridge, Mass. 1969), 16 n.19.

63 Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XVI.133

64 *Ibid.*, XVI.133-135; cf. *Enchiridion On Faith, Hope and Love*, VIII.27, the reference to man breaking away 'from the wholesome discipline of God's law'.

65 *Enchiridion*, XXVII.108.

66 *Ibid.*, VIII.107.

67 *De corruptione et gratia*, 29.

68 *Ibid.*, 30-32.

69 *De libero arbitrio*, 3.xxiv.71-72.

70 *Civitate*, XI.111; cf. *Enchiridion*, VIII.25 and *De peccatorum meritis*, 1.2.2.

71 *Ibid.*, XI.129, XIII.141; cf. XIV.259, *Enchiridion*, VIII.26 and *De peccatorum*, III.14.

72 *De libero*, 1.1.1, 3.xxi.63; cf. *Civitate* XI.27, *De vera religione* XIII.27 and *De dono perseverantiae*, 46.

73 *Enchiridion*, VIII.25.

- 74 *De libero*, 1.vi.15.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 1.xv.31-xvi.35.
- 76 *De natura et gratia*, 2.ii.
- 77 *Civitate*, XV.412,413; *De natura et gratia*, 7.vii-14.xiii; *De spiritu et littera* passim.; *De peccatorum* 11.7.vi.
- 78 *De spiritu et littera*, 1.i, cf. 61.xxxv-66.xxxvi.
- 79 *De catechizandis*, 96; *Enchiridion*, 1X.30-32.
- 80 *Enchiridion*, 1X.28-30; cf. XXV and *De Praedestinatione*, 10-11.
- 81 *De praedestinatione*, 10-11; cf. *De dono perseverantiae*, 35.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 32-34, 14-16.
- 83 *De natura et gratia*, 24.xxi.
- 84 *De peccatorum* 11.11ff.
- 85 *Enchiridion*, XXXI.118; *De perfectione*, XIX.12; *De vera religione*, XXVI.50; cf. *De catechizandis*, 96-97.
- 86 *De gratia christi*, 11.27-32.
- 87 *Contra duas epistolas Pelag^{ian}orum*, 111.6-8.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 111.12.
- 89 *Ennar.in Ps.*, 104.7; 73.2.
- 90 *Enchiridion*, XI.43-46.
- 91 *De spiritu et littera*, 4.ii; 5.iii; cf. *De Peccatorum*, 11.7.vif.; 11.34.xx.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 6.iv-7.v; cf. 23.xiv-32.xix; *De gratia Christi*, 1.9; *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 22-23; *Contra duas epistolas*, 111.2.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 8.v-9.vi; cf. *De perfectione*, V.11; *Contra Faustum* XV.8.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 15.ix; cf. *De natura et gratia*, 1.1. The righteousness of God as shown in Rom. 1, is not the commands of the law only but 'the aid afforded by the grace of Christ'. See also *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 24.
- 95 *Contra duas epistolas*, 111.13, 18-23, 9.
- 96 *De spiritu et littera*, 16.x.
- 97 *De catechizandis*, 72-73, 96-97.
- 98 *De spiritu et littera*, 16.x
- 99 *De catechizandis*, 84-85; cf. *Ennar.in Ps.*, 34.7; 88.1.3-5.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 72-73.

- 101 *Ennar. in Ps.*, 88.11.4.
- 102 *Contra duas epistolas*, 111.10.
- 103 *De catechizandis*, 26-27.
- 104 *Civitate*, XVI.129.
- 105 *Ibid.*, XVII.253.
- 106 *Contra duas epistolas*, 111.7
- 107 *De spiritua et littera*, 21.xiii.
- 108 *Contra Faustum*, XIX; quote XIX.18.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 32.xix-33; 34.xix; 36.xxi.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 35.xx.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 40.xiv-50.xxix
- 112 *Ibid.*, 51.xxix-52xxx.
- 113 *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 8.
- 114 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 115 *Ibid.*, 18-21,28.
- 116 *Contra duas epistolas*, 111.10.
- 117 *De perfectione*, VI.11.18-19.
- 118 *De gratia Christi*, 1.10-11.
- 119 *De perfectione*, X.21.
- 120 *Enchiridion*, IX.31-32; cf. XXIV.97.
- 121 *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, 29; *De praedestinatione*, 19,39-43; *De dono perservantiae*, 4.
- 122 *De peccatorum*, 11.5.vi.
- 123 *De spiritu et littera*, 53.xxxi.
- 124 *ibid.*, 54.xxxi; 55.xxxii.
- 125 *Ibid.*, 60.xxxiv.
- 126 eg. *Civitate*, XIV.305ff; XV.430-435; *Sermones Supposititios*, CCX in *Opera Omnia*, V.2894.
- 127 *De perfectione*, XIX.12
- 128 *Contra Faustum*, XIX.18ff.
- 129 *Sermones Supposititios*, CCLXIV in *Opera Omnia*, V.3042f,3055; *De rectitudine catholicae conversationis*, in *Opera Omnia*, VI.1704,1762.
- 130 *Ennar. in Ps.*, 88.1.3-5.
- 131 *Heptateuchum Locutionem*, 1. Gen.21:27. I am indebted to Lillback for this quotation. See also *Ennar. in Ps.*, 102.25.

132 Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, 189

133 *Ennar. in Ps.*, 82.6. trs. 'Indeed, testament in the scriptures not only speaks of what is not effective except by the death of testators, but every covenant and agreement they call a testament.'

134 Even K. Hagen, whom Baker cites to support his exclusive unilateral argument, admits at this point, 'Augustine described *testamentum* in rather bilateral terms'; see *The Young Luther*, 35.

135 Others could also be considered. For example, Chrysostom, who saw the covenant of grace proceeding from both the Father and the Son as well as the old covenant: 'Nam ut Vetus Testamentum non Patris tantum est, verum et Filii; ita gratia non Filii solum est, set et Patris, et communia omnia', *Sancti Joannis Chrysostomi Opera*, 13 vols. (Paris, 1839), 10.790. He also discussed the relationship of the old covenant to the new with respect to elements of continuity and discontinuity and regarded the Old Testament saints as having the same kind of faith as those in the new (12.204-205; 9.561 etc.). Tertullian also made use of the idea (see Ferguson, 'The Covenant Idea in the Second Century', 148-150).

136 Baker, *op. cit.*, 1-3.

137 *Ibid.*, 20, 23.

CHAPTER SIX

The Covenant in Medieval Thought

The element of continuity between medieval and reformation thought has been highlighted again in recent scholarship, in keeping with the acceptance of the 'cradle view of history' rather than the old tripartite division of ancient, medieval, and modern.¹ In relation to this research in covenantal thought it is essential to keep two strands of development in mind and not to confuse them. One is essentially political, producing the developed social contract theory which became so important in the seventeenth century in relation to the question of resistance. The other is theological, and involves the question of the relationship of grace and works, and the unity and diversity of the Old and New Testaments.

Both these strands have their roots much deeper than in medieval soil. For example, Augustine, whom we have considered at the theological level, is also widely quoted as an authority by those who pursue the political questions.² These strands have converged from time to time in the thought of various writers, but always retaining an independence of each other until the New England situation brought about a more permanent *mariage de convenance*. Even the writings of Knox and Rutherford which used the idea of the covenant in both political and theological contexts and employed Old Testament examples in support of both, never do so in a way that leaves one entirely dependent on the other. It was this independent development which allowed the analogous situation in Puritan England where those who held to covenantal theological views in relation to hermeneutical and soteriological questions were on different sides of the

fence when it came to employing the idea of covenant in a more political role.³

Pacte d'association and Pacte de gouvernement

There were two forms of social contract theory discussed, the *pacte d'association* and the *pacte de gouvernement*. According to J.W. Gough the first of these was the social contract proper, though historically derived from the appearance of the latter.⁴ The *pacte d'association* was a theory of the genesis of organized society, where individuals 'contracted' to live together, surrendering some of their natural rights in order to safeguard others.⁵ The *pacte de gouvernement* was a contract of allegiance with a chosen ruler in an already established society in which the ruler promised protection and good administration in return for obedience and loyalty.⁶

If the term 'contract' has been criticized in a theological context, it has fared no better as a political theory on both historical and legal grounds.⁷ Historically, it is argued that the origin of society and government is tracable more to patriarchal structures than to contracts, and legally it is claimed that a contract can only be made through a pre-existent legal system, therefore, words like 'consent' or 'duty' are preferable. But, as has been pointed out, whatever word is used 'makes no real difference to the theory behind the phrase or to its implications'. If a legal analogy is used to express an obligation the question is whether the analogy is itself justifiable.⁸

The source of medieval contract theory is generally regarded as three-fold: Greek political thought, especially the *Politics* of Aristotle, Jewish theocracy as expressed in the Old Testament, and Justinian's *Corpus* of Roman law, which, paradoxical as it may seem, made *vox populi* the root from which the emperors derived their

absolute authority.⁹ Early medieval expressions of contractual principles were probably derived chiefly from the last two of these sources, and were to be found in the early Teutonic kingdoms of Europe, Visigothic Spain, and the Burgundian and Frankish kingdoms. In all these there was some acknowledgement of rights and duties as being reciprocal, and there is no evidence of hereditary succession by divine right without reference to the assent of the people, or of the king as being superior to, and not bound by, the laws of the nation.¹⁰ Mutual obligations between king and ruled were even described as a *pactum* in one ninth-century document, with the clear statement that if the king violated the *pactum* he would be admonished, and if he persisted, he would be prevented from doing injustice.¹¹

The influence of feudalism on political theory has also been underlined by the histories of the period.¹² Carlyle stressed that the principle of almost unquestioning 'loyalty and devotion' was strong in the feudal system, but that 'in the last resort feudal relations were contractual relations'.¹³ Figgis claimed that it was here 'the contractual theory of government took its rise', because of feudalism's stress on private rights backed by some general system of law. It contained the two elements necessary to contract theory, 'the assimilation of public to private right, and the mutual nature of the tie between governed and governor'.¹⁴ Both lord and vassal were equally obligated to maintain and obey the principles of equity and justice contained in the law. The prescriptions of the law formed the basis or obligations of a contractual relationship. The idea of society governed by law with both ruler and subject bound to obey that law owes much to the feudal jurists.¹⁵ There is evidence that feudalism stimulated the thought of those who incorporated contractual terms (eg. *pactum*, *foedus*) into their writings in medieval times.¹⁶

It was Church/State relations, however, in the form of the Investiture Struggle and the Conciliar Movement, which appear to have provided the main impetus to the development of contract theory. Here it is mainly a question of the relation of the church to the secular government rather than to the rights of the people that is paramount, but the principle of contract is present in the Papal claim to be able to depose a recalcitrant secular ruler, or of a Council to depose a tyrannical pope.

Manegold of Lautenbach (c.1030-1103) and John of Salisbury (1120-1180) are regarded as two of the earliest writers who distinguished between king and tyrant on the basis of law. John in his *Policraticus* did not use the term *pactum*, but the principle was there even to an emphatic defence of tyrannicide.¹⁷ Manegold was more explicit in his terminology. For him a tyrant had no claim upon the obedience of the people, because the ruler was chosen and exalted by the people in order to defend them from tyranny. When he himself resorted to tyranny he had no further right to the position entrusted to him, he had broken the *pactum* which bound him to the people, therefore they were under no further obligation to him.¹⁸

This early idea of *pacte de gouvernement* in which the king was chosen and exalted by the people and sealed by divine approval, yet limited by the obligations of law, was challenged in the late Middle Ages by the rise of 'antique-modern' thought with absolute monarchies in which the will of the king was law.¹⁹ This led to a theoretical consideration of the origin and nature of the state (aided by the recovery of Aristotle's works), and to the social contract proper - the *pacte d'association* - by way of Aquinas' *De Regimine Principum*, John of Paris' *Tractatus de Potestate Regia et Papali*, Engelbert of Volkersdorf's *De Ortu et Fine Romani Imperii Liber*, William of Ockham's *Dialogus*, Marsiglio of Padua's *Defensor Pacis*, and Nicholas of Cusa's *De Concordantia Catholica*.²⁰

The theoretical conflict at the Council of Basel made its contribution when an emphasis on 'the analogy with contemporary political institutions' began to creep into both papal and conciliar theories.²¹ Eugenius IV in his *Libellus Apolegeticus* inferred that revolt against papal monarchy threatened secular sovereignty as well. On the conciliar side the argument developed through Cusa's work and Roselli's *Monarchia* (1433) to Escobar's *Government of Councils* (1435), Segovia's *Ten Propositions* (1439), and Panormitanus' *Commentary on the Decretals*. On the *universitas* model the Council was regarded as the *normal* legal superior of the pope, and could claim the right of self assembly and determine its own membership and procedure. This new view made the pope subject to the Council not only in situations of heresy and emergency, but in his very function as ruler. Drawing on Aristotle's idea of a king having force large enough to overcome individuals, but not powerful enough to subject a whole community - which was his legal superior - to himself, the Council established precedents which it did not have in ecclesiastical sources for deposing rulers. Segovia argued that this 'new exposition of popular sovereignty' was merely applying in the church constituted principles acknowledged in most kingdoms. In this way ecclesiastical disputes became laboratories for secular theories of power with far-reaching consequences.²²

At the same time the *universitas* model of the state was giving way to a *societas* concept in which the human individual was seen as 'the *microcosmus*...in which the *macrocosmus* is mirrored',²³ and to a consequent 'populist way of interpreting *lex regia*'.²⁴ The most significant contribution in this respect was seven dialogues between the philosopher and the lawyer, *Patritii Romani De Principatu. Liber Septem* (1514), by the Italian jurist, Mario Salamonio (c1450-1532).²⁵ Salamonio argued that the *lex regia* 'was made by the will of the people'. It was a

compact between individual citizens, and the *princeps* was bound to obey its terms. The people created the prince, therefore they 'must be greater than the prince', whose rule was based in covenants. He could never, therefore, be a 'true overlord', but 'can only be a master of the people who retain ultimate sovereign authority'.²⁶

Thus, by the time of the Reformation, a two-pronged view of contract theory had developed - the contract of government and the fully fledged social contract. While this development was helped by ecclesiastical disputes, it was by and large purely political, and continued through and beyond the Reformation. The *pacte d'association* tended to predominate by the sixteenth century, but the *pacte de gouvernement* was by no means displaced. Indeed on the question of political theory the reformers can be seen to favour the latter as in Luther's attitude to the 'godly prince', Zwingli's defence of magisterial reformation, Calvin's relationship with the Genevan council, the Huguenot tracts, Beza's *De Haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis* (1554) and *De Jure Magistratu in Subditos* (1574), and the views of the Marian exiles, the Scottish Presbyterians and the establishment Puritans.²⁷

On the other hand, social contract theory found its continuity mainly through Francisco de Vitoria's *Relectiones Theologicae*, Molina's *De Justitia et Jure* (1592), Suarez' *Tractatus de Legibus ac Deo Legislatore* (1611), Althusius' *Politica Methodice Digesta* (1603), and Grotius' *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (1625),²⁸ with possibly some contribution from Hooker's *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593), and of course, the New England constitution which was the first actual expression of the social contract in practice, unless the abortive Taborite and Muntzer movements, and the Swiss *Gemeinde* are considered as such.²⁹

Following the Reformation, a more widespread use of biblical examples and terminology naturally became evident

within the political development since the Reformers became heirs of both the political and theological developments of the covenant idea. But the important thing is to recognize that until then there was a political development with its own history independent of the development of covenantal theology proper. For example, the writings of the so-called 'Monarchomachists' and jurists of the sixteenth century, who used the contract theory as a weapon in the conflicts of the period, were 'confined throughout to the political or legal sphere'.³⁰ It is arguable that while they provided support for each other, separate development of the political and the strictly theological factors can continue to be identified even in New England itself, where the idea of entering into a political covenant was based largely on the church covenant idea adopted by the Independents in Old England.³¹

Desirable as a more detailed unfolding of this political development would be, the foregoing broad outline must suffice in order to keep to the objective of this research and pursue the more theological questions. While not contributing directly to the development of covenantal theology, the political factors did, nevertheless, help to create an atmosphere in which the idea of covenant assumed a very important place. Calvin especially could not fail to be aware of it, first because of his training in law, and secondly because he emerged from a church which was at the centre of the medieval power struggles between church and state and prized her Gallican liberties based on conciliar arguments.

Potentia dei absoluta and Potentia dei ordinata

The nature of Augustine's controversy with Pelagius concerning the responsibility of man with regard to his own salvation was as old as man himself, but it did sharpen the lines of debate for centuries to come. Where Pelagius taught that salvation was for those who did their best,

Augustine stressed entire dependence on the grace of God and human inability to do anything towards salvation, and furthermore that this grace was irresistibly vouchsafed to those elected by God in eternity. Augustine's covenantal thought emerged in this context and while there were bilateral obligations in his view of the covenant, the ability to fulfil these was the gift of God's grace to the elect and not something fallen man could regard strictly as his own.³²

Thomas Aquinas, however, unhappy with Lombard's teaching on saving *charitas* as solely the result of a direct work of the Holy Spirit and not a created habit in man,³³ adopted the view of an infused habit of grace in man, as the means by which he could exercise obedience to God. This grace was not *forma substantialis* but *forma accidentalis* in man's soul.³⁴ While only accidentally present this habit of grace was, nevertheless, actually some part of man's soul and could be regarded as his own.³⁵ Thomas, however, did believe strongly in the necessity of the grace of the Holy Spirit in relation to the 'new law', or the gospel - 'No one has ever had the grace of the Holy Spirit except by faith in Christ...by faith in Christ man belongs to the New Covenant'.³⁶ He described the covenant (*testamentum*) as 'an arrangement about an inheritance (*dispositio hereditatis*)...new by reason of the time it was actually established, but...eternal because God had ordained it from all eternity and also because the inheritance for which it makes arrangement is an eternal one'.³⁷

Thomas divided the old law and the new, which 'doubly accommodates different stages of development'.³⁸ The old law, distinguished by ceremonial, judicial and moral precepts, 'clearly set forth the obligations of natural law', and bore witness to Christ, pointing and predisposing man to him.³⁹ The new law was not essentially different from the old because both come from one God and had the

same end in view. 'The unity of faith in the two covenants attests to the unity of the end,' said Thomas. The differences were only a question of what was between perfection and imperfection.⁴⁰ Consequently, while the new law was not set before man in the same way as the old, 'at all times there have been men who belonged to the New Covenant'.⁴¹ Men under the old covenant had the grace of the Holy Spirit, and therefore belonged to the new law and 'were justified only by faith in Christ, who is the Author of the New Covenant'.⁴² Furthermore, the substance of the new covenant was contained in the old and the observance of the old law was not abolished by the new, 'except in regard to ceremonial practices.... The entire body of moral precepts had to remain in the New Law, because they are intrinsically implied in virtuous action'.⁴³

The big question raised by Thomas was how, or on what grounds, grace could be received. In discussing God's power, Thomas distinguished between God's 'absolute power' (*potentia absoluta*), by which he could do anything that lay within power as such, and his 'ordinate power' (*potentia ordinata*), by which he did what 'He foresaw that He would do and pre-ordained to do'.⁴⁴ The Nominalist theologians took up this distinction in discussing the question of grace. Duns Scotus (c.1265-1308) before them provided the lead in his desire to protect the absolute freedom of God's will and power in salvation. God could accept anyone he pleased irrespective of whether they had the infused habit of grace in order to make them acceptable. The habit of grace, therefore, was 'not absolutely valid in itself', although it was contained in the *potentia ordinata* or the manner of working by which God had freely chosen to act and to which he had committed himself in relation to creation, that is, a covenantal relationship.⁴⁵

This covenantal relationship was twofold. In addition to the covenant of salvation made with those in the church and which included all in a state of grace

whether before or after Christ, there was also a covenant of creation made with all mankind and especially ratified in the promises made to Adam and Noah. In both of these God committed himself to act in dependable, defined ways, consistent with his will and nature. In one he promised to uphold the universe and its governing laws even though it was contingent by nature and marred by sinfulness. In the other he pledged to uphold the way of salvation which he had appointed even though it too was in the realm of contingent things and sinful man was basically unacceptable to him. The idea of covenant therefore lay at the root of the nominalist view of divine action. While God acted voluntarily and freely according to his own will, he never acted arbitrarily or despotically, but always consistently, wisely, and dependably. And, 'both of these Nominalist covenants are instituted by God *from above*', and were not to 'be equated with that early form of social contract theory' found in other medieval writers.⁴⁶

Peter Auriole (c.1280-1322), an active Thomist, provided opposition to this soteriological view by insisting that a man's own habit of *caritas* was the reason for his acceptance by God, but the Nominalists, notably William of Ockham, Jean Gerson, Pierre D'Ailly, Gregory of Rimini, Robert Holcot, Thomas Bradwardine and Gabriel Biel, developed Scotus' position with some variations.⁴⁷ Under the concept of *potentia dei absoluta* they followed the Augustinian tradition of the sovereignty of the divine will and predestination, while the *potentia dei ordinata* was the self-imposed laws or order established by God for conveying grace. It was of a contingent nature, or a doctrine of secondary causes.⁴⁸

But in seeking to relate these basic predestinarian and covenantal concepts the Nominalists did not all follow the Augustinian emphasis on unmerited grace. While claiming that salvation depended ultimately on the will of God, and did not require a habit of grace as a prior

condition, Ockham, nevertheless, insisted that under the *potentia dei ordinata* man by his natural ability (*ex puris naturalibus*) could perform acceptable works, which, while not meriting salvation, could merit the grace preparatory to salvation; hence the well-known nominalist phrase *Facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam* (God will not deny grace to those who do what is in them. i.e. their best),⁴⁹ and the distinction between *meritum de condigno* and *meritum de congruo*. Condign merit was God's acceptance according to strict justice of the fully meritorious acts of a man who was already in a state of grace. In other words a man could earn more grace once he had received grace. But what about the initial grace? Could that be merited? The answer was, Yes! and No! God would reward *de congruo* the efforts of the natural man with an infusion of grace, not, (as Biel in particular stressed *contra Rimini*), according to strict justice, but solely on the grounds of God's goodness and mercy, as expressed in his promise or covenant engagement.⁵⁰

It was this 'semi-merit' or 'semi-Pelagianism' which was attacked by the conservative Augustinian wing among the nominalist theologians. Bradwardine (*contra Holcut*) and Rimini (*contra Biel*) stood by the Augustinian view of original sin and predestination, and rejected the notion of any human merit in the reception of grace.⁵¹ It was the same objection which Luther was to make against the scholastic theologians and which was so hotly defended by Erasmus.⁵² But while Luther rejected the idea of merited grace bound up in nominalist covenantal theology, he was too much of a biblical theologian to throw out the baby with the bath water. The idea of covenant was retained in his writings.⁵³ It was the 'subversion of grace' in nominalism that Luther objected to, and rather than seeing *pactum* as an essential part of *meritum*, he regarded it as opposed to it throughout.⁵⁴

Attention has also been drawn to the use of the

covenant in medieval mystical theology, especially in the works of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson and Johannes von Staupitz.⁵⁵ Just how far this differs from its use in nominalism is uncertain. Oberman concluded that through Gerson and Biel there was a 'marriage of mysticism and nominalism', both generally concerned with conformity to the revealed will of God, that is, what God has ordained to do.⁵⁶ Ozment, however, maintained that there was no true mysticism until the *potentia ordinata* was transcended. Nominalists, he said, confined themselves to time and history, whereas 'mystics...look to an eternal covenant behind historical covenants, to the generation before creation in time',⁵⁷ constituting 'a common sense science of a presently active *potentia dei absoluta*' or what might be called 'a *potentia hominis absoluta*'.⁵⁸ Ozment saw 'a natural covenant' in Tauler's theology in which God was ontologically committed to the *gemuete* of the soul, which always 'recognizes itself as God in God', even though it was created.⁵⁹ In describing man's return to his pre-creation origin in the being of God, Tauler, because of his failure to separate the being of God and the being of man, remained ambiguous about whether the initiative in the order of salvation was divine or human.⁶⁰

In Staupitz's theology the mystical union of Christ and his people was more deserving of the term 'covenant'. He spoke of the consummation of 'the contract between Christ and his Church'.⁶¹ In this union the believer was so incorporated into Christ that 'Christ is I'. This relationship had its origin in the eternal grace of predestination which committed God to the salvation of the elect through Christ, and from which flowed the call to faith and the justification of the sinner. Christ, he said, was 'put under obligation to save the elect'.⁶² The law, whether the law of nature, the law of Moses, or the law of Christ according to the letter, he held to be burdensome indeed, but the justified man was made alive

'through faith active in love', so that what was burdensome became pleasing. Beyond natural works which were *extra fidem Christi*, the justified man was enabled to perform other works, 'works informed by faith that is alive and active in love'. In this way 'he loves God above all things and his neighbour according to the law'.⁶³

Oberman was right to say that Staupitz's view was 'the *unilateral covenant*, which God made with the elect, a *Covenant of Grace*, because it provided for the work of justification',⁶⁴ but he should not have inferred that it was thereby non-bilateral, since he went on to speak of Staupitz's 'emphasis on faith in Christ as the only condition for salvation'.⁶⁵ What was unilateral in initiation was bilateral in application, providing one keeps in mind that the fulfil^ling of the condition of faith/love/obedience was also the gift of grace inwrought by God.⁶⁶

Summary

The idea of covenant, then, was far from absent in the thought of medieval 'forerunners' of the Reformation. Given the sources from which they worked this was to be expected. The idea had specific sociological, governmental, hermeneutical and soteriological uses. It is difficult, however, to pinpoint direct links between this medieval use of the covenant and that of the Reformers. Yet it is clear that the latter were familiar with the thought and writings of the former. A good example is Calvin's attack on the nominalist concept of the *potentia dei absoluta* divorced from law and justice: 'I detest the doctrine of the Sorbonne, for which the papal theologians applaud themselves, that invents for God an absolute power (*Fr.* so as to be beyond law). For it is easier to divorce the light of the sun from its heat, or for that matter its heat from fire, than to separate God's power from His righteousness.... For to make God beyond law

is to rob Him of the greatest part of His glory, for it destroys His rectitude and His righteousness. Not that God is subject to law, except in so far as he himself is law'.⁶⁷

Wendel absolved Scotus from the position attacked here by Calvin, but McNeill pointed out that it was affirmed by Ockham and Biel.⁶⁸ It can be said that Calvin's knowledge of the scholastics was largely manifest in criticisms rather than through specific parallels that can be drawn, though Wendel and Reuter have endeavoured, not without justification, to draw a line of continuity from Augustine via Scotus, Gregory of Rimini and John Major to Calvin.⁶⁹ McGrath cautiously indicated that any inferences regarding the influence of late medieval theology on Calvin must be 'provisional and tentative', but he did consider the relation of the young Calvin to the *schola Augustiniana moderna*, exemplified by Gregory of Rimini, as a potentially fruitful area for further research.⁷⁰ Understandably, Calvin's main criticism was that all scholastics were of the Pelagian species due to their teaching of *facere quod in se est*, and their idea of 'accepting grace' in justification.⁷¹

Significantly, however, it is with respect to the idea of covenant that 'we find one of the few places where Calvin consciously accepts scholastic concepts', while at the same time drawing a different conclusion as to the ability of man to fulfil in his own strength any part of the covenant.⁷² This emerged when Calvin discussed the promises of the law in relation to the gospel. Calvin agreed that observance of the righteousness of the law 'considered in itself, is the way of eternal life; and...is capable of bringing salvation to us'.⁷³ The scholastics, he said, agreed that the works of the law performed by fallen man could not merit salvation by their own intrinsic worth, but were only accepted by God because of the covenant he had made in the law (*ex pacto ratione*). It

was only from this covenant that any reward was owed to works. God esteemed them to be of worth only out of his own liberality and kindness.

In his *Commentary on Galatians*, Calvin said: 'Paul took into account what was certainly true, that, except by a covenant with God, no reward is due to works. Admitting then that the law justifies, yet before the law man could not merit salvation by works, because there was no covenant. All that I am now affirming is granted by the scholastic theologians: for they maintain that works are meritorious to salvation, not by their intrinsic worth, but by the acceptance of God (to use their own phrase), and on the ground of a covenant. Consequently, where there is no divine covenant, no declaration of acceptance is found, - no work will be available for justification.'⁷⁴

While Calvin agreed with the scholastics on the basic idea of acceptance only through the covenant, the difference was that the scholastics still regarded these works as meritorious of grace leading to justification. Calvin emphasized that no one could earn anything according to the promise of the law unless he fulfilled perfectly the condition of perfect righteousness. He explained: 'The Sophists...did not observe how far those works, which they meant to be meritorious, were from fulfilling the condition of the promises unless preceded by justification resting on faith alone, and by forgiveness of sins, through which even good works must be cleansed of spots'.⁷⁵

Medieval thought assumes importance as 'a pervasive presence' in Calvin's theology, as attested by his numerous references to the 'Sophists', 'Papists', 'Sorbonnists' and 'Scholastics' - all terms which he used interchangeably.⁷⁶ While mainly critical of their concepts, the above passages show that Calvin was still able to adopt a discriminatory attitude as far as their covenantal theology was concerned.⁷⁷

NOTES: Chapter Six

1 H.A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation*, (New York, 1966), 3ff, provides a good discussion of the term and its significance. Also 'The Shape of Late Medieval Thought: the Birthpangs of the Modern Era', *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, eds. C. Trinkaus and H.A. Oberman, (Leiden, 1974), 3-25; and R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (Oxford, 1949), 54.

2 This is particularly so with regard to his picture of the *Fürsten-spiegel* in *De civitate Dei*. See J.N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's City of God*, (London 1921); J.W. Gough, *The Social Contract*, (Oxford, 1936), 22-23; F.J.C. Hearnshaw, *The Social and Political Ideas of Some Great Medieval Thinkers*, (London, 1923), 34-42; A.J. Carlyle, 'St. Augustine and the City of God', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 34-52, claimed that Augustine had little influence on the Middle Ages, nevertheless admitted that he was 'constantly appealed to' by the medieval writers. See also Carlyle, *A History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, 6 vols. (Edinburgh, 1903), 1.83 passim, especially 164-170; O. Gierke, *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*, trs. F.W. Maitland, (Cambridge, 1900), 2.

3 This is an area in the history of Medieval and Reformation thought which could profit from further careful research.

4 J.W. Gough, *op.cit.*, 2-3.

5 O. Gierke, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society*, 2 vols. trs. E. Barker, (Cambridge, 1934), 1.62ff.

6 *Ibid.* See also Gough, *op.cit.*, 2-3. In the eighteenth century, David Hume in his essays, acknowledged this theory to be just and prudent, but denied the idea of owing allegiance 'bound by the obligation and sanction of a promise'. He maintained that 'The original establishment was formed by violence and submitted to by necessity'. For Hume government therefore represented a continuing struggle between authority and liberty, in which some degree of liberty must be sacrificed. (see, 'Of the Original Contract', *Essays, Moral, Political and Literary*, (London, 1903), 455,461; 'Of the Origin of Covenant', *Ibid.*, 35-39.

7 For historical arguments see Gierke, *Natural Law*, *op.cit.*, 1.111, 2.304. For the legal side see R.W. Lee, *The Social Compact*, (Oxford, 1898).

8 Gough, *op.cit.*, 4-6.

9 E. Barker, 'Medieval Political Thought', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 9; 'Greek Political Thought and Theory in the Fourth Century', *Cambridge Ancient History*, eds. J.B. Bury

et.al., (Cambridge, 1927), 6.505-537. See Gierke, *Political Theories*, 4-5; Gough, *op.cit.*, 7-20 and Carlyle, *History*, vols. 1-2 for detailed discussion of these issues up to the twelfth century.

10 Extensive examples and evidence, chiefly from the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, are cited by Carlyle, *History*, 1.229-252, and Gough, *op.cit.*, 23-26.

11 *Capitula ad Francos et Aquitanos Missa de Carisiaco*, 856, July 7, 'si ille (ie. the king) juxta humanam fragilitatem aliquid contra tale pactum fecerit, illum honeste et cum reverentia, sicut seniore decet, annonemus, ut ille hoc corrigat et emendet et unicuique in suo ordine debitam legem conservat', *M.G.H. Leges*, II.2.262, quoted by Carlyle, *History*, 1.249.

12 Carlyle, *History*, 3.19-86; J.N.Figgis, *Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius 1214-1625*, (New York, 1960), 12-14, 169-170; Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1978), 2.129-130, 310-319.

13 *Ibid.*, 21ff.

14 Figgis, *Gerson to Grotius*, 12, 85 and 13. For further detailed discussion of the place of law in feudalism see Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.129-130, 310-319, 332; and Carlyle, *History* 3.30-74.

15 Carlyle, *History*, 85-86.

16 Gough, *op.cit.*, 32-33, cites the Magna Carta, Paul von Bernreid, and Guido, Bishop of Ferrara, as examples.

17 John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 3.15, 'Porro tyrannum occidere non modo licitum est sed aequum et iustum', quoted by Carlyle. See Carlyle, *History*, 3.136-146, especially 144 n.1, and 4.330-341; Gough, *op.cit.*, 30-31; E.F. Jacob, 'John of Salisbury and the *Policraticus*', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 53-84.

18 Manegold of Lautenbach, *Ad Gebehardum*, cxxx, cxlvii, 'Neque enim populus ideo eum super se exaltat, ut liberam in se exercendae tyrannidis facultatem concedat, sed, ut a tyrannide ceterorum et improbitate defendat. Atque, cum ille, qui pro coercendis pravis, probis defendendis eligitur, pravitatem in se fovere, bonos contere, tyrannidem, quam debuit propulsare, in subiectos ceperit ipse crudelissime exercere, nonne clarum est, merito illum a concessa dignitate cadere, populum ab eius dominio et subiectione liberum existere, cum pactum, pro quo constitutus est, constet illum prius irrupisse?'

'Cum enim nullus se imperatorem vel regem creare possit, ad hoc unum aliquem super se populus exaltat, ut iusti ratione imperii se gubernet et regat, cuique sua distribuat, pios foveat, inpios perimat, omnibus videlicet iusticiam impentat. At vero se quando pactum, quo

eligitur, infringit, ad ea disturbanda et confundenda, que corrigere constitutus est, eruperit, iuste rationis consideratione populum subiectionis debito absolvit, quippe cum fidem prior ipse deseruerit, que alterutrum altero fidelitate colligavit'. Quotations in *M.G.H. Libelli de Lite*, I.365, 391-392; and in Carlyle, *History*, 3.136. 160-169, especially 136 n.2 and 164 n.1. See also Gough, *op.cit.*, 28-30; Figgis, *Gerson to Grotius*, 8, 168.

19 Gierke, *Political Theories*, 4-5. By this phrase he means the ideas of classical antiquity becoming modern in the progress of the Middle Ages.

20 Gough, *op.cit.*, 35-45.

21 A.J. Black, 'The Political Ideas of Conciliarism and Papalism 1430-1450', *JEH*, 20. (1969), 45; *Monarchy and Community*, (Cambridge, 1970), 88 etc. See also J.W. Stieber, *Pope Eugenius IV, the Council of Basel, and the Secular and Ecclesiastical Authorities in the Empire: The Conflict over Supreme Authority and Power in the Church*, (Leiden 1978), 26ff; J.A.F. Thomson, *Popes and Princes 1417-1517*, (London, 1980); B. Tierney, *Foundations of Conciliar Theory*, (Cambridge, 1905). The Basel theorists were, of course, building on earlier conciliar works such as Gerson's *De Potestate Ecclesiastica*. See J.B. Morrall, *Gerson and the Great Schism*, (Manchester 1960), 104 etc.; Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.114-117; C.M.D. Crowder, ed. *Unity, Heresy and Reform 1378-1460*, (London, 1977); C.J. von Hefele, *Histoire des Conciles*, trs. H. Leclereq, (Paris 1907-1916). For the political thought of individual conciliarists, see J.A.F. Thomson, 'Papalism and Conciliarism in Antonio Roselli's *Monarchia*', *Medieval Studies*, 37.(1975), 445-458; P. Sigmund *Nicholas of Cusa and Medieval Political Thought*, (Harvard, 1963); D. Sullivan, 'Nicholas of Cusa as Reformer: the Papal Legation to the Germans 1451-1452', *Medieval Studies*, 36.(1974), 382-428; Z. Rueger, 'Gerson, the Conciliar Movement and the Right of Resistance 1642-1644', *JHI*, 25. (1964), 467-486; W.J. Courtenay, 'Covenant and Community in Pierre D'Ailly', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, 46.(1971), 94-119; F. Oakley, 'The Political Thought of Pierre D'Ailly: the Voluntarist Tradition', (New Haven, 1964); J.B. Morrall, *op.cit.*; W. Ullman, *The Origins of the Great Schism*, (London, 1948) and A.S. McGrade, *The Political Thought of William of Ockham: Personal and Institutional Principles*, (Cambridge, 1974); C.C. Bayley, 'Pivotal Concepts in the Political Philosophy of William of Ockham', *JHI*, 10.(1949), 199-218.

22 Black, *Political Ideas*, 55; Figgis, *Gerson to Grotius*, 37-70.

23 Gierke, *Political Theories*, 7-8; Gough, *op.cit.*, 44-45

24 Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.131.

25 On the importance of Salamonio's work, see Figgis, *Gerson to Grotius*, 10-12; J.W. Allen, *A History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century*, (London, 1928), 332-336 and Gough, *op.cit.*, 45-47. Skinner has the fullest treatment in *Foundations*, 2.130-134, 148-152. A full study of his work is available by M. D'Addio, *L'Idée del contratto sociale dai sofisti alla riforma e il De Principatu di Mario Salamonio*, (Milan 1954). Gough (p.45) and Allen (p.332) are both wrong in assuming Salamonio was a Spaniard and wrote *De Principatu* in 1544 (see D'Addio pp.3-15).

26 M. Salamonio, *Patritii Romani De Principatu. Libri Septem*, (Rome, 1514), fos. 8b, 8a-9b, 12b, 17b, 21a, 28b-29a, 55 and 59 as quoted by Skinner, *op.cit.*

27 On Luther's political thought see J.W. Allen, 'Martin Luther', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 171-191, who sees Luther as 'essentially unpolitical'. Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.3-108 covers both the principles and spread of Lutheranism in this respect. A good outline is found in S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought*, (London, 1961), 141-164. See also H. Baron, 'Religion and Politics in German Imperial Cities during the Reformation', *EHR*, 52. (1937), 405-427, 614-633, and L.W. Spitz, 'Luther's Ecclesiology and his Concept of the Prince as *Notbischof*', *CH*, 22. (1953), 113-141.

On Calvin's political and social views see W.R. Matthews, 'John Calvin', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 193-215, who agrees that Calvin does not have 'anything in the nature of a social contract' (p.213), but errs in saying that Calvin's Calvinism was 'the most extreme other-world religion' (p.204). Also J.T. McNeill, *John Calvin on God and Political Duty*, (Indianapolis, 1956); *The History and Character of Calvinism*, (New York, 1954); 'The Democratic Element in Calvin's Thought', *CH*, 18. (1949), 153-171; 'Calvin and Civil Government', *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, ed. D.K. McKim, (Grand Rapids, 1984), 260-274; W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trs. H. McKnight, (London, 1956), 229-245; Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.219-221, who brings out useful evidence from the commentaries and sermons; Wolin, *op.cit.*, 165-194, and W.J. Vesey, 'The Sources of the Idea of Active Resistance in the Political Theory of John Knox'. PhD Thesis (Boston University, 1961), 151-182; C.J. Butler, 'Christian Liberty and Covenant Theology', 52-60 etc.; H.A. Lloyd, 'Calvin and the Duty of Guardians to Resist', *JEH*, 32. (1981), 65-67; P. Stein, 'Calvin and the Duty of Guardians to Resist: A Comment', *Ibid*, 69-70.

The most famous of the Huguenot tracts were François Hotman's *Francogallia*, (1573); *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, (1579), whether written by Philippe du Plessis Mornay (Figgis and Skinner, 2.305) or Hubert Languet (Barker and Gough, 52), and Lambert Daneau's *Politices Christianae*, (1596). For discussion of these see R.M. Kingdon, 'The

Political Resistance of the Calvinists in France and the Low Countries', *CH*, 27.(1958), 220-233; E. Armstrong, 'The Political Theory of the Huguenots', *EHR*, 4.(1889), 13-40; D.R. Kelley, *Francois Hotman: A Revolutionary's Ordeal*, (Princeton 1973); R.D. Linder, 'Pierre Viret and the Sixteenth Century French Revolutionary Tradition', *Journal of Medieval History* 38.(1966), 125-137; Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.239ff; Gough, *op.cit.*, 49-57 and Allen, *op.cit.*, 306ff

On Beza see R.M. Kingdon, 'The First Expression of Theodore Beza's Political Ideas', *AFR* 46.(1955), 88-100; *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement 1564-1572* (Madison, 1967); R.C. Gamble, 'The Christian and the Tyrant: Beza and Knox on Political Resistance Theory', *WTJ* 46.(1984), 125-139 and Vesey, *op.cit.*, 197-206; P-F. Geisendorf, *Théodore Beze*, (Geneva, 1949), 191ff. 349ff.

The most important works among the Marian exiles were J. Ponet, *A Short Treatise of Politic Power*, (1556) and C. Goodman, *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed of their Subjects*, (1558). See D.H. Wollman, 'The Biblical Justification for Resistance to Authority in Ponet's and Goodman's Polemics', *SCJ*, 13.4 (1982), 29-41; Skinner, *Foundations*, 2.221-224, 233-238; Vesey, *op.cit.*, 182-197; W.S. Hudson, *John Ponet (1516?-1556): Advocate of Limited Monarchy*, (Chicago, 1942); D.G. Danner, 'Christopher Goodman and the English Protestant Tradition of Civil Disobedience', *SCJ*, 8. (1977), 61-73; E. Hildebrandt, 'The Magdeburg Bekenntnis as a Possible Link between German and English Resistance Theories in the Sixteenth Century', *AFR*, 71. (1981), 240-252; G. Bowler, 'Marian Protestants and the Idea of Violent Resistance to Tyranny', *Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England*, eds. P. Lake and M. Dowling, (London, 1987), 124-143;

On the Scottish development see J. Knox, *Works*, 3.157-215, 217-226, 251-330; IV.461-520, 349-430; G. Buchanan, *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos: A Dialogue Concerning the Rights of the Crown in Scotland*, (1579) and S. Rutherford, *Lex Rex or The Law and the Prince*, (1644). See also Vesey, *op.cit.*, 17-45, 113-129; R.L. Greaves, 'The Legitimacy of Resistance', *Theology and Revolution in the Scottish Reformation: Studies in the Thought of John Knox*, (Grand Rapids, 1980), 126-253; J.H. Burns, 'Knox and Revolution 1558', *History Today*, 8.(1958), 565-573; 'The Theory of Limited Monarchy in Sixteenth-Century Scotland'. PhD Thesis (Aberdeen University, 1952); W.O. Chadwick, 'John Knox and Revolution', *Andover Newton Quarterly*, 15. (1975), 250-266; F. Oakley, 'On the Road from Constance to 1688: The Political Thought of John Major and George Buchanan', *JBS*, 1. (1962), 1-31; Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1650*, (New Haven, 1980), 419-433; Gough, *op.cit.*, 61-62 who claimed Rutherford's *Lex Rex* was 'a reasoned defence of the contract of government' (p.93); Gamble, *op.cit.*; O.K. Webb, 'The Political Thought of Samuel

Rutherford'. PhD Thesis (Duke University, 1964), and S.A. Burrell, 'The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol in Scotland 1596-1637', *CH*, 27. (1958), 338-350.

On the English development see standard history works, especially Gardiner; R.D. Linder, 'Pierre Viret and the Sixteenth Century English Protestants', *AFR*, 58. (1967), 149-171; J.H. Franklin, ed. *Constitutionalism and Resistance in the Sixteenth Century*, (New York, 1969).

28 R. Hooker, *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiasticall Politie Eyght Books*, (London, [1593]). This work has been well described as 'a judicious combination of views' (Gough, *op.cit.*, 69), and can be used to argue in various directions, but Hooker did seem to regard the origin of the state as well as the establishment of government as a deliberate contractual arrangement by individuals: 'the lawe of nature doth require of necessitie some kinde of regiment, so that to bring things into the first course they were in, and...when some kinde of regiment was once approved, it may be that nothing was then further thought upon for the manner of governing...till by experience they found this for all parts verie inconvenient. This constrained them to come unto lawes'. (*Eccl. Pol.*, I.10.4-5) See also N. Sykes, 'Richard Hooker', *Social and Political Ideas of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (London, 1926), 63-89; On Vitoria see B. Hamilton, *Political Thought in Sixteenth Century Spain*, (Oxford, 1963); Skinner, *op.cit.*, 2.175-180. On Suarez see A.L. Lilley, 'Francisco Suarez', Hearnshaw, *op.cit.*, 90-104; Skinner, *op.cit.*, 2.180-184; F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol.3. (London, 1953), and R. Wilenius, *The Social and Political Theory of Francisco Suarez*, (Helsinki, 1963). On Grotius see Hearnshaw, 'Hugo Grotius', *op.cit.*, 130-152. For the federal development of Althusius and Grotius, see Gierke, *Natural Law*, 1.36-79, especially 70-79.

29 Gough, *op.cit.*, 83-83; F.G. Heymann, *John Zizka and the Hussite Revolution*, (Princeton, 1955); H. Kaminsky, *A History of the Hussite Revolution*, (Berkeley, 1967), 361ff; G.R. Potter, *Zwingli*, (Cambridge, 1976), 58.

30 A. Lang, 'The Reformation and Natural Law', *Calvin and the Reformation*, ed. W.P. Armstrong, (Grand Rapids, 1980), 72-75.

31 W. Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism*, (New York, 1893); C. Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea: Its Origin and Development*, (Philadelphia, 1904); Miller, 'The Half-Way Covenant'; J.W. Allen, *English Political Thought 1603-1660*, 2 vols. (London, 1938), 1.214-219; R. Niebuhr, 'The Idea of the Covenant and American Democracy', *CH*, 23. (1954), 126-136.

32 P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, (Berkeley 1969), 340-364; G. Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo: Life and*

Controversies, (London, 1963), 312-393; H. Chadwick, *Augustine*, (Oxford, 1986), 107-119.

33 P. Lombard, *Sentences*, Liber 1. Distinctio 17.

34 T. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 61 vols. trs. M. Browne et.al., (London, 1964-1981), I/2.110.2.

35 Ozment, *op.cit.*, 32-33.

36 *Summa*, II.106.1.

37 *Ibid.*, III.78.3.

38 *Ibid.*, II.91.5.

39 *Ibid.*, II.100.1ff; II.98.5; II.98.2.

40 *Ibid.*, II.107.1.

41 *Ibid.*, II.106.3.

42 *Ibid.*, II.107.1.

43 *Ibid.*, II.107.2-3, 108.3.

44 *Ibid.*, I.25.5. Some editions print the latter term *de potentia ordinaria*, ie. by his ordinary power.

45 D.C. Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei: The Theology of Johannes von Staupitz in the Late Medieval Setting*, (Leiden, 1968), 51-55, 77-78; H.A. Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism*, (Cambridge Mass., 1963), 166-184; 'Justitia Christi and 'Iustitia Dei: Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification', *HTR*, 59. (1966), 1-26; Ozment, *op.cit.*, 33-36; F. Oakley, *The Western Church in the Late Middle Ages*, (New York, 1979), 141-148; *Omnipotence, Covenant and Order: An Excursion in the History of Ideas from Gerson to Leibniz*, (New York, 1984), 47-65

46 Courtenay, *op.cit.*, 116-118. Courtenay has made a valuable contribution in pointing out the general and soteriological use of covenant in nominalism. Stoute's criticism that Courtenay overstressed the use of covenant in nominalism, making it, rather than divine omnipotence, the 'principal thesis', is unjustified. See D.A. Stoute, 'The Origins and Development of the Reformed Idea of the Covenant'. PhD Thesis (Cambridge University, 1979), 53. Courtenay makes it clear that the covenant motif is the only link which unites the *absoluta/ordinata* arguments, and therefore protects God's omnipotence in both the natural order and in the order of salvation (pp.118-119).

47 Courtenay, 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion', *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, eds. C. Trinkaus and H.A. Oberman, (Leiden, 1974), 26-59. Courtenay distinguished a three-school movement in late scholasticism: The conservative branch represented by Bradwardine and Rimini, the moderate branch (Ockham, D'Ailly, Biel), and the radical branch which

included Holcut, Adam and Wodham (pp.34-35). For the thought of individual nominalists see: on Ockham - G. Leff, *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse*, (Manchester, 1975), 470-475; Ozment, *op.cit.*, 37-41, and McGrade, *op.cit.*; on Gerson - S.E. Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis: A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson, and Martin Luther (1509-16) in the Context of their Theological Thought*, (Leiden, 1969), 49-83; Oakley, 'Gerson and D'Ailly: An Admonition', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies*, 40.(1965); on D'Ailly - Courtenay, 'Covenant and Causality', 94-119; G. Lindbeck, 'Nominalism and the Problem of Meaning Illustrated by Pierre D'Ailly on Predestination and Justification', *HTR*, 53.(1959), 43-60; F. Oakley, 'Pierre D'Ailly and the Absolute Power of God: Another Note on the Theology of Nominalism', *HTR*, 56.(1963), 59-73; 'Gerson and D'Ailly', *op.cit.*, 74-83; 'Pierre D'Ailly' in *Reformers in Profile*, ed. B.A. Gerrish, (Philadelphia, 1967), 40-57; on Rimini - H.A. Oberman, 'Headwaters of the Reformation: *Initia Lutheri - Initia Reformationis*', *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era*, ed. H.A. Oberman, (Leiden, 1974), 40-88, especially 69-85; on Holcut - Oberman, *Forerunners*, 142-150; '*Facientibus Quod in Se Est Deus Non Denegat Gratiam*: Robert Holcut O.P. and the Beginnings of Luther's Theology', *HTR*, 55.(1962), 317-342; on Bradwardine - G. Leff, *Bradwardine and the Pelagians*, (Cambridge 1957); Oberman, *Forerunners*, 151-164; on Biel - Oberman, *Forerunners*, 165-174; *Harvest*, *op.cit.*; Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, 123-132.

48 Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 38-39.

49 Oberman, '*Facientibus*', *op.cit.*; Courtenay, 'Covenant and Causality', 102-110.

50 Oberman, *Harvest*, 124-125, 166-178; '*Facientibus*', 327-330.

51 Oberman, *Forerunners*, 155-157. It is important to note here, however, that Bradwardine, like Augustine, while emphasizing the priority of grace and grace alone, does underline the obligation for man to seek and ask for mercy on the basis of God's promise, even though the desire to ask and the faith are also the gifts of grace.

52 E.G. Rupp and A.N. Marlow, eds. *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, (Philadelphia 1969); C. Trinkaus, 'Erasmus, Augustine, and the Nominalists', *AFR*, 67.(1976), 5-32; Ozment, *Age of Reform*, 42, 232-239, 290-302.

53 Preus, *op.cit.*, 275-284; also on late Medieval influence on Lutheranism see A. McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation*, (Oxford, 1978), 108-121.

54 *Ibid.*, 255-265.

55 S.E. Ozment, 'Mysticism, Nominalism and Dissent', *The Pursuit of Holiness*, eds. Trinkaus and Oberman, *op.cit.* 67-92; Oberman, *Harvest*, 323-360. On Tauler see Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis*, 13-46. On Gerson's mysticism see Preus, *op.cit.*, 79-85; Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis*, 49-83; *Age of Reform*, 73-78. And on Staupitz see Oberman, *Forerunners*, 175-203; D.C. Steinmetz, *Misericordia Dei*, *op.cit.*, and *Luther and Staupitz*, (Durham N.C., 1980).

56 Oberman, *Harvest*, 323-360, especially 359.

57 Ozment, 'Mysticism', 71, 91. 58 *Ibid.*, 2-3.

59 Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis*, 16.

60 *Ibid.*, 46.

61 J. Staupitz, *Libellus de ex^ecutione eterne praedestinationis*, (Nuremberg, 1517). Quoted in Oberman, *Forerunners*, 187.

62 *Ibid.*, 175-181, 179.

63 *Ibid.*, 193-194, 182;

183, 185. .

64 Oberman, *Forerunners*, 139.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*, 183.

67 Calvin, *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, trs. J.K.S. Reid, (London, 1961), 179 (CR, 8.361); cf. also *Ser. on Job*, 23:1-7; *Inst.*, I.17.2.

68 Wendel, *op.cit.*, 127-129; McNeill, *Inst.*, I.17.2 n.7; for other references to the nominalists in the *Institutes* see 'Author and Source Index', 2.1602 (Biel and Bradwardine), 1613 (Gerson), 1621-2 (Ockham).

69 Wendel, (*op.cit.* 19) claimed that Major influenced Calvin in the direction of a nominalist interpretation of Lombard, and Reuter has built upon this. See K. Reuter, *Das Grundverständnis der Theologie Calvins: Unter Einbeziehung ihrer geschichtlichen Abhängigkeiten*, (Neukirchen 1963). Compare also the similar line which Oberman traces to Luther - H.A. Oberman, *The Masters of the Reformation: The Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe*, trs. D. Martin, (Cambridge, 1981), 84-110.

70 A. McGrath, *Intellectual Origins*, 93-107.

71 *Inst.*, II.3.13. For a selection of Calvin's criticisms of scholastic concepts see: on *facere quod in se est* *Inst.*, II.3.10, III.4.1ff; on 'accepting grace' III.17.4, III.11.13-19, III.18.8; *Com. on Gal.*, 3:6, 5:6; *A Reformation Debate: Sadoletto's Letter to the Genevans and Calvin's Reply, With an Appendix on the Justification Controversy*, ed. J.C. Olin, (New York 1966), 68-69 (CR, 5.398-399; and on *meritum de congruo* etc. *Com. on Ps.*,

50:16; *Har. of Gosp.*, 2.257-258 (Mark 10:21); *Com. on Rom.*, 8:18; *Com. on Gal.*, 2:21; *Com. on Phil.*, 2:9, *Com. on Col.*, 1:5.

72 A.A. LaVallee, 'Calvin's Criticism of Scholastic Theology'. PhD Thesis (Harvard University, 1967), 93 (on law and gospel see 83-89, 224-225).

73 Calvin, *Inst.*, IV.13.13.

74 *Com. on Gal.*, 3:17.

75 *Inst.*, III.17.3. See also II.7.5, II.8.3-10; *Com. on Deut.* 27:11; *Com. on Ps.*, 19:12; *Har. of Gosp.*, 2.123-124 (Luke 17:7-10); *Com. on Acts*, 15:10, *Comm. on Gal.*, 3:10; *Acts of the Council of Trent with the Antidote*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, (CTS) 3.156; *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, (CTS) 3.248.

76 LaVallee, *op.cit.*, 26-28.

77 The same attitude is observable in Calvin and the other Reformed writers with respect to the subject of natural law which was intimately related to the concept of the covenant. J.T. McNeill, 'Natural Law in the Teaching of the Reformers', *JR*, 26. (1946), 168, has pointed out that 'Natural law is not one of the issues on which they bring the Scholastics under criticism'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Covenant in the Early Reformers

Whatever element of continuity there was between the sixteenth-century Reformers and their medieval forerunners, it remains that the central factor in the Reformation of religion that took place was a return to the Scriptures. Systematic study of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, had been long neglected. Renewed interest in the exposition of Scripture, would have found it difficult indeed to miss the place given to the covenant as one of its great unifying themes. As George Marsden put it, 'The covenant doctrine was emphasized primarily because it was discovered to be a central biblical concept. It was...one more instance of the Protestant recovery of biblical teaching. That this is the case is supported by the fact that the covenant doctrine began to appear in numerous places almost as soon as the Reformation had begun'.¹ It is on some of these places that attention must now be focused.

Martin Luther

'Luther is primarily to be seen as an Augustinian reared in a nominalistic climate of thought...carried on the waves of the rising tide of humanism', to creatively reshape traditional thought in the Reformation.² Educated at Erfurt by Bielites, the early Luther in his *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513-1515) retained the nominalist concept of the *facere quod in se est*, and while he filled Biel's covenantal view with the Augustinian concept of *promissio*,³ the *meritum de congruo* still appeared.⁴ But if the idea of preparation for grace was still strong in the *Dictata*, at the same time the whole question of law and gospel and the Old Testament and New was being raised by

his adoption of a *spiritus/litera* 'hermeneutical divide', which tended to direct the emphasis to grace rather than works of preparation, and enabled Luther to find grace in the *lex vetus* as well as in the new.⁵

A real break with the idea of preparation for grace, either *de congruo* or *de condigno* was evident in a theses disputed on 25 September, 1516,⁶ and with the moral implications of the *facere quod in se est* doctrine in his lectures on Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* (Nov.1515-Sept.1516). Here he rather inconsistently tried to distinguish between this doctrine and the Pelagian errors (~~Pelagiano errori~~) in it. He wanted to hold the concept but reject the errors, which he now regarded as having subverted the church ('Inde enim tota ecclesia pene subversa est')⁷

The following year, Luther rejected completely the nominalist concepts in his *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam* (1517) in favour of the Augustinian view that anything related to man's own moral powers could not be a disposition to grace, but only indisposition, rebellion and ignorance. Preparation for grace could only come from God's eternal election and predestination, and not from man's rational powers or from Aristotelian logic.⁸ For Luther, human reason was now effectively subordinated to Scripture.

Luther used *pactum* and *foedus* when speaking of an alliance between nations,⁹ but used *testamentum*, *pactum*, *foedus* and *promissio* interchangeably when referring to God's covenant with his people.¹⁰ There is no indication of any unilateral/bilateral distinction on linguistic grounds, since he stressed the importance of obligations in the *testamentum* as well as with *pactum*. Even God's servants (ie. the elect remnant) could violate the covenant and suffer outwardly.¹¹

Again, in his lectures on the *Epistle to the Hebrews* (1517-1518), Luther followed Chrysostom's four-fold

description of *testamentum*, the third of which is: 'A testament has precise conditions laid down which are binding on the testator and the beneficiaries'.¹² These obligations were to observe the Lord's supper, preach the gospel, struggle against sin, keep the commandment to love one another, and all the other precepts bearing on persecution, love and peace given by Christ in John 12-18. This would fulfil the typology of the Old Testament which enabled the people to continue as 'worthy possessors of the good things of the promised land'.¹³

A similar emphasis is found in Luther's *Sermon on Baptism* (1519), where of the recipient he said, 'God has made a covenant with him to forgive him all his sins, if only he will fight against them even until death'.¹⁴ Again, in a *Sermon on the New Testament* he stressed the responsibility to believe and exercise faith in the *testament und zusagen*. Abraham would not have received anything if he had not believed. Abraham's faith had to be exercised, but it was, however, the gift of grace.¹⁵

In his *Commentary on Galatians* (1519), Luther used both *pactum* and *testamentum* concerning God's covenant in Christ, but here he employed Jerome's distinction of a *pactum* relating to the living and a *testamentum* relating to death. 'So', he said, 'Jesus Christ, the immortal God, made a *pactum*, and at the same time a *testamentum*, because of his future mortality: since he is God and man at the same time, so he made a *pactum* and a *testamentum* at the same time'.¹⁶ The same distinction occurs in *De Captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* (1520). Here Luther used all terms synonymously, when he spoke of the '*pactum, foedus, testamentum domini*', which appeared so frequently in Scripture.¹⁷

A bilateral stress, then, is clearly evident in Luther's view of the covenant. It is, however, to be expected that in controversy with his Roman antagonists over the place of merit and works in salvation that his

main emphasis would be on grace and the unilateral aspect of the covenant. This is what is found. Indeed, so passionate was Luther's concern to preach justification through grace by faith alone, that we discover him coming almost to the borderland of antinomianism. Luther's 'hermeneutical divide' began to take on a clear-cut Old Testament/New Testament, law/gospel distinction, with the letter/spirit categories falling into the same divisions, rather than overlapping them. Luther began to divide Scripture into commandments and promises. The promises bestowed what the commandments demanded in the prescriptions of the law. God gave both the commandments and the fulfillment of them, and the promises belonged entirely to the New Testament.¹⁹

With typical vigour Luther practically dismissed Moses and the law for the Christian: 'Moses is dead. His rule is ended when Christ came. He is of no further service.'¹⁹ Luther, consequently, restricted himself to a twofold use of the law: one civil, and the other theological; one to restrain behaviour in society, and the other to reveal sin. That was the limit of the law (*hique resistit lex*).²⁰ And Luther claimed that this twofold distinction had been unknown for centuries. Only Augustine had known of it to some extent.²¹ Any failure to maintain this rigid distinction, Luther regarded as a defection from the gospel. Even his fellow reformers came in for heavy handling in this respect. He accused those who 'profit from the gospel with us' (presumably Zwingli), of not understanding the correct use of the law, as well as the Anabaptists, the New Arians, the Spiritualists and Papists.²²

But in spite of this strong insistence on a rigid law/gospel dichotomy, there is evidence that the later Luther still wanted to retain a place for the law in the Christian life. In the face of the antinomian spirit manifest during the Peasants' Revolt and the later

Antinomian Disputations, Luther pointed to a *via media*, which he called the royal road (*regia via*). While still firmly denying that the law had power to justify in any sense, he also denied that the liberty of the gospel absolved men from all responsibility to the law. We must travel a road between 'those who want to be justified by the law, on the one hand, and those who want to be completely free of the law on the other'.²³ Luther now admitted that there was a place for keeping the commandments in the Christian life, but that it was only possible through grace.²⁴

In discussing the sin that still clings to the believer, Luther entered the qualification that 'we are free from the law, so long as we walk in the Spirit'.²⁵ In *The Liberty of a Christian Man*, he had already granted that good works, while not contributing to justification, were an essential part of the individual Christian life.²⁶

This trend was most marked in Luther's writings during the antinomian controversy in which the *duplex usus legis* was only referred to once.²⁷ Luther distinctly differentiated between the preaching of the law to the *impii* and to the *pii*.²⁸ In relation to the former it had a condemnatory role, but for those already justified through the redemption of Christ it assumed hortatory significance as a means of directing and exhorting the Christian towards what is good (*sed ut hortetur ad bonum*).²⁹ Ebling admitted that the law 'acquires a homiletic and pastoral relevance' here. He insisted, however, that this did not mean a different *usus legis*, but indicated rather 'a distinction in the execution of the preaching of the law within the *usus theologicus*'.³⁰ Luther may have declined explicitly to employ a *tertius usus legis* category, but Ebling's distinction appears a shade too fine to account for the shift from a position where Moses was of 'no further service' to one where he became an exhorter in Christian good.

Luther himself attempted to explain this continued use of the law on the basis of *lex naturalis*, which he equated with the commandments of Moses. Thus, in *Predigten über das 2 Buch Mose*, he said that he kept the commandments of Moses, not because Moses gave them, but because they had been implanted in him by nature. He distinguished between the moral commandments which are by nature, and other ceremonial commandments which are not, and concluded that he was not bound by Moses' commandments 'except insofar as they are implanted in everyone by nature and written in everyone's heart'.³¹ He then indicated that while the ceremonial law was abolished with the coming of Christ, the ten commandments could not be because they are the measure of sin even when not verbally known.³²

In this way, Luther, in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535f), came to view the law as an integral part of the Edenic arrangement. Man's original righteousness was part of his nature, and when that became corrupted through the temptation and fall in Eden, it was the equivalent of violating the entire decalogue (*secum affert ruinam seu violationem totius Decalogi*).³³ Our first parents sinned against both tables of the law, against God himself, and against his word.³⁴ And it was that same law, which they had forgotten, which convicted their consciences before God when they were reminded of it.

Johannes Oecolampadius (1482-1531)

Amandus Polanus, at the turn of the sixteenth century, claimed that 'the earliest reference to the covenant in Reformed theology' was to be found in the works of Oecolampadius.³⁵ This reference was to Oecolampadius' *In Iesaiam Prophetam Hypomnematon, hoc est Commentariorum*, first published in Basel, 1525, but originally expounded in lectures from the spring of 1523 to the summer of 1524.

From the letters published in Staehelin's edition of his works, we learn that Oecolampadius had a wide variety

of contacts during the early years of the Reformation, including Erasmus from 1517, Capito from March 1518, Reuchlin in 1518, Melanchthon from July 1519, and Luther from June 1523.³⁶ The question of Oecolampadius' dependence upon Zwingli with respect to covenant thought is still a matter of ^{debate} *desideratum*.³⁷ His correspondence with the Zurich reformer opened in December 1522,³⁸ but before that, in a report on his preaching sent to Kasper Hedio (June 1522), he had already spoken of the promises of the gospel relative to the sacraments as 'pledges' of grace in a covenantal sense.³⁹ Even as early as June 1521, in his *Sermo de sacramento Eucharistiae*, he referred to 'the sense of our covenant' (*mens nostrae foederis*) in this respect.⁴⁰

But it is in his *Commentary on Isaiah* that Oecolampadius discussed the idea of covenant most fully, and a careful reading shows two areas of tension or balance, according to how one looks at them. One is the presentation of the covenant as God's promise and also as a conditional arrangement. The other is the manner in which he spelt out the differences between the old covenant and the new, but at the same time underlined the basic unity and similarities of the covenants. And throughout his writings Oecolampadius used *pactum*, *foedus* and *testamentum* interchangeably.⁴¹

Trinterud claimed that Oecolampadius' view of the covenant contained 'the entire law-contract structure', and that to be blessed of God man must keep the covenant by obeying the law that was written in his heart at creation and expounded in the Bible. Therefore, said Trinterud, it was entirely bilateral and contractual.⁴² Baker categorically denied this! With reference to Oecolampadius, he concluded: 'Nowhere did he clearly state the bilateral nature of a covenant... He spoke of no conditions in connection with that promise...it was an Augustinian notion of unilateral testament'.⁴³

On the second of the areas mentioned above, Baker was

just as adamant. He could see only two distinct and separate covenants in the law and the gospel. Oecolampadius, he said, 'saw neither the unity of the Testaments nor the unity of the testament...It was not until the early summer of 1526 that he began to equate the people of God in the Old and New Testaments', that is, after Zwingli and Bullinger had published their views on the matter.

Oecolampadius certainly saw the covenant as God's promise, in the way that the rainbow was 'a covenant of peace' to Noah. And he gave to his covenantal thought a very strong Christological context.⁴⁴ In what can only be regarded as a foreshadowing of the later covenant of redemption idea, Oecolampadius spoke of God's covenant with his people in Christ as based on a '*pactum cum filio suo*'. Just as God entered into a covenant with his Son, so according to his larger promises (*ampliores promissiones*), there will be an everlasting covenant (*foedus sempiternum*) made with his people.⁴⁵ This eternal covenant with the elect was fulfilled in Christ and confirmed by his blood, binding God's people to himself.⁴⁶

Oecolampadius also stressed that this covenant was wrought in the hearts of God's people through the agency of the Holy Spirit. In a phrase reminiscent of Staupitz, he went on to say that this internal work of the Spirit produced 'faith that works by love'.⁴⁷ Thus, *lex charitatis* and *lex spiritus* were one and the same. While contrasted with the external precepts of the Old Testament, this 'faith that works by love' nevertheless fulfilled the commandment to love God and neighbour and so fulfilled the moral law given at Sinai. Christ did not destroy this law. He fulfilled it. While the Old Testament ceremonial laws and signs were abolished, the law of love continued because this was from the beginning.⁴⁸

It was in this spiritual application of the covenant to the believer that the conditional element emerged.

Those to whom the Spirit brought this 'new law' were to exercise that faith as the apostle Paul did at his conversion, and turn away from their sin to take hold upon God's covenant.⁴⁹ For Oecolampadius the law still had an important place in the believer's life, not as an antecedent condition of salvation, but as a consequent condition of new life.

This conditional aspect was reinforced by Oecolampadius' references to the possibility of men violating the covenant with God that was entered through baptism.⁵⁰ But Oecolampadius was careful, like later covenantal theologians, to point out that these '*conditiones foederis*' were also promised in the covenant. They were contained in the promise of God to his servants. The faith that laid hold upon the covenant, and the love and good works which it manifested were not by human initiative, but by the enabling of the divine Spirit (*sed Spiritu suo*).⁵¹ This was exactly what was discovered in Usher, Ball and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, and it is just not possible to interpret this promise of fulfillment and divine enabling in a way that buries the reality of the bilateral aspect of the covenant.⁵²

On the second issue mentioned above, Oecolampadius did outline differences between the old covenant and the new. He referred to a 'two-fold covenant' characterized by what is old and new, what is carnal and spiritual, what is external and internal, what is perfect and imperfect.⁵³ Baker interpreted this to mean two, distinct, entirely separate covenants, corresponding to law and gospel.⁵⁴ But if by this differentiation, Oecolampadius meant that the essence of the covenant of Christ and that of Abraham and Moses was different in substance without any correspondence whatever, how could he say in the same work that the eternal covenant in Christ which wrote the law of love in the hearts of God's people is a continuation of the Abrahamic covenant? Oecolampadius made it clear that he

was referring to one eternal covenant with diversity of administration and manifestation at different times in history.⁵⁵

There is too much unity stressed in all of Oecolampadius' works to sustain Baker's interpretation. For example, Oecolampadius said that both aspects of the twofold covenant went back to Adam.⁵⁶ He also claimed that the tetragrammaton, or the revelation of God's name, was given under the covenant, and that he remained the same God to his people under both the Old Testament and the New.⁵⁷ Again, he declared that it was the same covenant that was entered by circumcision in the Old Testament that was entered by baptism in the New,⁵⁸ and that the church which incorporated New Testament believers was the same church that had incorporated 'Abraham, Abel, Enoch, Noë, Mose, et alii'.⁵⁹

Allied to these references is the evidence already cited regarding the antiquity of the 'law of love' and the eternal nature of the covenant.⁶⁰ Oecolampadius had clearly grasped the idea of the unity of the covenant in his early lectures. It does not follow that because he only used the idea against the Anabaptists after Zwingli did so in his *Taufbuchlein* (May 1525), that Oecolampadius had no previous idea of the concept.⁶¹ Certainly the covenantal unity of the Testaments was more strongly stated in his later works, due to the Anabaptist controversy, but it was also clearly stated in his earlier works.

Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531)

All scholars are agreed as to the importance of Zwingli in the development of reformed covenantal thought.⁶² There is, however, wide diversity of opinion as to just what his role was. At one extreme, J.B. Torrance suggested that 'Zwingli was probably the first of the reformers to use the covenant concept in theology in 1526 in the defence of infant baptism'.⁶³ But Zwingli had

used the idea of the covenant long before 1526, and it is much more correct to say that his covenantal thinking 'was developed in a context other than the defence of infant baptism'.⁶⁴ It was Schrenk and his followers who were responsible for the view that covenantal thought was first suggested to Zwingli by his Anabaptist opponents.⁶⁵ But even Lowell Zuck, who studied sympathetically the importance of the covenant in the Anabaptist revolution, remained non-committal on this question. In one place he said that covenantal theology 'arose as a defence by Zwingli and his associates against the radical covenant doctrines of their opponents, the Anabaptists',⁶⁶ but conceding a lack of conclusive evidence, he went on to add, 'It is quite possible, however, that Zwingli himself may have introduced the appeal to the covenant into the argument'.⁶⁷

Anabaptist views of the covenant developed along three main lines. The first concerned the individual's relationship with Christ which was established in conversion and viewed as entering into a covenant, with strong emphasis on the inner witness of the Spirit as evidence of genuine conversion and of divine election.⁶⁸ Secondly, the more radical of the Anabaptists who looked for the inauguration of an eschatological kingdom of God on earth saw this in terms of faithfulness to the covenant.⁶⁹ The Munster debacle was the chief manifestation of this view, when the term 'comrades of the covenant' came into vogue.⁷⁰

But the most important of the Anabaptist views on the covenant was in relation to the church. It was this issue and not baptism which really initiated the Anabaptist movement and eventually provoked the split with the Reformers. Curiously though, some of Zwingli's early views are regarded as the inspiration behind the Anabaptist church view.⁷¹ Their first demand was for a church freed from the state and characterized by discipline, imitation

of Christ, ethical separation and exclusive sacramental practice. These are the basic hallmarks of the early Anabaptist church view which came to be viewed in covenantal terms.⁷² It must be seen as the forerunner of the later seventeenth-century church covenant notion of the Independents.⁷³

The baptism question was an extension of the Anabaptist church view. The church for the Anabaptist was a community of adult believers constituted on a voluntary basis. Infants could not enter into a voluntary agreement, and lacking faith, they were, therefore, excluded from the sacraments. Baptism came to be regarded as only for those who showed evidence of true personal faith and grace.⁷⁴ The Anabaptist view of salvation history placed a sharp distinction between the Old Testament and the New. The Old was interpreted allegorically; the New brought spiritual reality. Consequently, there was a radical discontinuity between the covenant in the Old Testament and the new covenant in Christ. There could be no correspondence between Old Testament circumcision and New Testament baptism.⁷⁵ It is important, however, to indicate that due to the diversity of groups labelled Anabaptists, not all so-called held to the general position outlined above. For example, Casper Schwenckfeld (1490-1561), a Silesian aristocrat and one of the so-called spiritualist Anabaptists, in controversy with Pilgram Marpeck (d.1556), leader of the southern German Anabaptists, refused to accept this Old Testament/New Testament dichotomy on covenantal grounds, insisting that the Old Testament saints were 'Christians' with essentially the same faith as those in the New.⁷⁶

All these developments in Anabaptist covenantal thought came after Zwingli's earliest use of the covenant concept which can be traced, at least in embryonic form, to the spring and summer of 1522.⁷⁷ Cottrell has usefully gathered together some of the early writings from *Von*

Erkiesen und Freiheit der Speisen (April 16, 1522) to *Ad Matthaeum Alberum de coena dominica epistola* (Nov. 1524) in order to illustrate this early development.⁷⁶ Cottrell criticised Walton for exaggeration of Zwingli's use of the covenant particularly in *Eine freundliche Bitte und Ermahnung an die Eidgenossen* (Jul.13, 1522) and *Apolegeticus Archeteles* (Aug.22-23, 1522).⁷⁹ Walton saw the Zurichers - 'the people of the new covenant' - as standing in the same covenantal relationship with God as Israel of old, and the use of the idea of the covenant as marking the difference between Zwingli's understanding of 'the Gospel's place in the church and that of Bishop Hugo'.⁸⁰ Cottrell's criticism here must be tempered by Locher's insistence that the biblical idea of covenant was in Zwingli's thought 'from the beginning'.⁸¹ This was clearly illustrated in the *Supplicatio...ad R.D. Hugonem, Episcopum Constantiansem* (Jul.2, 1522), where Zwingli used specific covenantal terminology in comparing the relationship of Israel to the church of God: 'Since therefore, as we have said, God, as of old he used to warn Israel time and again by the mouth of his prophets, now deigns in our day to illumine us with his Gospel, in order to renew his covenant which cannot be annulled'.⁸² †

The unity and continuity of the gospel in both Testaments was strongly stressed by Zwingli in his early writings, while at the same time he distinguished the discontinuous elements such as 'ceremonials and prescriptions'. In *Amica^c et Pia Paraenesis* he indicated that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses and David were also partakers of the gospel, and in *Apolegeticus Archeteles* he spoke of the ceremonial and judicial aspects of the *lex vetus* being abrogated.⁸³ By the following year, Zwingli's covenantal thought became more clear. Discussing the sacrifice of Christ in his *Commentary on the Sixty-seven Articles* (Jul.14, 1523), he said, '*Testamentum, pactum* and *foedus* are commonly used one for another in scripture;

testamentum, however, is used more frequently, and it means, as we signify here, an inherited legacy. None the less it also stands for *foedere* and *pacto* such as men make for the sake of peace between themselves; as when we speak of old testament, new testament: for we understand that the *pactum* which God once made with the patriarchs or with following generations, with the whole world through Christ'.⁸⁴

Zwingli then went on to explain that the covenant between God and men was always associated with blood sacrifices, and when Christ confirmed the eternal covenant, he did so with his own blood. The covenant, he stressed, was in the death of Christ and the blood was the sign of the covenant, not the covenant itself, although sometimes 'the blood' may be used with reference to the death of Christ, and could therefore be spoken of as 'the covenant in my blood'. But the main point Zwingli was making was that the testator (Christ) had died and his eternal *testamentum et foedus* could now be executed: 'In this way as long as Christ has given us the covenant through grace, we may through that become the sons and heirs of God.'⁸⁵

This passage from the *Commentary* is foundational in Zwingli's covenantal thought and represents the basic direction of later development. In the first place, while again differentiating the old and new in certain respects, he viewed the covenant of grace as one and eternal. The covenant which was made with the patriarchs was that which was confirmed through Christ. It has been argued that the unity of the covenant does not emerge in Zwingli's thought until November 1525, and that his earlier writings only contrasted the Testaments. For example, Hagen, commenting on this very passage, inexplicably interpreted it as 'only contrast...no unity'.⁸⁶ There is sufficient evidence in the earlier writings to indicate otherwise.

Secondly, Zwingli, while singling out the specific emphasis of *testamentum* as legacy, made it clear that

pactum and *foedus* were used interchangeably with it, and that, biblically speaking, they all carried the same meaning. In this passage he himself used *foedus* and *pactum* synonymously with *testamentum* even when discussing the idea of legacy in Christ's death.⁸⁷ Zwingli was certainly emphasizing the unilateral provision of salvation through the grace of God, but there is nothing to indicate that he was of the opinion that '*testamentum* is unilateral through and through'.⁸⁸ He said that it was the same as *foedus* or *pactum* 'such as men make for the sake of peace between themselves', which would indicate some bilateral content.

It is not a question of whether Zwingli had the Roman law usage or a Swiss *Gemächd* usage of *testamentum* in mind.⁸⁹ It was the biblical usage that he was discussing, and this did not mean that the legacy of salvation was automatically paid into the beneficiary's bank account. It had to be received, otherwise it was not a covenant but rather the imposition of the will of one party upon another unwilling party. It is also important to keep in mind that in this passage Zwingli was discussing the provision of eternal salvation through the death of Christ, and not the means by which men came to realize and to enjoy that salvation. For this reason we could expect an emphasis on the unilateral side, but this does not mean, as we have seen, that the implication of a bilateral side is non-existent.

It can be misleading, therefore, to speak of 'shifts' in Zwingli's covenantal thought.⁹⁰ It is much more appropriate to see merely changes of emphases according to the context or controversies of the time to which he was addressing himself. In the baptist controversy he emphasized the believer's covenantal pledge. Bromiley says that 'he continually overemphasizes it'. But Bromiley goes on to acknowledge that Zwingli also clearly indicated that 'a covenant is necessarily two-sided'; he never lost

sight of the fact that 'the baptismal covenant involves a pledge given by God as well as a pledge made by us'.⁹¹ For example, Zwingli used interchangeably the terms *bundeszeichen* which is taken to mean God's pledge, and *pfllichtzeichen* which is usually taken to refer to man's pledge.

These ideas were developed and their implications unfolded throughout Zwingli's later writings, but meantime the *Commentary* continued to stress Old Testament fulfilment and continuity in the '*novum testamentum vel foedus*'.⁹² One area where this continuity is so very evident is in relation to the law of God. Zwingli taught that the *lex naturae* was 'nothing other than the will of God',⁹³ which for Zwingli was a manifestation of the divine character in which God's covenant was rooted.⁹⁴ This natural law was written in human hearts by God himself, and could only be understood by the Spirit of God.⁹⁴ God's written commandments were also composed wholly according to his will, therefore the word and law of God were unchangeable and were not to be changed or judged by man, but they were to be his judge and to convince him of his sin. This law was never abrogated. When the Holy Spirit worked through his word in the life of the believer, bringing love to God, then he would be more and more conformed to the law of God, though never perfectly in this life. The basis of this conformity was that the law of love was the same as the *lex naturae* or the law of God.⁹⁵ This also was the basis of all civil law for Zwingli. All human righteousness and laws ought to conform as closely as possible to the law of God.⁹⁶

The same theme was further elucidated in Zwingli's *De Divina humanaque Iustitia* (Aug.3, 1523) and in *Eine kurze christliche Einleitung* (Nov.17, 1523), where he clearly taught the duty of the Christian with respect to the law. For the believer the law was both renewed and abolished in Christ. It was renewed because Christ who is the divine

Lawgiver interpreted and commanded more plainly what our heavenly Father required. It was abolished in the sense that no one could ever condemn the believer for transgressing the law since Christ had fulfilled its demands for him and purchased access for him to the Father in heaven.⁹⁷ The Christian then had a 'two-fold salvation from the law', first from external ceremonies and performances, and secondly from the punishment for his violation of the law.⁹⁸

But this salvation from the law did not make the substance of the law (ie. the moral law) superfluous in discipleship. The moral law had 'everlasting validity'.⁹⁹ While the Christian may be thankful that he was free from the law in this double sense, he, nevertheless, needed the 'harder laws' (*herterer/ gsatzten*), that is, Christ's exposition of the law in Matt. 5-7 and John 13-17, in order to be kept on the way and to be instructed in which works were well pleasing to God.¹⁰⁰ This did not mean that the law was harder in the sense of being more imposing or harsh and unattractive. Rather for the Christian the love of God in his heart made the will of God desirable, so that for him the law was gospel: 'I call everything gospel which God demands of men or which he has revealed to them. For anything which God displays and explains of his will delights those who love God. It is therefore a good report. Because of this I also call the law gospel. I call it gospel rather than law, since it should be clearly regarded by this name for the sake of the pious rather than the impious; and because to speak of the gospel in this way clearly puts an end to the controversy between law and gospel.'¹⁰¹ And those good works which were well pleasing to God and issued from the Christian's conformity to the law of God were viewed by Zwingli as the evidence of faith. They were described by him as 'opera fidei' since they were the consequence of true faith.¹⁰²

The idea of the unity and continuity of the covenant

was worked out fully in the literary war with the Anabaptists between 1525-1530.¹⁰³ Zwingli had hoped that his *Commentary on True and False Religion* would be sufficient to convince the Anabaptists of the error of their ways, but instead it provoked a detailed reply from Balthasar Hubmaier, entitled *The Christian Baptism of Believers*, which led to a series of refutations and counter refutations. Zwingli produced numerous documents on the subject of baptism, including four major works: *Von der Taufe, von der Wiedertaufe, und der Kindertaufe* (May 1525), *Antwort über Balthaser Hubmaiers Taufbüchlein* (Nov. 1525), *In Catabaptistarum strophas elenchus* (Jul. 1527) and *Questiones de Sacramento Baptismi* (1530).¹⁰⁴ The same development found expression in Zwingli's other works as well, especially his commentaries on Scripture.¹⁰⁵

Zwingli argued that the covenant (*foedus, pactum, testamentum*) made with Abraham was the same eternal covenant that was fulfilled in Christ, and that baptism was the sign of this covenant in the New Testament just as circumcision had been the sign of it in the Old Testament.¹⁰⁶ The entire argument for infant baptism in *The Reply to Hubmaier* was based on the equation that the Christian was in the same covenant that God made with Abraham. Zwingli sought to demonstrate this unity in two tables:

<u>Abraham's tafel</u>	<u>Der Christen tafel</u>
God	God all-sufficient
Abraham's God	Our God
Abraham to walk uprightly	We are to walk uprightly
God of Abraham's seed	God of our seed
Saviour promised to Abraham	Saviour sent to us
Covenant signs: Circumcision	Covenant signs: Baptism
of children and adults	of children and adults
Teach children when able	Teach children when able
to understand	to understand ¹⁰⁷

The same kind of parallelism between the Abrahamic covenant and the covenant in Christ was discussed in *The*

Refutation of the Tricks of the Anabaptists and other writings.¹⁰⁸ But this unity did not only reach back to Abraham. The covenant was originally made with Adam and renewed with Noah.¹⁰⁹ And it was the very same covenant which was renewed and clarified with Abraham, since God spoke more openly as the time of his Son's advent approached.¹¹⁰ Abraham and the Old Testament saints were not saved by observance of the law under another covenant, but were saved through Christ and constituted one church with Christians today, even though they came into the Lord's vineyard long before as part of God's elect.¹¹¹ Zwingli concluded: 'Since therefore there is only one immutable God and only one kind of covenant; we who believe in Christ are under the same covenant: consequently God is our God just as he was the God of Abraham, and we are his people just as he was the God of the people of Israel'.¹¹²

From the widespread use of the idea of the covenant in Zwingli's works, it is impossible to accept the judgment that 'it is not prominent in Zwingli'.¹¹³ It is more accurate to say that his 'statements flow into a covenant theology of *Deus noster*'.¹¹⁴ Zwingli, of course, did not have a prelapsarian covenant of works as portrayed in later covenantal theology, but it must be noted that the implications of his teaching on the law of God, particularly the *lex naturae*,¹¹⁵ and his doctrine of the representative headship of Adam,¹¹⁶ could be regarded as providing the essential ingredients for development in this direction.

The main emphasis in Zwingli's covenantal thought was on the unity and continuity of the covenant. While some scholars have suggested 'shifts' or 'change of understanding' in this respect, the evidence rather supports the view that Zwingli early on emphasized the diversity of the Testaments, while at the same holding on to their unity, and later he emphasized the unity of the one covenant of grace in Christ from Adam on, while not

losing sight of the elements of discontinuity.¹¹⁷ Again Zwingli's synonymous use of covenantal terminology is of such frequency and force as to make any distinctions on this basis practically irrelevant. For him, *foedus* carried the idea of a legacy just as much as *testamentum*, although the latter tended to single out the idea more than the former. *Testamentum*, *foedus* and *pactum* as synonymous terms run through practically all of Zwingli's works used in this research.¹¹⁸ All the terms were used in relation to all manifestations of covenant, including the marriage covenant.¹¹⁹ He even referred in one place to *pactum* and *foedus* as 'variations of *testamentum*'.¹²⁰

Zwingli's theology was too much rooted in Scripture for him to lose sight of the two-sided nature of covenant. While stressing the sovereign grace of God in the covenant as God's pledge to his people, he also had a bilateral leaning. It is erroneous on the one hand to say that Zwingli viewed the covenant as 'unequivocally' a unilateral covenant,¹²¹ or on the other hand to say that it was chiefly a bilateral view.¹²² He recognized and maintained both emphases. This was admirably summed up in one passage where he clearly stressed the sovereign mercy of God in establishing his covenant with Abraham, and yet with equal clarity he showed that this new relationship involved the responsibility on Abraham's part to walk uprightly before God, carry the sign of the covenant, teach his children the meaning of the covenant and thus fulfil the conditions of the covenant.¹²³

And the conditions and promises outlined in Exodus 19:5 which Zwingli referred to the covenant made with Abraham and his descendants applied equally to all his descendants in Christ.¹²⁴ These conditions have sometimes been construed to mean that 'God, according to Zwingli, will be our God *only if* "we walk wholly according to his will"', and that the 'burden of fulfilment rests upon man' entirely.¹²⁵ But these conditions of covenant were not

presented by Zwingli as meritorious conditions, but rather as consequent conditions which were contained in the covenant for the elect. They were the works of the law written in hearts by God, and constituted the 'sign of election', or the fruit of salvation, showing both love and fear towards him.¹²⁶ These works of obedience were the natural response of faith which was given to the elect as the unmerited gift of God.¹²⁷

The relationship of the covenant to the elect needs to be kept in mind in order to maintain a proper perspective on Zwingli's thought. Locher says that it is in relation to Zwingli's presentation of election to salvation that 'we recognize the root of "federal theology"'.¹²⁸ For Zwingli, salvation through grace was rooted in election.¹²⁹ Since this salvation was a covenantal salvation, there was a strong implication of the later idea of the eternal covenant of redemption based on the authority of divine election.¹³⁰ The covenant of grace therefore had its springs in the elective love of God which was according to his predetermined purpose.¹³¹ But while this was so, Zwingli allowed that there were those who stood in some relationship with the covenant, who may not be elect. For example, the children of believers, such as Esau, who had received the sign of the covenant and were said to be under the covenant, but who proved in later life to be reprobate.¹³² Zwingli, however, warned against too hasty a judgment in this respect. The case of Esau was made clear from the Scriptures, but it was impossible to judge in the case of infants. Faith was the evidence of election and elect infants were regarded by God as having faith even though it was not yet exercised. Therefore, Zwingli advised that children were to be regarded as elect in the covenant people of God, until the Lord would indicate otherwise, that is, when faithlessness (*perfidia*) became evident.¹³³ There was, therefore, in Zwingli's thought a covenantal sphere within which the

promises of the covenant were given and the covenant signs administered, but which did not infallibly guarantee election. Within that sphere again were the elect, who, by the internal operation of the Spirit, entered into and were given the grace of perseverance within the covenant of grace proper.

Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)

Heinrich Bullinger, Zwingli's successor in Zurich, has been assigned a heady position with respect to covenantal thought in recent research. It has been claimed that it was the additional element of bilateral covenant 'that made Bullinger's theory unusual, different from the thought of any other major reformer'. Again, that 'there were no progenitors of Bullinger's concept of the covenant prior to the Reformation, save perhaps Irenaeus'. This concept has been defined as 'the bilateral approach within the confines of *sola fide* and *sola gratia*'.¹³⁴ Such a judgment was reached, of course, only by use of a presupposed distinction between unilateral testament and bilateral covenant, regarding these as irreconcilable opposites so that those who were said to have 'a theology of testament...had no concept of covenant at all'.¹³⁵ The evidence already surveyed makes such an interpretive distinction very suspect indeed.

Much discussion has been devoted to the question of Bullinger's dependence on Zwingli. It is now generally accepted that Zwingli was 'the father of Reformed covenant theology' and that Bullinger followed him.¹³⁶ Bullinger himself said that Zwingli was the first in a thousand years to understand the essence and fundamental knowledge of God in terms of his 'one eternal covenant' (*sines ~~eniger~~, ewiger pundt*).¹³⁷ Baker opted for more independence and for a more simultaneous development of ideas with Zwingli between 1525-1527.¹³⁸ He based this, however, on two premises both of which are questionable. First, that

Bullinger 'saw the unity of the Testaments, if not of the covenant, as early as 1523, an understanding that Zwingli did not reach until 1525', and secondly, that, unlike Zwingli, Bullinger 'affirmed the bilateral nature of the covenant'.¹³⁹

It has already been demonstrated that Zwingli understood the unity as well as the diversity of the Testaments and the covenant much earlier than 1525, and that he also understood clearly the bilateral nature of the covenant. Again, Baker claimed that it was Bullinger in *Von dem Touff* (Nov./Dec.1525) who introduced a new facet into covenantal theology in that 'the covenant had first been made with Adam.'¹⁴⁰ But Zwingli had already suggested as much in 1522.¹⁴¹ It is, however, reasonable to maintain that because the Swiss reformers were all first and foremost biblical scholars with some knowledge of the Church Fathers and were involved in the kind of controversy which they encountered, that their thought should point in the same direction, and that if Zwingli had never written on the covenant it would nevertheless 'have emerged as an important theme in Reformed theology'.¹⁴²

Like Zwingli, Bullinger stressed the unity and continuity of both Testaments in a hermeneutical and soteriological sense. This he began as early as Nov. 1523 in *Epistola ad Rudolphum Asper de Scripturae negotio* in a way that was 'nearly the equivalent' of affirming the unity of the covenant.¹⁴³ But it was also in the context of the Anabaptist controversy that Bullinger really emphasized the unity and eternity of the one covenant of grace first made with Adam and the Old Testament fathers, with circumcision as the sign of the covenant, following its explicit renewal with Abraham.¹⁴⁴ This first began for Bullinger in a letter to Heinrich Simler (Nov./Dec.1525) in which he followed the ideas already used by Zwingli in *Von der Taufe* (May 1525) and *Antwort Uber Balthasar Hubmaier* (Nov. 1525). Bullinger also spoke of *testamentum* as legacy and used the

term synonymously with other covenantal terms.¹⁴⁵ Also when emphasizing the unity of the covenant he did not lose sight of the discontinuous elements between the Old Testament revelation and the New.¹⁴⁶ Nor was he blind to the two-sided nature of the covenant. While it was established in the free mercy of God, it had obligations for Abraham and his seed as well.¹⁴⁷ The same arguments were followed in his *Antwort an Burchard* (1527/1528).¹⁴⁸

The fact that Bullinger, probably more than Zwingli, developed his covenantal doctrine in the context of controversial writings needs to be borne in mind, for it can account for particular emphases. This being the case, Bullinger would be expected, in view of the Anabaptist bifurcation of the Testaments and increasing tendency towards antinomianism, to stress the unity and eternity of the covenant and its bilateral nature; and in view of continuing Catholic hostility, to show that justification by grace through faith alone was the way in which men were, and always had been, reconciled with God.

While Bullinger was the first clearly to organize the ideas of the covenant in a polemical work, *De Testamento* (1534), it is possible to over concentrate on this and make more of the covenant theme in Bullinger than himself made of it. *De Testamento* was a short, sometimes patchy, work and contained little more than what Bullinger had already dealt with in his other writings. Stoute has rightly shown that the covenant was not a dominant theme in the *Decades* (1549), nor even 'a constant, although sometimes submerged, theme', as Baker claimed, and he has also pointed out that Bullinger's description of what he regarded as the chief points of religion did not include mention of the covenant.¹⁴⁹ Nor was there any sermon in the *Decades* specifically on the covenant. The main treatment of it was what Bullinger called a 'short digression' in the midst of his sermon on the ceremonial laws of God.¹⁵⁰ And in the commentaries there was no more

weight given to the theme than due comment required, though here incidently there was much more stress on the unilateral nature of the covenant.¹⁵¹ Even in some of his anti-Anabaptist tracts, while he emphasized the soteriological unity of the saints in the Old Testament and the New, there was surprisingly little use made of covenantal terminology.¹⁵² The same can be said of the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566) which was originally written by Bullinger in 1562 for his own use and as a testimony of the faith by which he had lived and in which he wished to die.¹⁵³ But having entered this caveat, *De Testamento*, nevertheless, represented a milestone in the history of covenantal thought. In it Bullinger gathered together and expanded in a more concise and systematic way all the points made by Zwingli and it can be justly called 'the first extended exposition of the covenant of grace'.¹⁵⁴

Bullinger began this work by defining his terminology in a section entitled 'Nomenclatura Testamenti'.¹⁵⁵ The Greek term Διαθήκη which translated the Hebrew בְרִית, 'indicates an inheritance which falls to one by a testament'. The etymology of the Latin *testamentum* revealed a two-fold usage: it meant a last will or testament (ie. an inheritance), or to speak and affirm something by an oath (ie. a promise). But Διαθήκη following בְרִית also meant *pactum* and *foedus*, that is, to make or to enter into a covenant. The biblical use of *testamentum*, therefore, carried this meaning as well, and Bullinger clearly indicated that he was using it in this sense also.¹⁵⁶ At the outset then, Bullinger affirmed both a unilateral and bilateral sense to a biblical covenant, and that the words *testamentum*, *pactum* and *foedus* were used interchangeably. This synonomous usage can be found in practically all the writings in which Bullinger mentioned the covenant.¹⁵⁷

A covenant or testament, according to Bullinger,

involved coming together in a union of friendship with the observance of particular ceremonies and conditions. The heirs of the covenant were recorded and the inheritance, which became valid on the death of the testator, was described. It was on account of man's behaviour and weakness that God had gone along with (*sequutus est*) this human way of speaking and acting in the arrangement of a relationship.¹⁵⁸ 'It is in a human manner that God has made a covenant with us,' he said.¹⁵⁹ Bullinger then proceeded to use Genesis 17 as his chief illustration of God's covenant with man. He began by stressing the unilateral mercy and grace of God in offering to covenant with man. The impetus behind this was the pure, natural goodness of God and human merit had no part in it.¹⁶⁰ Bullinger wondered at the great mystery and mercy of God, that he should condescend to join himself in covenant with such miserable, sinful creatures.¹⁶¹

Then after identifying who the covenant was with (i.e. the seed of Abraham), Bullinger proceeded to discuss the twofold conditions of the covenant.¹⁶² First, there were the promises that God made in offering the covenant. In the Old Testament these included the material blessings of Canaan, but even then these were but types of the greater spiritual benefits provided, namely, 'the righteousness, sanctification, life, redemption and salvation' which was in Christ, and was the inheritance of those who believed in the one, eternal covenant.¹⁶³ And this offer was made to 'every kind of man' (*ad...omne genus hominum*).¹⁶⁴ Secondly, there was the duty of man to keep the covenant and walk before God, which Bullinger described as 'wholehearted adherence to God' and conformity of life to God's will.¹⁶⁵ For Bullinger, amendment of life always followed reconciliation and forgiveness.¹⁶⁶

The remainder of *De Testamento* concentrated on the major theme suggested by the title - the unity of God's eternal covenant.¹⁶⁷ Bullinger concluded that what began

with Abraham and Moses was only part of a Christianity that was far older, going back to Adam,¹⁶⁸ and that the faith of Abraham, Adam and Christ were the same'.¹⁶⁹ In other words, the people of God from Adam to Christ, and all since Christ, were related to God through one covenant. This was the central theme of *Der alt gloub*, but all the basic arguments were to be found in *De Testamento*.¹⁷⁰

The covenant, Bullinger considered to be the *scopus* of Scripture because the word basically summarized all that was revealed of God - his unity, power, majesty, goodness and glory - in short, his all-sufficiency. It included everything material and spiritual that God in his grace and goodness had provided for his people in every nation.¹⁷¹ This stress on the Godward aspect of the covenant needs to be noted here. Baker, dealing with this section of *De Testamento* pointed up the bilateral side, but ignored this emphasis on the revelation of God and his will which Bullinger regarded as the principal part of the covenant.¹⁷² The same treatment was given by Baker to evidence from the *Catechesis pro adultioribus*. Statements on the bilateral aspect of the covenant were quoted, while the 'chief thing', as Bullinger called it in introducing the subject, was ignored. The 'chief thing', Bullinger described as the promise of the pre-eminent good of a future life, not brought about through any merit of ours, but by God's natural, pure grace and goodness.¹⁷³

In his *Commentaries*, Bullinger made the same point. On Isaiah 55:3 he regarded the sovereign mercies of God as 'the principal part of the covenant', noting that the prophet spoke of the mercies of God and not just mercy, in order to show the immensity of the mercy of God and the abundant fullness of divine grace towards sinful men.¹⁷⁴ In his *Commentary on Jeremiah* he declared that standing at the head of the covenant was the revelation of God as El Shaddai, the sovereign, all-sufficient, omnipotent, omniscient, God of mercy, justice and wisdom, who showed

fatherly love to man, and who alone was the author of all good. It was futile, he said, to think that men could covenant with such a God from this side. All they had were broken cisterns, and so weredependent on divine grace and life which they did not have in themselves. This unilateral grace which was in the covenant, providing a propitiation for sins, was the focal point of the covenant: 'The grace of God and that special propitiation belong to the new testament or covenant', and Bullinger explained that it was by the same means that those in other times and races were forgiven.¹⁷⁶

Again in *Ratio Studiorum*, Bullinger described as the first of three principal affirmations of the Christian faith, the truth of one invisible, eternal God, who has made (ie. 'stuck on' *adglutinatus est*) one eternal covenant with men, who worked all things in all men, and who was to be adored only in Spirit, and worshipped only from the heart in the way that he himself had prescribed.¹⁷⁶ To say that Bullinger's was simply a bilateral view of covenant is seriously to curtail the evidence.

Proceeding in *De Testamento* to expound the covenantal revelation of God in Scripture, Bullinger began with the law and interpreted the decalogue as a declaration of God's unilateral deliverance of his people from Egypt, and as a paraphrase of the conditions of the covenant which he required of them.¹⁷⁷ Bullinger differentiated between the moral, ceremonial and judicial aspects of the law.¹⁷⁸ The external, ceremonial and judicial elements were necessary for the regulating of the civil and ecclesiastical life of Israel, but they were not the spiritual or substantial and enduring part of the covenant, which was operative long before they were given.¹⁷⁹ In *A Confession of Fayth* he referred to the ceremonies as *adiaphora*, whereas 'the true concorde of the churche standeth in doctrine; in the uniforme preaching of Christ his Gospell, and in keeping of those rites whiche the Lorde evidently delivered and

commanded' (ie. baptism and the Lord's supper).^{1e0} The ceremonies were added out of compassion towards an unbelieving and unfaithful people to deter them from the worship of heathen deities, and also to wrap up the mystery of Christ so that it might be made known through the mouthpiece of types.^{1e1}

It was from these 'accidental things' (*accidentia*), and not from 'the substance of the covenant itself' (*ex ipsa foederis substantia*), that the distinction between the Old and New Testaments arose.^{1e2} These 'accidents', among which were listed, the Aaronic priesthood, legal sacrifices of various kinds, purifications, fasting, the tabernacle etc., were not perpetual and were totally unnecessary for salvation.^{1e3} They were temporal concessions to the people and purposes of the time, 'and without them the covenant would easily continue to stand'.^{1e4} Wrong use of the law, dependence on the external elements, and the accretions and superstitions of human minds added to the older revelation, contrasted greatly with the fullness of the covenant displayed in the teaching and work of Christ, and also contributed to the Old/New distinction. But the teaching of Christ was nothing other than what had been contained in the decalogue about faith and loving God and neighbour.^{1e5}

The decalogue, therefore, remained while the ceremonial externals and the condemnation of the law were done away in Christ, because 'this is most certain, the ten commandments, or any other things in the Old Testament which taught the law of faith and love could not be annulled'.^{1e6} The apostle Paul's 'anti-law' argument in his epistles (Ephesians, Galatians and Hebrews) was not directed against the law *per se*, but against those who were trusting for salvation in the external observances of the law and knew nothing of the spiritual substance of the covenant.^{1e7} Consequently, these people were sheltering under a carnal use of the law, adhering to it without

knowledge or spirit. They abused the law not recognizing the spiritual purpose to which the ceremonies etc. were directed.¹⁸⁸

This same distinction between the spirit and the letter of the law was made by Bullinger in *A Confession of Fayth* and also in *Ieremias*, where he described the spiritual interiority of the covenant in contrast with the external aspects of the old administration. It was the Spirit who awakened the faith (*fidem excitet*) through which men were justified, and who breatheed in his love bringing a spontaneous enthusiasm for the law of God (*spontaneum legis Dei studium*). And while there was more enlightenment, enlargement and communion since the time of Christ, the same spirit was also given to the fathers of old.¹⁸⁹

The thrust of Bullinger's argument here, supported by references from the Fathers,¹⁹⁰ was that 'the old times also had a spiritual Israel'.¹⁹¹ It was to approve the spiritual and condemn the carnal that God continually sent the prophets to Israel.¹⁹² The spiritual Israel was in the same church as the Christians, and the same Spirit was in both.¹⁹³ The visible sacraments of the covenant while differing in the administration of the Old Testament and the New, were nevertheless visible signs of the invisible grace (*invisibilis gratiae signa visibilia*) of the one covenant.¹⁹⁴

This, however, was not to underestimate the difference which the coming of Christ made. Bullinger had already exulted in how Christ came as 'the seal and living confirmation of the covenant. God, by assuming a true human nature, 'attested to the ends of the earth that mystery, that God evidently admitted men into covenant and fellowship'.¹⁹⁵ Christ not only displayed God as the sovereign, covenanting God who provided for his people, but he also exemplified for his people the conditions of the covenant. He demonstrated in his life what those in the

covenant agree to be, because they ought to walk as he walked (I John 2:6).¹⁹⁶

Since Christ came believers had a much clearer and fuller degree of knowledge, and of the light of salvation, now that the old figures and ceremonies and shadows were superceded by what they signified.¹⁹⁷ They had a much clearer knowledge and exposition of the law and the will of God. For those in Christ the law was the same as the gospel and fulfilled the office of the gospel.¹⁹⁸ Christ in the Sermon on the Mount made known the true spirit of the law in contrast to the externality of the Pharisees,¹⁹⁹ so that it could now fulfil its proper function in showing men their true selves in order that they might seek mercy of God for non-performance of the the law, and also that it might instruct them in seeking to frame their lives and worship according to his most holy will. The latter function corresponded to Bullinger's *tertius usus legis*.²⁰⁰ In other words, Christ exhibited both sides of the covenant; first, the sovereign goodness and justice of God in revealing himself in such a covenantal, saving manner, and, secondly, in the moral and spiritual implications of that revelation for those in covenant.²⁰¹ The teaching of the apostles, according to Bullinger, interpreted the eternal covenant in precisely the same way.²⁰²

In one place in *De Testamento*, Bullinger related the covenant, albeit only incidentally^a, to God's eternal predestination. This was a quotation from Oecolampadius' *Hieremiam Commentariorum*, where Oecolampadius argued for the unity of the eternal, spiritual covenant, even though there were diversities of administration at different times. He said, 'Not only in the eternal predestination, but also in the internal affairs of man it always was, and continually remained, one'.²⁰³ This quotation could be regarded as very tenuous in seeking to relate the covenant and predestination in Bullinger's thought, but elsewhere he

did not hesitate to put both predestination and covenant into his theological system. In *In Omnes Apostolicas Epistolas* he described those who are in the covenant from the time of Adam to the consummation of the ages as having the faith of the elect of God.²⁰⁴

Predestination also featured in the *Second Helvetic Confession*,²⁰⁵ but it was in the *Decades* that Bullinger left the fullest and most systematic exposition of his theology. Here his views on both the covenant and predestination were clearly dealt with - the covenant in the sixth sermon of the third decade, and predestination in the fourth sermon of the fourth decade. The former was a resumé of the ground covered in previous writings, showing the sovereign, divine authorship of the covenant, the antiquity of the covenant, and the conditions and sign of the covenant.²⁰⁶ The covenant was made with the spiritual seed of Abraham (and the saints before him) by 'the living, eternal, omnipotent God, the author, conserver and governor of all things'.²⁰⁷ Bullinger's predestinarian views were set in the same context of the all wise providence of God, the One who 'governs all things in accordance with his good will, just judgment, excellent arrangement, by most righteous and equal means'.²⁰⁸ Consideration of God's providence, however, was not to encourage sloth, since means belonged to that providence for the good ordering of life, labour and industry and were not to be neglected. But the godly could derive comfort from such consideration and appreciate God's good will and care for them in every detail of life.²⁰⁹

Bullinger said that the doctrine of foreknowledge and predestination had the same consolation for the godly since it was similar to the providence of God. He defined predestination as 'the eternal decree of God in which he has determined to save or destroy men; a most certain end of life and death having been set up beforehand. Wherefore, it is also described elsewhere as a fore-

ordination'.²¹⁰ Further down the page he was even more emphatic: 'God by his eternal and immutable counsel has fore-ordained who ought to be saved and who ought to be damned. Indeed the end, or the decree of life and death, is concise and is clear to all the godly'.²¹¹ Concerning the elect, they were predestined to eternal life, and to sonship and glory in Christ, and this 'predestination is not dependant on, or set in motion by any worthiness or unworthiness of ours, but is from the pure grace and mercy of God the Father'. Then backed up by reference to Eph. 1:4-6; Rom. 11:16; and II Tim. 1:9-10, Bullinger added: 'For they wander (ie.intellectually) who think that those to be saved are predestinated by God on account of merit or good works which God foresees in them'.²¹²

Concerning those 'predestinate to death' (*de praedestinatīs ad mortem*), Bullinger refrained from further comment, simply quoting John 13:18-19, and advised those who were concerned about their election to consider the essential evidence of election. Those predestinated to life had communion and fellowship with Christ through faith, while those who were strangers from Christ were predestinated to death and damnation.²¹³ The same evidences of election and reprobation were set out in *A Confession of Fayth*: 'God hath chosen us, so that they which are nowe ingrafted in Christe by faithe, be also elected, and they be reprobate or caste awaies which are without Christ'. But, like Zwingli, Bullinger warned against rash judgment of who were reprobate. Hope was to be entertained for all, judgment as to who was reprobate was to be suspended, and these things were not to be curiously enquired into. 'Let Christ be our glasse wherein we maie behold our predestination', he exhorted.²¹⁴

Bullinger, therefore, spoke of predestination to life and to death, and in true Reformed fashion declared that those chosen to life were drawn, called, enlightened, given faith and enabled by grace to believe, for, he concluded,

'all things belonging to our salvation are of divine grace, nothing except reproach is ours'.²¹⁵ This emphasis runs like a refrain through Bullinger's writings. Man was unable to do any good apart from divine grace, 'no, not so much as to thinke any good,' he said, and repentance he considered 'the mere gift of God, and not the worke of our strengthe'.²¹⁶ To say that when Bullinger referred to opening the secrets of the heart that he was inferring 'it is something we can do on our own', is to misread him.²¹⁷ It was God by his Spirit who removed whatever would prevent mutual friendship between man and himself, and he also conferred and increase^d hope and love in faith, so that they may be united and joined to him in eternity.²¹⁸

Saving faith was especially stressed by Bullinger as God's work: 'that faith by which we believe Christ has satisfied the law, and that he himself is our righteousness and perfection, is not of our own motive or our own merits but is being poured into us by the grace of God through the Holy Spirit, who is given into our hearts'.²¹⁹ In the *Second Helvetic Confession*, enlightenment of mind, renewing of will, and power to will or do any good were all attributed to the Holy Spirit. Men were not passive in regeneration, but 'what they do of themselves, they are enabled to do by God' (*aguntur enim a Deo, ut agant ipsi, quod agunt*).²²⁰

Bullinger's restraint in commenting further on the reprobate in the *Decades* (see above), was clearly due to his concern to avoid questions which might confuse or trouble 'the simpler folk' (*simpliciores*).²²¹ He frequently sought to minister to those perplexed by the issue of predestination and election, although he always affirmed his belief in the doctrines.²²² Bullinger disliked the controversy surrounding the doctrine and sought to avoid it where possible, probably for pastoral reasons.²²³ But he probably also had in mind his continual fear of giving fuel to those who would accuse him

of making God the author of sin.²²⁴

This was Bullinger's chief concern and the basis of his reluctance to get embroiled in the Bolsec affair, much to Calvin's displeasure.²²⁵ Care needs to be taken with regard to interpreting Bullinger's correspondence as a basic disagreement with Calvin's views. He definitely thought that Calvin's more emphatic and expanded statements on reprobation could encourage others to make the charge that God was the author of sin, but there was nothing in the correspondence which directly made that charge or left any fundamental disagreement with Calvin.²²⁶ Bullinger aligned himself with Zwingli's position in *De providentia*, and his own statements on predestination in the correspondence are as unambiguous on double predestination as those in the *Decades*.²²⁷ The same concern to refute the charge that God was the author of sin surfaced in his letter to Traheron (3 March, 1553), but again there was no revision of his views on predestination, election and reprobation.²²⁸

It is inappropriate to argue that Bullinger rejected a decree of reprobation because he affirmed that God was not the author of sin. Calvin was every bit as insistent as Bullinger on denying this.²²⁹ It would be more appropriate to interpret the *Decades'* sermon on sin in the light of these clear, foundational statements of Bullinger on providence, predestination and election, rather than *vice versa*, as Baker suggests.²³⁰ Bullinger did not evade attributing all things to the providence and will of God. He simply affirmed that in the outworking of events God was not guilty of any evil. In replying to 'curious questions' such as why God did not stop Adam from sinning, he merely said, 'Those things whiche are done, are not evell in respecte of God's Providence, will and power, but in respect of Sathan, and our will, whiche rebelleth againste God's will'.²³¹

Again, it should be observed that Bullinger's

citation of 'Biblical passages with universalist overtones' were always in the context of the offer and proclamation of the gospel to the entire world.²³² He emphasized strongly the divine love in making the free offer of the gospel to all without distinction,²³³ but alongside that it was the exercising of faith in Christ which gave some indication in time as to who was eternally elected to life and who was not, because saving faith was 'the pure gift of God which God alone out of his grace, gives...to his elect, through the Holy Spirit'.²³⁴ It is misleading to say that for Bullinger, 'God's election only became binding in history as individuals kept the conditions of the covenant', and more correct to say that it only became *evident* then.²³⁵

In Bullinger's thought the matter of salvation and covenant was as much subordinated to predestination as in Zwingli or Calvin. Any difference was simply a matter of Bullinger emphasizing more, for pastoral reasons, the free offer of the gospel, and faith as the evidence of election together with the duties of man in terms of covenantal conditions. And nowhere can the latter be construed as meritorious or antecedent conditions upon which the covenant of grace and the salvation and favour of God depended. That was *sola fide*, unilaterally bestowed by God. Paul, said Bullinger, made this evident in the *Epistle to the Galatians*: 'If in fact, it should be approved, no one adds anything to the will (testament) of a man, or takes anything away from it. It is most reasonable therefore, that no one should add or take away anything from the covenant of God. Besides, this is the covenant which God has made inviolable, that he wills to bestow the blessing, not on many or through many, but upon the seed of Abraham, through One'.²³⁶

Bullinger had the distinction of being the first to produce a theological treatise on the subject of the covenant and to set it out clearly as the *scopus* of Scripture. Nevertheless, the correspondence of his thought

with that of Zwingli is fairly obvious in his treatment of the idea. He picked up and expanded all the points outlined by Zwingli. Like Zwingli, his main emphasis was on the unity of the covenant and the Testaments, while noting carefully their differences.²³⁷ He clearly enunciated both the unilateral and bilateral elements in the covenant. Certainly there was more stress in Bullinger on the duties of man in the covenant, but this was balanced by his repeated insistence that the sovereign, unilateral bestowal of grace and salvation by God was the chief factor in the covenant. There was no advocacy of the idea of soteriological favour in response to the fulfilment of prior obligations.²³⁸ Like Zwingli, too, there was no specific doctrine of a prelapsarian covenant of works, but here again the implications of Bullinger's teaching on natural law must be considered.

In *In Omnes Apostolicas Epistolas* Bullinger taught that natural law was mandatory for all nations, because man was originally created in the image of God and therefore his law was inscribed upon his heart, teaching him his duty with respect to the will of God.²³⁹ He defined natural law as 'a rule of the conscience, in fact a regulator introduced by God himself into the minds and hearts of men to advise them what they ought to do and what they ought to disregard'.²⁴⁰ Although sin had corrupted human nature, some notions of religious principles, fairness and general good remained, as Paul argued in Romans 2:14-16. For Bullinger there were two principal points of natural law: one was the recognition and worship of God, the other was the preservation of association and friendship between men.²⁴¹ This *lex naturae*, therefore, corresponded to the written law of God in the ten commandments.²⁴²

For Bullinger, the Edenic relationship between God and Adam was one which involved a legal relationship. Adam was under law - not a grievous, burdensome, unreasonable law, for it was given with respect to the

goodness of God, and required responsive obedience and love.²⁴³ In addition to the law written in his heart, Adam was given a verbal commandment. This was not imposed in order to impinge upon man, but was given as an opportunity for Adam to express his gratitude and obedience to his benefactor and to show his subjection to God as the only way to continue to live in perfect happiness and communion with God: 'In fact, God showed him the tree as a sign of that which was imposed by talking about the law, certainly of his obedience to the Lord alone, as the wise and bountiful, excellent, greatest God and Creator.'²⁴⁴ Adam was promised the continuance of life for obedience and the punishment of his sin by death for disobedience. This natural duty of obedience to God was not abolished by the fall. Man still had a creative obligation to frame his life according to the will of his Creator.

Bullinger also pointed out that the promise of life was still attached to perfect obedience to the law. If a man could perfectly satisfy the demands of God's law he would be justified before God. But, of course, since the fall that was only a hypothetical proposition since it was impossible for sinful man to fulfill the law. But Christ fulfilled it and satisfied its demands in all points on behalf of his people, and imputes his perfect obedience and righteousness to them as their own when they lay hold of him by faith.²⁴⁵ Bullinger's amplification of Zwingli in respect of natural law and the Edenic arrangement certainly merits McCoy's description as 'the real beginning of federalism' in Reformed theology.²⁴⁶ The only difference between Bullinger's position and that of later 'covenant theologians' here is the appellation 'covenant of works'.

One other question arises from Bullinger's doctrine of the covenant. In many of the works considered, the covenant was shown to be with the elect, that is, between the believer and God, whereas Bullinger's view of the law as the conditions of the covenant would appear to give it a

much wider application. Also if the sacraments were signs of the covenant and these were for all within the visible Christian community, it would appear that all who were baptised were elect and in the covenant.²⁴⁷ The first of these issues is resolved when it is recognized that Bullinger regarded the obligation of man towards God's law as a natural one quite apart from the covenant of grace, or the role that the law would have within that framework. On the second issue, Bullinger nowhere categorically stated that all within the Christian community were *ipso facto* elect. But all such, especially the infants of believers, were to be regarded as such and were to be granted the sign of the covenant on the basis of the promise of God. The people of God were visibly known either by their profession or by the promise of God.²⁴⁸ It was possible for professions to be made hypocritically or for baptized children to grow up to be hypocrites, thereby demonstrating that they never were elect, but they were to be numbered in the church until it should be otherwise revealed,²⁴⁹ for 'all that are in the church are not of the church' (*non omnes qui sunt in ecclesia sunt ecclesia*).²⁵⁰

Bullinger understood the church in a twofold sense - 'a visible and outward church and another invisible and inward church'.²⁵¹ God's covenant was made externally with the church, but 'belongs properly to the elect members of God, being endued with faith and true obedience, but does not belong to hypocrites, who are destitute of faith and due obedience'.²⁵² Bullinger therefore conceived of a general, outward covenantal sphere identified with the Christian community, and within which all participated in the benefits of the external ordinances of the church, but within that was the covenant of grace proper, internally effected in the lives of the elect of God, who ultimately were known to him alone, but whose faith and manner of life were the identifying marks of election.²⁵³

NOTES: Chapter Seven

- 1 G. Marsden, 'Perry Miller's Rehabilitation', 99-100.
- 2 Oberman, 'Headwaters of the Reformation', 54.
- 3 M. Luther, *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513-1516), W.A. 3-4.462 See WA.40, 41 'et testamentum meum promissiones et pactum'; cf. also 3.508; 4.165, 203, 246. He uses the same covenant terms with respect to faith and the gospel (3.491), and the word of God (3.508). On Luther's education by the Bielites, see Oberman, 'Facientibus', 331; *Masters of the Reformation*, 109-110. (All quotations from Luther, unless otherwise indicated, are from the Wiemar edition (WA) of his works. LW signifies the American edition by Pelikan and Lehman).
- 4 WA, 4.261-262; 4.283.
- 5 Oberman, 'Iustitia Christi', op.cit. 13; Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, 200-211, 267-268; Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz*, 53-59.
- 6 WA., 1.148 'Homo, Dei gratia exclusa, praecepta eius servare nequaquam potest neque se, vel de congruo vel de condigno, ad gratiam praeparare, verum necessario sub peccato manet.' cf. 40'.220-221; and see T.M.McDonough, *The Law and the Gospel in Luther*, (Oxford, 1963), 156-162; Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, (Bloomington, 1986), 47-58.
- 7 WA, 51.502-503 (Rom. 14:1). cf. also 51.201-203 (Rom. 2:14).
- 8 WA, 1.225-226 'Ex parte autem hominis nihil nisi indispositio, immo rebellio gratiae gratiam praecedat...' For further elucidation of this development of thought in Luther, see Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, 63-67.
- 9 WA, 3.629.
- 10 WA, 3.144, 282, 289, 491, 558, 626 (Note here *testamentum*, *pactum*, *foedus* and *bundt* are all used together); 4.40, 41, 49, 165, 201, 203, 344 etc.
- 11 WA, 4.46; cf. LW, 2.193 By contrast the reprobate are rejected inwardly and utterly.
- 12 WA, 57.211 'Testamentum quaedam habet testatoris, quaedam eorum, qui suscipiunt, ita ut quaedam suscipiant, quaedam faciant.'
- 13 WA, 57.213 tr. J. Atkinson, *Luther's Early Theological Works*, LCC XVI, (London, 1962), 177-178.
- 14 WA, 2.733 tr. C.M. Jacobs, LW, 35.37; cf. also 'Rationis Latomianae confutatis', WA, 8.114 'Quia pepigit deus pactum iis, qui sunt hoc modo in Christo, ut si

pugnent contra seipos et peccatum suum, nihil sit damnationis.'

15 WA, 6.361.

16 WA, 2.521 'Ita Iesus Christus, deus immortalis, fecit pactum, idem simul testamentum, quia futurus mortalis: sicut idem deus et homo, ita idem pactum et testamentum.'

17 WA, 6.513-534; cf. also *Eyn Sermon von dem newen Testamentum* (1520), WA, 6.353-378, especially 357.

18 WA, 7.52-53.

19 WA, 16.373, tr. E.T. Bachmann, *LW*, 35.165; cf. WA, 40¹.469 'ut saepe inculco, ista duo, Lex et Promissio, diligentissime distinguenda sunt, Quia tempore, loco, persona et simpliciter omnibus circumstantiis tam longe distant quam coelum et terra, principium mundi et finis.'

20 WA, 40¹.478ff, especially 486; cf. 'Preface to the New Testament' (1522,1546), WA(DDB), 6.9-10; and *Reformation Writings of Martin Luther*, 2 vols. ed. B.L. Woolf, (London, 1952-1956), 2.272-283.

21 WA, 40¹.486 'Augustinus aliqua ex parte illud tenuit ac ostendit.'

22 WA, 40¹.485.

23 WA, 40¹.527-528 'in dextra qui per legem iustificari, in sinistra qui prorsus a lege liberi esse volunt.'

24 WA, 16.627 'si servaveris haec praecepta (quod tamen sine gratia non poterant)...'

25 WA, 40².98 'a lege liberi sumus, modo Spiritu ambulemus.'

26 WA, 7.62-63.

27 WA, 39¹.441; G. Ebling, 'On the Doctrine of the *Triplex usus Legis* in the Theology of the Reformation', *Word and Faith*, trs. J.W. Leith, (London, 1963), 72.

28 WA, 39¹.399, 513.

29 WA, 39¹.474-475.

30 Ebling, *op.cit.*, 78, 77; see also 'Reflections on the Doctrine of the Law', 247-281.

31 WA, 16.380; cf. 57³.210f; and 39¹.353, 361, 406, 437. See also Ebling, *op.cit.* 277ff.

32 WA (DDB), 5.2-12 especially 8 'quaeque ratio pro peccatis non agnoscit.'

33 WA, 42.110-111.

34 WA, 42.121 'quo peccat Heua contra utraque tab^{ll}am et contra ipsum Deum et verbum eius.' Also 42.127-130.

35 A. Polanus, *De Vita Oecolampadii...*, (Basel, 1606).

36 E. Staehelin, ed. *Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oecolampads*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1927-1934; rep. London 1971), 32ff, 44ff, 71ff, 97ff, 222.

37 Letham, 'Saving Faith and Assurance', 39 says that Oecolampadius leans on Zwingli; also Cottrell, 'Covenant and Baptism', 374.

38 Staehelin, *op.cit.*, 200.

39 J. Oecolampadius, 'Oecolampad an Kasper Hedio', in Staehelin, *op.cit.*, 181-190; The same stress can be found in *Das Testament Jesu Christi*, (1523).

40 Oecolampadius, *Sermo de sacramento Eucharistiae* (1523), fol. page marked Aiī

41 *In Iesaiam Prophetam Hypomnematon, hoc est Commentariorum*, (Basel, 1525), 200b-201a (37:15-16) is a good example of this where all three terms are employed. See also *Postremus Tres Prophetas Nempe Haggaeum, Zachariam, et Malachiam, Commentarius*, (Basel, 1527), 75b-76a; *In Hieremiam Prophetam Commentariorum*, ed. W. Capito, (Argentinae, 1533), 164b (31:31) and *In Daniele Prophetam...libro duo*, (Basel, 1530), 119a.

42 Trinterud, 'Origins', 41.

43 Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, 187-189.

44 Oecolampadius, *In Iesaiam*, 265b (54:9-10).

45 *Ibid.*, 268a (55:3).

46 *Ibid.*, 'testamentum enim firmatura est intercedente morte Christi.' See also *In Hieremiam*, 161af (31:31f); *In Prophetam Ezechielem Commentarius*, (Argentorati, 1534), 113 (16:59-63). 207 (34:25f), 214 (36:23f); *In Epistolam B. Pauli Apost. ad Rhomanos Adnotationes*, (Basel, 1525), 76a-77a (9:4); *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos...explanationes*, (Argentorati, 1534), 99-100.

47 *Ibid.*, 285b (60:5-6) 'Praecipuum signum novi foederis, erat spiritus prophetiae, qui apostolis in die pentecostes datus.' See also 255b (51:3-5); *In Ezechielem*, 214b-215a (36:27); *Ad Hebraeos*, 88.

48 *Ibid.*, 150a (24:5) 'Per foedus sempiternum intelligo charitatis legum...Neq; enim novum mandatum hoc est, sed mandatum ab initio. Charitatis autem lex, lex est spiritus.' See also 12b (1:11); *In Epistolam Ioannis Apostoli Catholicam Primam*, (Basel, 1524), 25a-28a, 73bff, 87bff.

49 *Ibid.*, 271aff (56:4ff).

50 *Ibid.*, 9b (1:3), for 8b (error in pagination) 'Haec est apostasia, et derelictio gravissima, foedus cum deo in circuncisione (sic), vel baptismo initum violare.' See also 71b (7:7).

51 *Ibid.*, 271a (56:4); *In Hieremiam*, 164b-163b (31:31-34) (N.B. error in pagination. After page 164b pagination begins again at 161a). Staehelin's suggestion, cited by Baker, that Capito edited too freely and added too much of his own to the *Commentary on Jeremiah* does not apply to Oecolampadius' statements on the covenant, as they are to be found almost *verbatim* in his other works (eg. *In Danielelem*, 118b-121a and *Ad Hebraeos*, 85b-89a). See E. Staehelin, *Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads*, (Leipzig, 1939), 407-408 and Baker, *op.cit.*, 187.

52 Baker, *op.cit.*, 187.

53 Oecolampadius, *In Hieremiam*, 164b-163b (31:31-34). (Error in pagination, see n.51).

54 Baker, *op.cit.*, 186-187.

55 Oecolampadius, *In Hieremiam*, 162a-163b (31:34) (Second pagination, see n.51). See also *Ad Rhomanos*, 37b-45b (ch.4) and *Ad Hebraeos*, 88b; and *Oecolampadius and Zwingli*, 104a-108b, where Oecolampadius clearly spoke of one covenant with different modes of administration according to the times.

56 *Ibid.*, 164b-163b (31:31-34). (Err.in pag., see n.51).

57 *In Iesaiam*, 200b-201a (37:16); *In Danielelem*, 118b-121a.

58 *Ibid.*, 9a-9b (1:3).

59 *Ibid.*, 23b (2:2); cf. *Enarratio in Euangelium Matthaei*, (Basel, 1536), 1a; and *D.D. Iohannis Oecolampadii et Huldrychi Zwinglii Epistolarum, libri quator*, (Basel, 1536), 107b 'Idem enim testamenti et foedus, hoc est, eadem Dei misericordia mundo per filium eius promissa, saluum facit Adam, Noam, Abraham, Mosen, David; quod et Petram, Paulum, Ananias, Gamalielelem et Stephanum saluos fecit.'

60 See n.48; cf. *Postremus Tres Prophetas*, 75b-76b, 80a and *In Danielelem*, 120a.

61 Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 374.

62 A number of general works on Zwingli are available, including O. Farner, *Zwingli the Reformer*, (Archon, 1968); U. Gäbler, *Huldrych Zwingli. Eine Einführung in sein Leben und sein Werk*, (Munich, 1983); G.W. Locher, *Die Zwinglische Reformation in Rahmen der europäischen Kirchengeschichte*, (Göttingen, 1979); G.R. Potter, *Zwingli*, (Cambridge, 1976); J. Rilliet, *Zwingli: Third Man of the Reformation*, (London, 1964); W.P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, (Oxford, 1986). Some which show specific interest in Zwingli's covenant thought include Cottrell, 'Covenant and Baptism'; G.W. Locher, 'The Change in the Understanding of Zwingli in Recent Research', *CH*, 34. (1965), 3-24; 'The Shape of Zwingli's

Theology: A Comparison with Luther and Calvin', *Pittsburgh Perspective*, 8. (1967), 5-26; *Huldrych Zwingli in neuer Sicht*, (Zurich, 1969); *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives*, (Leiden, 1981); R.C. Walton, *Zwingli's Theocracy*, (Toronto, 1967). An excellent reference work on Zwingli is U. Gäbler, *Ulrich Zwingli im 20. Jahrhundert*, (Zurich 1975).

63 J.B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract', 62.

64 Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 17.

65 Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund*, 36-37; Blanke, ed. *Zwingliana*, 5.268; P.J. Klassen, 'Zwingli and the Zurich Anabaptists', *Gottesreich und Menschenreich*, ed. M. Geiger, (Basel, 1969); Moltmann, 'Föderaltheologie', 190; Møller, 'The Beginnings', 47; Barth, *CD*, 4'.56; Steinmetz, *Reformers in the Wings*, (Michigan, 1971), 136. The latter says that 'Zwingli only dealt with the idea of covenant incidently in the context of the discussion of infant baptism'.

66 Zuck, 'Anabaptist Revolution', 273, 274.

67 Major works on the Anabaptists include G.R. Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, (Philadelphia, 1962); G.R. Williams and A.M. Mergals, eds. *Spiritualist and Anabaptist Writers*, (Philadelphia, 1957); W.R. Estep, *Anabaptist Beginnings: A Source Book*, (Nieuwkoop, 1976); Zuck, *Christianity and Revolution: Radical Christian Testimonies 1520-1650*, (Philadelphia, 1975); J.M. Stayer and W.O. Packull, eds. *The Anabaptists and Thomas Muntzer*, (Toronto, 1980); L. Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, (Grand Rapids, 1964); M. Leinhard, ed. *The Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism*, (The Hague, 1977); C-P. Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History 1525-1618*, (Cornell, 1972); H.J. Goertz, ed. *Profiles of Radical Reformers*, (Pennsylvania, 1982); A. Friesen, *Reformation and Utopia*, (Wiesbaden, 1974); E.A. Payne, 'The Anabaptists', *The New Cambridge Modern History*, (Cambridge, 1968), 2.119-133. There are numerous other works of a specialist nature and most accounts of the Reformation in Europe carry a section on the radical reformers. *The Mennonite Encyclopaedia*, 4 vols. (Scottsdale, Pa. 1955-1959) is an invaluable source of information on the Anabaptist/Mennonite movement.

68 Zuck, *op.cit.*, 86-87; Williams, *Radical Reformation* 428.

69 Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 51, 55-58, 60, 75-77, 161, 413.

70 *Ibid.*, 297; cf. 362-386, 455.

71 Potter, *Zwingli*, 160ff; Walton, *op.cit.*, 176-208, 222ff; Locher, 'The Change' 19; Stephens, *op.cit.* 38.

72 Williams, *Radical Reformation*, 119f.

73 C. Burrage, *The Church Covenant Idea*; W. Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, (Boston, 1950); W. Klassen, *Covenant and Community*, (Grand Rapids, 1968).

74 Williams, *op.cit.*, 119, 153-154, 161-162, 171-173, 300-319, 396, 413.

75 A good example is Melchior Hofman, *The Ordinance of God* (1530), in Williams and Mergal, *op.cit.*, 184-203. See also Sebastian Franck, *A Letter to John Campanus* (1531), *Ibid.*, 145-160; and Balthasar Hubmaier, *On Free Will* (c.1527), *Ibid.*, 114-135.

76 Williams, *op.cit.*, 466-476; *Mennonite Encl.*, 1.598f; 3.491-502.

77 Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 17, 82; Locher, *Zwingli in neuer sicht*, 97.

78 *Ibid.*, 18-81.

79 *Ibid.* 22-29, 34-36.

80 Walton, *op.cit.*, 79, 106, 117ff.

81 Locher, 'Zwingli in neuer sicht', 97.

82 H. Zwingli, *Supplicatio...ad R.D. Hugonem*, in *Opera* 3.19 'Hinc quandoquidem ut prefati sumus deus, velut olim per prophetas suos aliis atque aliis temporibus Israel admonere solitus est, nostra nos tempestate Evangelio suo illustrare dignatur, ut testamentum suum, quod aboleri non potest, instauraret, occasionem hanc duximus minime negligendum esse, quin perpetuo conatu laborandum potius, ut quam plurimi salutis huius et splendoris participes fiant.' All citations from Zwingli, unless otherwise stated, are taken from *Zwingli Opera*, 8 vols. eds. M. Schuler and J. Schulthess, (Zurich, 1829-1842).

83 *Amica et Pia Paraenesis ad Communem Helvetiorum*, in *Opera*, 1.42ff; *Huldrici Zvinglii Epistola ad Erasmus Fabricium* (1522), in *Opera* 3.12ff; *Apolegeticus Archeteles* (1522), in *Opera* 3.52-53.

84 *Expositio et Confirmatio Articulorum Sive Conclusionum* (1523), in *Opera*, 1.264 'Testamentum, pactum, et foedus promiscue alterum pro altero in scripturis ponuntur; testamentum tamen magis accipitur ea significatione quae nobis huc servit pro legatione hereditatis. Nihilo minus capitur alias pro foedere et pacto quod homines inter sese pacis gratia feriunt; ut quum dicimus vetus testamentum, novum testamentum: intelligimus enim pactum quod vel cum patribus olim vel posterioribus seculis cum toto mundo per Christum ferit deus.' See also *Brevis Isagoge*, in *Opera*, 1.578ff; and *Brevis Commemoratio Mortis Christi*, in *Opera*, 6².8-10.

85 *Opera*, 1.265 'sic dum Christus nobis testamentum ex gratia dedisset, ut per ipsum essemus filii et heredes

dei'; cf. 1.267-268; 1.578ff; *Elenchus contra Catabaptistas*, in *Opera*, 3.420, 422.

86 Hagen, 'Testament to Covenant', 17; cf. Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 50-58, 96-97, 159-172; Stoute, *op.cit.* 81-91; Stephens, *op.cit.*, 206-207; Baker, *op.cit.*, 2-3.

87 See n.84; also *Opera*, 1.267 'hic potius est novum testamentum vel foedus.'

88 Letham, 'Saving Faith', 23.

89 Hagen, *op.cit.*, 17.

90 Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 72-81; Stoute, *op.cit.*, 75-91; Hagen, *op.cit.*, 17.

91 G.W. Bromiley, ed. *Zwingli and Bullinger*, LCC XXIV, (London, 1953), 127; Zwingli, *Opera*, 2.365.

92 Zwingli, *Opera*, 1.267f.

93 *Opera*, 1.372 'Nam deus et naturae lex (quae ipsa nihil aliud est nisi voluntas dei).'

94 *Opera*, 1.371; cf. 3.424f; 4.110-111.

95 *Opera*, 1.373 'ad caritatis et naturae legem (quae duae una lex sunt).' See also *De vera et falsa religione*, in *Opera*, 3.203ff.

96 *Opera*, 1.374 'ut quamproxime ad divinam legem eam omnesque leges suas dirigant.'

97 *Opera*, 1.459; cf. 1.567f; 3.86-89.

98 *CR*, 89.649 'Ietz hand zwo erlösungen vom gsatz. Eine ist von ceremonien, das ist: zünswereken oder kilchengespänsten. Die ander ist von der straff unser missthat.'

99 Locher, 'The Shape', 21; Stephens, *op.cit.*, 164-167.

100 Zwingli, *CR*, 89.654; cf. also *Opera*, 1.555-557, 566ff; 3.203ff; and *De Providentia Dei*, in *Opera*, 4.102.

101 *Opera*, 1.231 'Evangelium ergo illud voco, quod deus vel ab hominibus exigit vel quod ipse eis manifestat. Omnino enim, quum deus voluntatem suam hominibus ostendit et exponit, exhilarantur quicumque deum amant. Iis ergo bonum nuntium est. Propter hos ergo Evangelium etiam legem voco. Potius autem Evangelium voco quam legem, quod acquius videatur sortiri a piis quam ab impiis, et quod sic de Evangelio loqui controversiam de lege et Evangelio plane dirimit.' See also 1.322 and 1.229, 334, 326.

102 *Opera*, 4.124.

103 For accounts of the Anabaptist conflict in Zurich, see Williams, *op.cit.*, 118-148; Potter, *op.cit.*, 160-197; Gäbler, *op.cit.*, 125-131; Stephens, *op.cit.*, 194-217; H.S. Bender, *Conrad Grebel 1498-1526: Founder of the Swiss Brethren*, (Scottsdale, Pa. 1950); J.H. Yoder, 'The Turning

Point in the Zwinglian Reformation', *MQR*, 32. (1958), 128-140; R.S. Armour, *Anabaptist Baptism: A Representative Study*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, vol.2. (Scottsdale, Pa. 1966).

104 Zwingli, *Opera*, 3.145-325; 2.230-303; 2.337-369; 3.357-437; 3.563-588.

105 *Opera*, 5.14-16, 67, 75; 6.135-136, 148f, 381; 6².91, 194-195.

106 *Subsidium de Eucharistia*, in *Opera*, 3.352 'Novum testamentum...nihil aliud est quam conditio a Deo promissa. Ut quum Dominus cum Abrahamo ferit pactum, sive foedus...Hic nihil auditur quam foedus, quod Deus per gratiam suam dignatus est inire cum Abrahamo.' cf. also 2.346, 363-369.

107 *Opera*, 2.369.

108 *Opera*, 3.396ff. See also *Antwort...Hubmaier*, in *Opera*, 2.364; *Amica Exegesis*, in *Opera*, 3.550; and *Annotationes in Genesin*, in *Opera*, 5.45,75.

109 *Opera*, 3.414.

110 *Opera*, 3.415 'Cum illo (ie.Abraham) foedus quod cum Adamo pepigerat renovat, et clarius reddit: quanto enim propius accederet tempus adventus filii sui, tanto apertius cum illis loquebatur.' cf. also 5.679.

111 *Opera*, 3.420 'Salvatorem igitur unum eundemque nobiscum habentes unus nobiscum atque nos cum illis populus sumus, una ecclesia: etiamsi prisci isti dudum ante nos in vineam vinerint.' See also *De Peccato Originali Declaratio* (1526), where the same arguments regarding the covenant are followed through from Adam to Christ (*Opera*, 3.637-645).

112 *Opera*, 3.423 'Cum ergo unus sit atque immutabilis deus et unum solummodo testamentum; nos autem qui Christo fidimus in eodem testamento simus: sequitur quod deus perinde est deus noster sicut fuit Abrahami deus, et quod nos perinde sumus populus eius, sicut Israëliticus populus eius fuit.'

113 Møller, 'The Beginnings', 47.

114 Locher, 'The Change', 19.

115 Zwingli, *Opera*, 3.370-375.

116 *Opera*, 1.287, 552ff, 629ff esp.639f; 6².92-94.

117 eg. In *Catabaptistarum strophas elenchus*, where the main emphasis was on unity, he paused to ask, 'Quid ergo discriminis est inter vetus ac novum testamentum?' He replies, 'Plurimum...atque minimum', and goes on to list six differences (*Opera*, 3.422-423).

118 *Opera*, 2.368; 3.352, 354, 413, 419, 423, 557, 639-644; 5.69, 71.

- 119 *Opera*, 3.231-232.
- 120 *Opera*, 3.352-354.
- 121 Cottrell, *op.cit.*, 272; Baker, *op.cit.*, 2-3.
- 122 Trinterud, *op.cit.*, 41; Møller, *op.cit.*, 47-48; Hagen, *op.cit.*, 15ff; Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*. Clebsch's basic thesis (following Trinterud) is that it was Tyndale's adoption of a law-covenant-contract theology as exemplified in the Rhineland/Zurich reformers that signalled his break from Luther. See 114-115, 147 n.14, 180-204, 313; Greaves, 'Origins', 23-24.
- 123 Zwingli, *Opera*, 3.352 'Testamentum quod ad praesens adinet, nihil aliud est quam conditio a Deo promissa. Ut quum Dominus cum Abrahamo ferit pactum, sive foedus... Hic nihil auditur quam foedus, quod Deus per gratiam suam dignatus est inire cum Abrahamo. Quid vero continet hoc foedus? quibus conditionibus statuitur? Hae sunt ergo conditines: Ego ero Deus tuus: Tu ambulabis coram me integerrime. Quae quidem conditiones verum ipsum foedus sunt. Sed adduntur foederibus signa quae, tametsi foederum quoque nominibus vocentur, non tamen foedera sunt, ut eodem loco manifeste potest...' cf. 2.364-365, 369; 5.67ff, 95-96. This bilateral element with respect to infant baptism is also seen in *Von der Taufe*, in *Opera*, 2.243-246.
- 124 *Opera*, 3.415 'Nunc ergo si audiendo audieritis vocem meam, et foedus meum custodieritis...'
- 125 Greaves, 'Origins', *op.cit.* 24; Trinterud, 'The Origins', 45.
- 126 Zwingli, *Opera*, 7.550 'Signum enim electionis est, Deum amare ac metuere.'
- 127 *Opera*, 4.121, 124 etc.
- 128 Locher, 'The Shape', 22.
- 129 *Ibid.*; also *New Perspectives*, 126f.
- 130 Zwingli, *Opera*, 3.418-419.
- 131 *Opera*, 3.424-425.
- 132 *Opera*, 3.426-429.
- 133 *Opera*, 3.428 'Verbum enim istud, quod in fodere, testamento ac populo dei sunt, electionis eorum nos certus facit, donec dominus quid de aliquo aliud nunciet.'
- 134 Baker, *op.cit.*, 166, 181. See also 20-21.
- 135 *Ibid.*, 181.
- 136 Cottrell, 'Covenant and Baptism', 407; 'Is Bullinger the Source for Zwingli's Doctrine of the Covenant?', *Heinrich Bullinger 1504-1575*, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zum 400. Todestag vol.1. Leben und Werk*, eds. U. Gäbler und E. Herkenrath, (Zurich, 1975), 75-83; Further discussion in

H. Fast, 'Research Notes on the Beginning of Bernese Anabaptism', *MQR*, 31. (1957), 292-293; and Baker, *op.cit.*, 4-25.

137 H. Bullinger, *Von Warer und falscher leer, altem und nūwe, glouben und bruch der Eucharistien oder Mesz* (1527), cited by J. Staedtke, *Die Theologie des jungen Bullinger*, (Zurich, 1962), and Cottrell, 'Is Bullinger the Source?', 76-77. For opposite point of view implying reliance of Zwingli on Bullinger, see Williams, *Radical Ref.* 131.

138 Baker, *op.cit.*, 5-19.

139 *Ibid.*, 5, 15.

140 *Ibid.*, 5-6.

141 Zwingli, *Opera*, 1.42.

142 Stoute, *op.cit.*, 135.

143 Bullinger, *Epistola ad Rudolphum Asper de Scripturae Negotio*, fol. 46-48, cited by Baker *op.cit.*, 4-5.

144 H. Bullinger an Heinrich Simler von dem Touff, Nov/Dec 1525, cited by Baker, *op.cit.*, 5-8. See also *Adversus Anabaptistas, Libri VI*. Books IV and VI discuss the unity of faith and baptism, 117a-153b, 215a-218a; *Catechesis pro Adultioribus scripta*, 55a, 64b.

145 *Von dem Touff*, fol. 75v.

146 *Ibid.*, fol. 78v. This is similar to Zwingli.

147 *Ibid.*, fol. 75v, 76v. Baker unconvincingly attempts to play down the mention of human obligations in Zwingli here (*op.cit.*, 8, 16, 224 n.31) He says, 'For Zwingli the fulfilment of the human obligation was not a condition in the literal sense - it demonstrated the prior faith that was a gift to the elect'. The question is: Did not Bullinger regard faith in the same way? See *Decades*, 11b, 14a-14b, 139a, 218a-218b, 374b (PS 1.84-85, 97-98, 100-101, 2.151, 3.189-192, 4.18-19); *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XVI.2.

148 *Antwort an Burchard* (1527/1528), cited by Baker, *op.cit.*, 11-14.

149 Stoute, *op.cit.*, 156ff; Bullinger, *Decades*, 202b-203b (PSoc.4.115-122).

150 Bullinger, *Decades*, 121aff (PSoc. 2.169ff).

151 eg. *Isaias...expositus Homiliis CXC*, 159b, 277b, 319b; *Ad Romanos*, 72a-91b; *Ad Galatas*, 57-59 Note here also the interchangeable use of *pactum* and *foedus* in relation to the covenant with Abraham; *Ad Hebraeos* 6a-8a Here the word does not occur in the outline of his argument.

152 eg. *Adversus omnia Catabaptistarum prava dogmata*, (Zurich, 1535). In this work there is only brief use of

the terms *foedus* and *pactum* in introducing a lengthy discussion between Simon and Ioiada on infant baptism. The covenant idea is used more in two sections of his larger work *Adversus Anabaptistas Libri VI*, (Zurich, 1560), (1561?), to argue the unity of the faith in both Testaments in Bk.IV.117a-153b, and in relation to baptism in Bk.VI.

153 *Confessio Helvetica Posterior* (1566), in Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.233-306.

154 M.W. Karlberg, 'Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant', *WTJ*, 43. (1980), 11.

155 Bullinger, *De Testamento seu foedere Dei unico et aeterno...brevis expositio*, (Zurich, 1534), 2b-3b; cf. *Daniel...expositus Homiliis LXVI*, (Zurich 1565), 108a.

156 *Ibid.*, 3b 'pepigit aut foedus iniiit derivat.'

157 *Decades*, 121a; *Isaias*, 113b, 319b; *Ieremias* 187b-189b; *Daniel* 108a-109a; *Adversus Omnia Catabaptistarum* 55; *In Omnes Apostolicas Epistolas* I.370, 693-694; *Compendium Christianae Religionis* 6b-7b; *Ratio Studiorum* 29b-30a, 90b-91a.

158 *De Testamento*, 4a-4b; cf. *Decades*, 121a, 315b (PSoc. 2.169; 4.245).

159 *Ibid.*, 5a 'Deus hominum more foedus nobiscum pepigerit'; cf. *Catechesis pro adultioribus*, 6b.

160 *Ibid.*, 6a 'Deus aeternus, ipsum foedus primus offert, nullis ad hominum meritis adactus, sed mera et nativa bonitate impulsus.'

161 *Ibid.*, 6a-7b 'Such undeserved goodness awes us to silence'. Bullinger quotes Salustius: 'Satius esse silere quam parca dicere'. This unilateral stress is to be found in practically all of Bullinger's works dealing with the covenant. cf. *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.370-371; *De gratia Dei iustificante*, (Zurich, 1554), 5b-6a etc.

162 *Ibid.*, 11b-16a.

163 *Ibid.*, 14a 'Atque ille idem illa ipsa haereditas est quae hoc Dei unico et aeterno testamento credentibus legate est.' cf. *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.386, 693-695.

164 *Ibid.*, 14b.

165 *Ibid.*, 15a-15b 'uni mihi toto corde adhaereto...vitam tuam per omnia ad voluntatem meam.'

166 *A Confession of Fayth*, (London, [1566]), 39a-40a.

167 *De Testamento*, 16a-52a.

168 *Ibid.*, 47b-48a 'Verum istis longe vetustior est Christiana.'

169 *Ibid.*, 50a 'fidem Abrahae, Adae et Christi fuisse eandem.'

170 *Der alt gloub*, (Zurich, 1537), Eng. trs. M. Coverdale, *Writings and Translations of Myles Coverdale*, (Cambridge, 1844), 13-83, from which translations are taken. cf. also *Compendium Christianae Religionis* 2a-2b; *Isaias*, 113b; *Ieremias*, 187a; *Catechesis pro adultioribus*, 7a.

171 *De Testamento*, 16a-17a.

172 *Ibid.*, 11b 'Deus itaque qui in hoc foedere primas obtinet, primo fuus exponit depromitque ingenium, qualem se nobis praestare velit.' See Baker, *op.cit.*, 17.

173 *Catechesis pro adultioribus*, 6b. See Baker, *op.cit.*, 137-138.

174 *Isaias*, 277b 'Hae inquam foederis summae...ut immensam Dei notaret misericordiam erga homines peccatores gratiaque divinae copiam amplissimam.'

175 *Ieremias*, 13a-14a, 18a-20, 188b 'Et gratia Dei et propitatio praecipuum illud est testamenti vel foederis novi.'

176 *Ratio Studiorum*, 89aff; cf. 29b-31a.

177 *De Testamento*, 17b 'Quin ipse Decalogus conditionum foederis veluti paraphrasis quaedam esse videtur.'

178 *Ibid.*, 18a-20a. The same argument is followed in the *Decades*, 39a-39b (PSoc. 209-212); *Matthaeum Commentariorum*, 54b-55a; and *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XII.1-2.

179 *Ibid.*, 29a-29b.

180 *A Confession of Fayth*, 55b, also 89aff.

181 *De Testamento*, 30a 'Christi mysterium hisce velut typis involueret'; cf. *Decades*, 139b-141a (PSoc. 252ff).

182 *Ibid.*, 28b, 31b; cf. *Decades*, 148a (PSoc. 2.293-294); *Ieremias*, 187b; *Ratio Studiorum*, 91b-92a.

183 *Ibid.*, 28b-29a 'non ut perpetua et unice ad salutem necessaria.'

184 *Ibid.*, 28b 'sine quibus ipsum foedus facile subsisteret.'

185 *Ibid.*, 31a-31b.

186 *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 129b 'Certissimum etiam est, decem praecepta, et omnia ea quibus in veteri Testamento seu lege fides et charitas docetur, nunquam abrogari posse.' cf. also *Compendium Christianae Religionis* 38aff esp. 59b-60b; *Catechesis pro adultioribus*, 27b-28a; *Daniel*, 109a-109b; *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XII.4.

187 *De Testamento*, 32a; cf. *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.376-379.

188 *Ibid.*, 'Carnale enim dicitur quod legalibus sine scientia et spiritu adhaeret'; cf. 33b-37b.

189 *A Confession of Fayth*, 34b; cf. *Ieremias*, 188a *Der alt gloub*, 46 'All they that pleased God among the Fathers, pleased him not for the letter's sake, but by reason of the Spirit.'

190 *De Testamento*, 26b-28a, 30b, 37b, 40b, 41b.

191 *Ibid.*, 32b 'Proinde habuit quoque vetustas Israëlem spiritualem.'

192 *Ibid.*, 33a-34a; cf. 20a-21a.

193 *Ibid.*, 34b 'Spiritus quoque idem est utrisque'; cf. 25b 'Unicum ergo testamentum est et una omnium ante et post Christum sanctorum ecclesia'; *Decades*, 145b-149b (PSoc. 2.283-300) Here Bullinger outlines in detail the similarities and differences between the O.T. and the N.T. and their peoples: 'Idem certe populus, idem testamentum, eadem ecclesia, eademque doctrina, eadem fides, idem spiritus, eodem spes, haereditas et expectatio, eadem invocatio et eadem sacramenta' (pp.145b-146a PS 2.283). There is an almost identical statement in *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 130b-131a. The one Catholic church of Christ in the covenant of salvation consists of 'all the saints and the elect of God' from the whole world, including Adam, the Patriarchs, the priesthood and thousands of other eminent men of the Old Testament. See also *Ad Galatas*, 50ff; *Daniel*, 11b-15b, 108a-109a; *A Confession of Fayth*, 34b-35b.

194 *Ibid.*, 41b-44b.

195 *Ibid.*, 21b 'Christus obsignatio et viva confirmatio foederis...Deus verum assumpsit hominem...toto orbi maximum illud attestatus est mysterium, quod scilicet Deus hominem in foedus et consortium admisit.'

196 *Ibid.*, 23a-24a.

197 *Ibid.*, 34b-35b.

198 *Decades*, 137a (PSoc. 2.241); cf. *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.373ff.

199 *De Testamento*, 35b-36a; cf. *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 125b where Christ is described as the true interpreter of God's law in contrast to the Pharisees.

200 *Ibid.*, 36a-36b; cf. *Decades*, 136b-138a (PSoc. 2.238-245) This is Bullinger's classic statement on the *tertius usus legis*. It is a looking-glass to reveal sin, a regulator for the life of the godly, and a repressor of the unruly: 'Proinde hac ratione lex speculum quoddam est, in quo contemplamur nostra corruptionem, imbecillitatem, impotentiam, imperfectionem, indicum nostrum, id est instam nostram condemnationem...Secundus usus et alterum officium legis est docere, quid sequantur vel quid fugiant

iustificati in fide per Christum, et quomodo pii rite colant deum...Tertius usus divinae legis est coercere petulantes, et quos nulla commovet ratio, eos iubet suppliciis constringere, ut conservetur honestas et pax atque tranquillitas publica'; see also *Ad Galatas*, 38bff; *A Confession of Fayth*, 30b; *De Gratia dei iustificante*, 55b; *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 126b where the 'Tertium usum habet lex in ecclesia' is described also in terms of understanding exactly what is the will of God: 'per eam exacte voluntatem dei cognoscamus'; and *Der alt gloub*, 43 'The law...is also a rule of life, informing us what we ought to do and what we ought to leave undone.'

201 *Ibid.*, 23b-24a.

202 *Ibid.*, 24a-24b.

203 *Ibid.*, 38a-38b The full quote from Oecolampadius is to be found in *Hieremiam* 162 (second pagination; see n.51) and reads: 'Apud Deum unum est foedus illud aeternum, quod pro diversitate temporum varie disponitur. Et in interioribus quoque hominis semper unum fuit et usque manebit, not solum ut est in aeterna praedestinatio'.

204 *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.694; *Decades*, 14b (PSoc. 1.97-98).

205 *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, X; cf. *A Confession of Fayth*, 13b.

206 *Decades*, 121aff (PSoc. 2.169ff).

207 *Ibid.*, 121b 'Deus inquam vivus, eternus, omnipotens ac summus rerum conditor, conservator et moderator' (PSoc. 2.170).

208 *Ibid.*, 214b-217b quote 216a (PSoc. 3.173-184); cf. *Ratio Studiorum*, 92a-92b. Barth recognized this CD, 11².81-88.

209 *Ibid.*, 216a-216b (PSoc. 3.181-184); 217a (PSoc. 3.184).

210 *Ibid.*, 217a 'Non minus consolatur pios dei cultores, doctrina de Praescientia et Praedestinatione dei, quae cum Providentia cognationem quandam habent...Praedestinatio autem decretum dei aeternum est, quo destinavit homines vel servare vel perdere, certissimo vitae et mortis termino prefixo. Unde et praefinitio alicubi eadem appellatur' (PSoc. 3.185). cf. *A Confession of Fayth*, 15a 'For God...hath appointed an ende for every thing, even he hath ordeined also both the beginnyng and meanes, by the whiche he may come to the ende.'

211 *Ibid.*, 217a 'Caeterum ab aeterno immutabili consilio praefinivit deus, qui salvari, quive damnari debeant. Finis autem, sive decretum vitae et mortis breve est et omnibus piis perspicuum' (PSoc. 3.186).

212 *Ibid.*, 217b 'Praedestinatio dei nulla innititur aut movetur vel dignitate vel indignitate nostra: sed ex mera gratia et misericordia dei patris, in solum respicit Christum...Nam hallucinantur qui existimant praedestinari a deo ad vitam salvandos propter merita vel bona opera quae in ipsis providet deus' (PSoc. 3.186,187-188).

213 *Ibid.*

214 *A Confession of Fayth*, 13b, 25a; cf. *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, X.

215 *Decades*, 218a-218b 'Omnia enim salutis nostrae gratiae sunt divinae, nihil nostrum est praeter opprobrium' (PSoc. 3.189-192); cf. 168b-169b (PSoc. 2.393-396); *A Confession of Fayth*, 30b; and *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XVI.2,6.

216 *A Confession of Fayth*, 17a, 20b, 36a; cf. *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XIV.1-2.

217 N. Pettit, *The Heart Prepared*, (New Haven, 1966), 38.

218 Bullinger, *Decades*, 122b 'Idem confert et auget spem et charitatem in fide, et deo coniungi et cohaerere possimus in aeternum' (PSoc. 2.174).

219 *Ibid.*, 139a 'Caeteram fides illa qua credimus Christum satisfecisse legi, et ipsum esse iustitiam et perfectionem nostram, neque ex natura neque ex nostris existit meritis, sed ex gratia dei infunditur per spiritum sanctum, qui datur in corda nostra' (PSoc. 2.251).

220 *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XVI.7-8.

221 *Decades*, 217b (PSoc. 3.187).

222 eg. *Fundamentum Firmum*, (Zurich, 1563), *passim*.

223 *Summa Christenlicher Religion*, ai(v)-aiv; see Baker, *op.cit.*, 50.

224 *Decades*, 162a-164a (PSoc. 2.361-370).

225 Calvin, 'Calvinus Farello', (8 Dec. 1551) and 'Calvinus Bullingero', *CR*, 42.218-219, 251-254.

226 *CR*, 42.214-215. It is more a question of emphasis and expression. Bullinger's complaint is that Calvin's stronger emphasis on the will of God in relation to the reprobate exposes him more to the charge of making God the author of sin. Bullinger did not want to stress the exercise of the will of God, although his statements undoubtedly imply that the reprobate were 'predestined to death'. The controversy had pushed Calvin into emphasizing the will of God in this respect. In Reformed theology the question of where the divine will and human responsibility meet always remains in tension. It is generally agreed that the problem is resolved in God himself. Given the revelation he has, man must acknowledge the divine will in relation to the destinies of men, but also insist on the

free offer of the gospel to all and that God is not the author of sin. Unregenerate man is responsible for his own destruction. Stressing the divine will in relation to the reprobate, Calvin left the resolution of this problem back in the 'secret will' of God. Bullinger, on the other hand, felt it better not to speak too loudly of the destiny of the reprobate in terms of the active will of God, but rather leave that to be manifest in due course by their rejection of the gospel. But the important thing is that Bullinger is not denying the predestinating will of God in this respect. Care needs to be taken, therefore, not to present Bullinger's position in terms of paradox and logical inconsistency over against Calvin's 'logically rigorous statements'. For Calvin, just as much as for Bullinger, there is a point where logic breaks down and the resolution of apparently contradictory positions must be accepted by faith as something that lies outside the domain of revelation and cannot be reached by human logic and wisdom. For example, in *Concerning Offences*, Calvin stated that it was 'as much as our capacitie could beare, and as much as was for our behoofe' that the Lord had revealed in Scripture the election of some from a 'forlorne' humanity to be redeemed to life, and all others 'ordayned before to everlastinge damnation'. He then warned, 'To proceed any further if it were lawful, yet were it not expedient' (p.46) See also C.P. Venema, 'Heinrich Bullinger's Correspondence on Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination', *SJT*, 17. (1986), 448; Calvin, *Inst.*, III.23.4-5. It is not so much that 'Bullinger and Calvin differed in their understanding of the doctrine of predestination', but rather it is more of a difference in their understanding of how the doctrine of predestination should be presented (contra Venema p.450). Venema's article is most helpful in demonstrating both the role of the divine will and human responsibility in Bullinger's view, although he does tend to push the interpretation of the latter too far; eg. when he suggests that Bullinger did not regard the number of the elect as 'fixed and inviolate' (p.447). For the rest of the correspondence see 'Bullingerus Calvino', (20 Feb.1552), *CR*, 42.289-290; 'Calvinus Bullingero', (13 Mar.1552), *Ibid.*, 301-305; 'Bullingerus Calvino', (n.d.) *Ibid.*, 510-511. In the latter Bullinger indicates that he is happy to subscribe to what Calvin has written on the subject. In all liklihood this is a reference to *De aeterna Dei praedestinatione*, which Calvin completed in Jan. 1552 and is probably the work sent to Bullinger with the March letter (see *CR*, 36.249-366).

227 Bullinger, 'Bullingerus Calvino', (1 Dec.1551), *CR*, 42.214-215; *Aphorismi de praedestinatione* (1559), *CR*, 42.210 'Quae dicta sane (sunt?) de praedestinatione, de electione, et reprobatione, quae sunt actiones sanctissimae voluntatis Dei.'

228 'Bullingerus Traheroni', (3 Mar.1553), *CR*, 42.480-490
'Praedestinatio, praeordinatio aut praefinitio illa Dei ordinato est qua ab aeterno in certum finem omnia, inprimis autem hominem omnium dominum destinavit, idque sancto et iusto suo consilio, iudicio decretove. Iam et electo Dei ab aeterno est qua quidem alios ad vitam elegit, alios ad interitum. Electionis et praedestinationis causa non est alia quam bona et iusta Dei voluntas indebite salvantis electos, debite autem damnantis et reicientas reprobos' (p.487).

229 Calvin, *De aeterna predestinatione*, *CR*, 36.352ff (Ried 169ff) ' quomodo Dei voluntas rerum omnium quae in mundo geruntur causa sit: neque tamen malorum auctor sit Deus'; *Articuli de Praedestinatione*, *CR*, 37.714 (*Theological Treatises*, ed. Reid, 179-180); *Inst.*, III.23.2-5; I.17.3-5; *Com.on Gen.*, 25:29; *Com. on John*, 6.40.

230 Baker, *op.cit.*, 31-32; also Venema, *op.cit.*, 449-450.

231 Bullinger, *A Confession of Fayth*, 19b.

232 Baker, *op.cit.*, 33 does not observe this. See *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 141a, where Bullinger spoke of the grace and Spirit of God being abundantly distributed throughout the whole world (*In nove item testamento gratia et spiritus dei abundantius per totum terrarum orbem distributus fuit*). But this does not imply a covenant for each and every man. The context shows that he is contrasting the limitation of the old to the Jews, whereas the new reaches out to all nations. cf. *A Confession of Fayth*, 30a; and *Ieremias*, 188b. In his *Matthaeum Commentariorum*, 187b Bullinger quite clearly agreed with Jerome that the ransom which Christ gave was not for all, but for many, ie. those who believe - 'Non dixit pro omnibus, ait, sed pro multis, id est, pro his qui credere voluerint.'

233 Bullinger, *Adversus Anabaptistas*, 211b.

234 *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XVI.2.

235 Baker, *op.cit.*, 53.

236 Bullinger, *Decades*, 18a 'Testamento hominis, siquidem sit comprobatum, nemo addit aut adimit aliquid. Aequissimus ergo est, ne quis dei testamento aut addat aut adimat aliquid. Ceterum hoc est testamentum quod sancivit deus, quod benedictionem semini Abrahae, non in multis aut per multos, sed per unum conferre velit' (PSoc. 1.113).

237 *Ibid.*, 148a-149b (PSoc. 2.293-300); cf. *Ieremias*, 187b.

238 *contra Greaves*, 'Origins', 24-25.

239 Bullinger, *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.24; *Ad Romanos*, 17a-19a, 40a-41a.

240 *Decades*, 36a 'Lex naturae est dictamen conscientiae adeoque directio quaedam ab ipso deo hominum animis et cordibus insita, admones quid vel facient vel omittant' (PSoc. 1.194).

241 *Ibid.*, 36a-36b 'Alterum, deum agnoscito et colito: alterum, societatem et amicitiam homines servato' (PSoc. 1.194-196).

242 *Ibid.*, 37a 'Lex naturae respondet legi scriptae (decalogo)' (PSoc. 1.197); cf. *In Omnes Apostolicas*, I.373-374; *Ad Romanos*, 40b.

243 *Ibid.*, 163b 'data est ipsi a deo lex, quae quid ageret aut quid fugeret ostenderet' (PSoc. 2.139); see also 165a (PSoc. 2.375); 167b-168a where Adam is seen as breaking the tenth commandment (PSoc. 2.387-388); and *Der Alt Gloub*, 17.

244 *Ibid.*, 165a-165b 'Arborem vero ei ostendit tanquam symbolum eius, quod lege lata iniunxerat nempe obediendum esse domino soli, utpote sapiente et benefico, optimo, maximo deo' (PSoc. 2.375-376).

245 *Ibid.*, 138a-139a (PSoc.2.245-250).

246 McCoy, 'Covenant Theology of Johannes Cocceius', 61.

247 Bullinger, *Decades*, 355a-359b (PSoc. 4.381-401).

248 *Ibid.*, 355b (PSoc. 4.383).

249 *Ibid.*, 273a-276a, 355a-355b 'in ecclesia hypocritas quoque numerari donec revelantur.' Bullinger cites Simon Magus and Judas as examples (PSoc. 4.12-26, 382-383).

250 *Ibid.*, 274a (PSoc. 4.16).

251 *Ibid.*, 274a 'Ecclesiam dei aliam quidem esse visibilem et externam, aliam vero invisibilem et internam' (PSoc. 4.17).

252 *Ibid.*, 374b 'Haec testimonia omnia proprie quidem (quod et paulo ante monui) electis dei membris fide et iusta obedientia donatis, hypocritis fide et iusta obedientia destitutis, improprie congruunt' (PSoc.4.18-19).

253 *Ibid.*, 218b-219b (PSoc. 4.191f); cf. 155b-156a (PSoc. 3.330).

PART THREE

***THE GENEVAN
INFLUENCE***

CHAPTER EIGHT

John Calvin: The Unity of the Covenant

There has been much scholarly discussion as to what constitutes the central theme in Calvin's theology.¹ The sovereignty of God and the doctrine of predestination have been most closely associated with the reformer in this respect.² Other contenders for the honour have included the rule of law³ and Calvin's Christology.⁴

The truth more likely is that Calvin never consciously attempted to make any one doctrine central in his system. This was Göhler's opinion: 'There is no central doctrine in the theology of Calvin; rather all his doctrines are central in the sense that their aim is to aim to understand independently from their several viewpoints what is central and essential.'⁵ Others have come to agree with him.⁶ Calvin saw the interrelatedness of biblical doctrines and dealt with them accordingly. Consequently, every one of the doctrines mentioned are key themes for Calvin, and are so interwoven in his treatment of themes that it is difficult to single any out for individual examination without doing violence to the whole. When, therefore, the questions are asked, Was Calvin a predestinarian theologian? Was Calvin a 'legal' theologian? or Was Calvin an eschatological theologian?, the answer is both positive and negative. Negative if thinking of any one of these issues dominating his theology; positive if it is meant that these aspects are vital, essential, ever-present factors within the entirety of his theological work.

Was Calvin a covenantal theologian? No one has ever seriously suggested that Calvin made the covenant the dominating feature of his system in the manner of some later theologians such as Cocceius or Witsius, but

interestingly, the only two major studies which appear to have been undertaken on the subject, have demonstrated that the covenant is a continuing and integral part of Calvin's entire theological thought.⁷ Without it the unity of his entire system would be seriously undermined. Both Van den Bergh and Lillback concluded that Calvin deserved to be designated a 'covenant theologian'.

The articles by Hoekema and Eenigenburg lend qualified support to this contention. The former insisted that Calvin's use of covenant was so widespread in his work that it occupied a distinctive place in the organization of his theology in the *Institutes* from 1539 onwards, and also in his commentaries and sermons.⁸ Eenigenburg rejected the designation from an historical point of view, but regarded it as having significance from an exegetical perspective.⁹ At the opposite end of the pole a few writers have ventured to suggest that 'covenant theology does not appear in the writings of...Calvin'.¹⁰ Perry Miller saw it as a Puritan addition to Calvinism which must have caused Calvin's ghost to shudder.¹¹ Other writers fit somewhere in between, practically all recognizing that the concept of covenant, particularly the covenant of grace, plays a more or less important role in Calvin's work.

Certainly the idea of covenant is very widely dispersed throughout Calvin's writings and impinges upon practically every area of doctrine. A glance at the lemmatic index of the Battles and Miller *Computerized Concordance to Institutio* shows that Calvin used the word *foedus* no fewer than seventy-seven times and immediately related words (*foedera* etc.) a further seventy-four times.¹² *Pactum* was used fifteen times, and related words, including *pactio* and the homonym *pacisci*, twenty times.¹³ *Testamentum* was used twenty-nine times and related words fifty-four times.¹⁴ To employ specific 'covenant' terminology 269 times in one work is a

significantly high usage, and this calculation does not take account of words such as *coniunctio* (union, association, affinity), *obstringere* ('to bind up', or 'lay under an obligation'), *vinculum* (bond, fetter), or *vincire* ('to bind'), which Calvin often used synonymously.¹⁵ By no stretch of the imagination can it be agreed that 'the covenant element in the *Institutes* is relatively minor'.¹⁶

The concentration of Calvin's use of these terms in the *Institutes* is also worth noting. There is relatively little use (about 4%) in Book I which addresses itself to the knowledge of God as Creator, while the highest incidence (some 47%) is in Book IV where Calvin discussed the external means of grace by which men are invited into and maintained within the society of Christ, and particularly the chapters relating to the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper.¹⁷ Understandably the subject of infant baptism was important here, for Calvin too was caught up in the Anabaptist controversy and considered baptism as corresponding to Old Testament circumcision. God's covenant with Abraham, therefore, formed the basis of 'the anagogic relationship of the one to the other'.¹⁸ A further 32% of Calvin's covenantal terms were reserved for Book II in which he discussed the fall of man and how God subsequently works in the hearts of men.¹⁹ Of special significance here was his treatment of the similarities and differences between the Old and New Testaments, the manner in which Christ was promised and revealed to the fathers under the law, and how that related to those under the gospel.²⁰ The remaining 17% of the terms under consideration were used in Book III in describing the manner in which the grace of Christ was received, and its subsequent benefits and effects.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the major importance of the covenant for Calvin was three-fold. First, in relation to God's dealings with men relative to his redemptive purposes in Christ; secondly, to the

accomplishment of that redemption through Christ, and finally to its application in the experience of man. This redemptive, soteriological emphasis corresponds to what is found in other works that are usually viewed as being within the orbit of covenantal theology within the period covered by this research.

In the *Westminster Confession of Faith* the chief mention and discussion of the covenant came precisely within the same context as that in which Calvin placed it in Books II and IV. It was dealt with between the chapters on the fall of man and that on 'Christ the Mediator', and was further elucidated in the chapters on the law of God and the sacraments.²¹ Indeed, if the use of 'covenant' in the general doctrinal topography of these documents was the sole criterion, there is as much justification for calling the *Institutes* 'covenant theology' as there is for designating the *Confession* as such. Of course, the problem of definition again arises, and anticipates such questions as: But how did Calvin use these terms? How does his use of covenant compare or contrast with that of his predecessors? or Is there a covenant of works in Calvin?

The term 'covenant' has no titular place in Calvin's work, except for a reference to 'the folk of the old covenant', in relation to the giving of the law.²² But the fact that the idea was used somewhere in the discussion of practically every area of doctrine, shows much more integration into his theological system as a whole than was found in any of his predecessors. An exhaustive study of the use and significance of the covenant in Calvin lies beyond the scope of this work, but in the interests of pursuing the degree of continuity or otherwise in the development of covenantal theology, attention will be given to examining the areas raised in the study so far, namely, such interrelated topics as the unity and continuity of the covenant in Scripture, the place of law in relation to the

covenant, the covenant and predestination, the mutuality and conditionality of the covenant, and the possibility of a covenant of works in Calvin.

Before proceeding to these issues, one question of historical significance needs to be mentioned. The development of the idea of the covenant in the *Institutes* was largely in the second edition (1539), and did not figure greatly in the *Libellus*, as Calvin called it, of 1536. It will not do to say that Calvin was introducing something entirely new. Benoit's reminder as to the organic development of *Institutio* - 'the maturing and expression of thought within the framework which already existed' - is as applicable here as elsewhere.²³ Calvin was not introducing a new theological category, but taking up a biblical motif best suited to develop and stress what was already inherent in his thinking.

The new emphasis is probably explained by the fact that the *Libellus* was already begun and planned according to the classical form of catechism while Calvin was still quietly studying in France at the home of Du Tillet in Angoulême in 1534. When forced to flee at the beginning of 1535, his initial concern was to find another 'quiet hiding place', where he could continue his studies. The predominant atmosphere under which the writing was carried through (it was finished in August 1535) was the Catholic persecution of the Reformed church in France.²⁴ *Institutio* was presented as a apolegetic work to the king of France, in the hope of helping the Protestant cause. In addition to this external circumstance, Calvin was a comparative newcomer to the study of theology. His own reformed pilgrimage had only recently begun. The form of the *Libellus* shows that he was following the pattern of Luther's *Small Catechism* of 1529, emphasizing the place of law, faith, true and false sacraments, and Christian liberty.²⁵ Calvin's chief concern at that time was to produce a basic reformation document that would help to

clarify his own position and convince his Catholic opponents.

By the time he had completed the *Libellus*, however, Calvin was busy reading the works of other Reformed theologians, and had begun to enter into correspondence with them.²⁶ At the same time the revolutionary Anabaptist movement had become a kind of *cause célèbre* in Europe following the crush of the Munster seige during the summer of 1535.²⁷ Disputes with the Anabaptists as well as with Catholic controversialists quickly came Calvin's way. In short, from all these sources a whole new area of problems and implications for reformed thought were presented to Calvin's mind which he could not have had time to ponder and incorporate in the *Libellus*, but which undoubtedly contributed to the extended development of the 1539 edition. For example, reference to the Anabaptist sect at the beginning of the new chapter 'De similitudine ac differentia veteris et novi testamenti', which included a developed use of the covenant, is a good indication that his new emphasis on the covenant emerged from his engagement with the radicals.²⁸

The significance of the covenant in the unfolding of the history of salvation can be said to be the chief place ascribed to it by the early reformers. For them the one eternal covenant of God ran through the entire history of mankind from Adam to the present day, and while there may have been variations of administrative detail or 'accidents', the covenant in substance was unchanging and inviolable. The same historical, soteriological scope is observable in Calvin's application of the idea.

Calvin's first mention of the covenant in the *Institutes* was in this context. Observing the fact that God was known to those in old times not only as Creator and Ruler of all, but also as Redeemer in the person of the Mediator, he indicated that this is what the covenant was all about, by saying that he did not want to discuss it

yet, but just wanted to point out that 'that covenant by which God adopted to himself the sons of Abraham...has always separated believers from unbelieving folk, for it was founded in Christ'.²⁹ And this distinction he pushed beyond Abraham, for just before he had said, 'There is no doubt that Adam, Noah, Abraham and the rest of the patriarchs...penetrated to the ultimate knowledge of him [i.e. as Redeemer] that in a way distinguished them from unbelievers'.³⁰

It was only after Calvin had laid the groundwork for his theology of redemption by expounding the doctrines of creation, providence and the fall of man, that he returned to unfold the doctrine of the covenant which he had earlier touched upon in embryonic form.³¹ Arguing that all fallen men who 'perished in the person of Adam' ought to look for salvation only through faith in Christ the Mediator and that Christ was known to the Jews under the law, which was actually given to foster the hope of salvation in Christ, he continued, 'Now we can see clearly from what has already been said that all men adopted by God into the company of his people since the beginning of the world were covenanted to him by the same law and by the bond of the same doctrine as obtains among us. It is very important to make this point'.³²

The point was important for three affirmations within it. First, concerning the relationship of covenant to adoption. Calvin spoke often of 'the covenant of adoption'.³³ Secondly, it placed the initial manifestation of the covenant at 'the beginning of the world'. And thirdly, it regarded both the law and the gospel as integral, binding factors in the establishing of the covenant. Its immediate importance for Calvin, however, arose for two reasons: One because of the plain testimonies of Scripture to the one 'rule of reverence and piety' that God has for his people in every age, and secondly, it was necessary to refute the heretics and

'certain madmen' of the Anabaptist sect.³⁴ He proceeded then to look at the similarities and differences between the covenant of old and that which God made with the New Testament church and summarized it with an unambiguous introductory statement: 'The covenant made with all the patriarchs is so much like ours in substance and reality that the two are actually one and the same. Yet they differ in the mode of dispensation'.³⁵

Against the view of Servetus that faith and forgiveness were carnal and earthly under the law, Calvin first argued for the unity of the covenant from the fact that 'the hope of immortality' to eternal salvation - not just national blessings and happiness - was embodied in the Old Testament.³⁶ The illumination of the Word was given to Adam, Abel, Noah and Abraham etc., and fellowship with God was offered to them in 'the very formula of the covenant', and these implied entrance into the kingdom of God and brought everlasting salvation.³⁷

Calvin continued this argument by taking examples from the patriarchs beginning with Abraham, and from the kings and prophets, stating that their lives were not lives of uninterrupted material blessings and pleasures and that their faith and hope rose above present circumstances and difficulties to future blessedness through Christ, who was 'the pledge of the covenant'.³⁸ The gift of free salvation was received in Old Testament times in the very same manner as in the New. To them also, as sinners, 'the doctrine of the righteousness of faith was imparted'. They were justified through the free mercy of God, apart from their own merit. With them also 'was made the covenant of the gospel, the sole foundation of which is Christ'. Calvin reasoned here from the case of Abraham, but carefully added that what was spoken of him was shown by the apostles 'to have been universal among the believing folk' of the Old Testament.³⁹

The free mercy of God apart from human merit was a

major plank in Calvin's presentation of the unity of the covenant. All men in all ages stood before God as sinners. As such they could do nothing to effect their own salvation. That stood only in the free grace of God, which was the basis of the eternal covenant. He said, 'If a covenant of this sort (ie. Hos.2:19,23 etc.), which is clearly the first union of us with God, depends upon God's mercy, no basis is left for our righteousness.'⁴⁰

Like Zwingli and Bullinger, then, Calvin saw the covenant as something which had its roots back at the beginning with our first parents. As time progressed, God, who being a God of order, unfolded his purposes in successive renewals and revelations of his covenant, and with an ever increasing degree of clarity, until eventually it reached its meridian and goal in the full revelation of Christ: 'The Lord held to this orderly plan in administering the covenant of his mercy: as the day of full revelation approached with the passing of time, the more he increased each day the brightness of its manifestation. Accordingly, at the beginning when the first promise of salvation was given to Adam (Gen.3:15) it glowed like a feeble spark. Then, as it was added to, the light grew in fullness, breaking forth increasingly and shedding its radiance more widely. At last - when all the clouds were dispersed - Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, fully illumined the whole earth.'⁴¹

Calvin added that this unfolding of the covenantal plan opened up for him a veritable forest of material which would require him to write a large volume on its own, but that he must leave the discerning reader to follow the trail that he had blazed.⁴² We can only regret that Calvin did not get around to writing such a volume, but the importance that he attached to the topic is obvious from this comment and in all his writings. In speaking of this progressive revelation culminating in Christ, Calvin was not saying that Christ was absent in the earlier unfolding

of the history of salvation. One the contrary, he dared anyone to separate the Jews from Christ.⁴³ When Calvin said in his *Commentary on Galatians* that 'whereas the ceremonies sketched out an absent Christ, (while) to us he is represented as present', he was speaking in a relative manner as the context makes clear.⁴⁴ Christ was inescapably present to his people from the very beginning. Although not so *fully* known as to those after his coming, he was, nevertheless, *truly* known.

Wendel noted this: 'The new Covenant is none other than the reestablishment of the old covenant...the Christ who is the foundation of all true religion, could not, for that reason, be absent from the covenant with Abraham, and therefore, it is he who dominates both of the Testaments'.⁴⁵ Christ was their Mediator also. Calvin reinforced this point in the *Commentary on Galatians*. He interpreted the verse 'Christ is not the Mediator of one', as making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles in relation to signs and ceremonies only: 'In external respects, there is diversity of condition among those with whom, through His agency God enters covenant. But Paul asserts that God's covenant must not be assessed like this as if it contradicted itself or varied on account of the differences in men. As (*sicuti* ie. in the same way) Christ formerly reconciled God to the Jews in making a covenant, so now He is the Mediator of the Gentiles.'⁴⁶

Calvin then asked about the law. Was there not an apparent contradiction between the law and the covenant of grace? No, he explained, because those under the law in old times had faith in Christ. Moses and the prophets attested to the doctrine of faith. It was only because the clarity of faith was not so fully manifest that the apostle spoke of 'the time of the new covenant as the time of faith'. He did this purely in a relative manner, not absolutely. The patriarchs may not have travelled by the light of the mid-day sun, but they had the light of dawn

and that was sufficient to show them the way.⁴⁷

In discussing the history of covenanted salvation, Calvin, like most writers on the subject, tended to make much of the example and experience of Abraham, presumably because of the Pauline emphasis at this point. In Book I he referred to 'the covenant begun with Abraham', but he did not mean by this that it did not exist before Abraham. He was speaking in the context of the Israelites as a people, and how, when Moses brought God's word to Israel, God was simply calling them back to what they already knew lay at the roots of their calling as a nation, that is, 'the special covenant by which he distinguished the race of Abraham from the rest of the nations'.⁴⁸

This was simply a fuller revelation of what had been previously made known to Adam and Noah - the one covenant in Christ, in which 'salvation flows from the Head to the whole body'.⁴⁹ The patriarchs were but part of a larger company who both preceded and followed them, all covenanted to God through Christ. The faithful between Adam and Abraham were likewise part of 'that mutual society...who were in possession of the covenant of life', which was destined to embrace all nations.⁵⁰ The faith of the godly had always rested in Christ alone. It was the same covenant that the Old Testament saints knew that was fulfilled and ratified at the coming of Christ.⁵¹ The covenant was to do with the everlasting kingdom that God promised to David, otherwise because of the unfaithfulness of some of the kings and of the people 'there would have been no stability in the covenant'. It was because of the eternal nature of the covenant that 'the covenant would not be invalidated' by the apostasy of men.⁵²

Calvin not only related the covenant to the unfolding of salvation history in the case of Abraham, but at practically every stage in Israel's record. Isaac and Jacob were joined with Abraham as beneficiaries of the promises of the Lord of the covenant.⁵³ Moses promulgated

the covenant of mercy with the giving of the law.⁵⁴ It was to this 'principle of a freely given covenant' that Israel was recalled again and again by the voice of the prophets.⁵⁵ It was the same covenant to which the everlasting reference in the giving of the kingdom to David applied. The promise to David declared that 'God would be through the hand of Christ the deliverer of his Church; and that his freely given covenant, whereby God had adopted his elect would stand fast'.⁵⁶ David was 'separated...to establish the covenant made in his hand by God', and his name became so inextricably linked with the covenant that God was asked 'for...David's sake' to pardon the sin of the people (Ps.132:10), when the covenant rather than the man was the basis of the intercession.⁵⁷

When God spoke once more of the covenant in David's name in relation to the return from exile, Calvin again emphasized the unity of the covenant: 'Nothing new is promised for which the Lord did not formerly enter into an engagement with his people; but it is a renewal and confirmation of the covenant that the Jews might not think that the covenant of God was made void on account of the long-continued banishment.'⁵⁸ This was the same covenant into which God entered with the fathers. It was not changeable or temporary, but 'firm, sure and eternal'.⁵⁹

In addition to his threefold argument stressing the unity of covenant from salvation history (ie. the hope of immortality, the free mercy of God, and the Mediatorship of Christ), Calvin affirmed the idea of unity from the covenantal character of the sacraments as well. This was to be expected if Calvin's covenant teaching was developed in controversy with the Anabaptists. Calvin had already paused in demonstrating the similarity of the Testaments in Book II of the *Institutes* to note the equality between Israel and the church with respect to the signification of the sacraments, as well as the grace of the covenant itself. The same grace manifest to Jews and Christians

was sealed with signs that were also the same in substance.⁶⁰

It was in Book IV, however, that Calvin treated the subject thoroughly. As with covenants, sacraments were described as God's 'wonderful providence accomodating himself to our capacity' in which 'he instituted...aids to foster and strengthen faith'.⁶¹ The sacraments, however, were not to be equated with the grace of the covenant: 'They do not bestow any grace of themselves, but announce and tell us, and...ratify among us, those things given us by divine bounty'. But the signs or seals, Calvin said elsewhere, were in common parlance so related to the covenanted grace that sometimes 'By the figure metonymy, the name of covenant is transferred to circumcision, which is so conjoined with the word, that it could not be separated from it'.⁶² The sacraments, according to Calvin, were 'testimonies of divine grace towards us', to which only God himself could bear witness. His classic definition was: 'A sacrament is a seal by which God's covenant, or promise, is sealed'.⁶³

The gist of Calvin's argument concerning the unity of covenant and sacraments is that since the efficacy of grace and salvation was contained not in the sign or symbol, but in the covenant itself, and this grace of salvation was the same for all God's people in both Testaments, then the signs or seals signified the same thing. The external symbols may be different, but the substance remained the same.⁶⁴ The same faith was required to receive benefit in the covenant.⁶⁵ The same Holy Spirit promoted and confirmed faith, and illumined and enabled effective reception of covenant grace.⁶⁶ The same Word worked in confirming faith.⁶⁷ The same spiritual covenant promises were contained in the old and new sacraments.⁶⁸ The same Christ was portrayed as Saviour and Mediator of the covenant.⁶⁹ The same classes of people could partake of the covenant signs.⁷⁰ And the same benefits

(regeneration, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life) were represented in both.⁷¹

The problem generated by 'certain frantic spirits' (Anabaptists) was that they confused things that differ (ie. the external signs with the substance), and separated what otherwise belonged together. They failed to recognize the reformed distinction between the grace of the covenant and the sign of the covenant, when they argued that if baptism was the same as circumcision then there should be a certain day for baptism, and that it ought not to be administered to women.⁷² On the other hand, in denying baptism to infants, they inferred that infants could not be partakers of life in Christ because they were incapable of exercising faith, understanding preaching and repenting.⁷³ That would mean that the efficacy of grace lay in these things rather than in the promise.

Scripture, said Calvin, furnished abundant arguments for, and examples of, children to whom the promise was specifically given, being partakers of the operations of the life-giving Spirit.⁷⁴ And these children did not simply foreshadow 'the spiritual infants of the New Testament, who were regenerated to immortal life by God's Word'. They were actual heirs of the promise.⁷⁵ Therefore, according to the promise, children were included in the covenant even before they were born, so if these 'children of believers are partakers in the covenant without the help of the understanding, there is no reason why they should be barred from the sign merely because they cannot swear to the provisions of the covenant'.⁷⁶

Calvin did not deny the validity of adult baptism, but that was for unbelievers who were 'reckoned as alien to the fellowship of the covenant', and who must embrace Christ through faith and repentance in order to gain 'access to the society of the covenant', before they could be given the badge of the covenant. Instruction always preceded the administration of the sign for adults who were

formerly 'strangers to the covenant', as in the case of Abraham himself, but for those, like Isaac, who were born within the covenant community, instruction in its meaning followed the administration of the sign.⁷⁷ God's continued acceptance of children was attested by Christ himself in embracing them and commending them with prayer to the Father. Christ's act, Calvin argued, attested more so than baptism 'that infants are contained within God's covenant'. If they were not denied this testimony of belonging to the kingdom of heaven, why should they be denied the sign which 'opens for them a door into the church, that adopted into it, they may be enrolled among the heirs of the kingdom of heaven'.⁷⁸

The continuity of the covenant then was a central pillar in Calvin's dispute with the Anabaptists over baptism. For Calvin, the covenant with Abraham continued into the New Testament, therefore circumcision and baptism signified the same thing. If infants could be circumcised before reaching the age of understanding, then baptism could be administered to infants also. The sign was a confirmation or ratification of what was promised in the covenant, that is, a sign of regeneration by the Spirit which was to be experienced.⁷⁹ While it was important for the faith and comfort of the parents, and for the later instruction of the child that this visible 'symbol of the covenant' should not be neglected or 'despised with impunity', yet the sign was not so tied to what it signified as to imply baptismal regeneration or an *ex opere operato* administration of grace. The Lord's mercy was not automatically cut off from those prevented from receiving the sign.⁸⁰ But neither were all who received the sign necessarily regenerated. This was so in the case of Ishmael and Esau and of the Jews in New Testament times. The covenant could be violated by those who had been circumcised or baptised, but this did not invalidate the promises in the covenant, or deny to their offspring the

right of the covenant. The rebellion and stubbornness of some and their rejection by God underlined the importance of the covenantal obligations and how pointless it was for such to 'boast in the name of the covenant unless they keep the law of the covenant, that is, obey the Word'.^{e1}

This stress on the unity of the covenant naturally raised an important question. If the covenant was 'actually one and the same', as Calvin said, then wherein lay the 'oldness' of the old and the 'newness' of the new? In discussing the sacraments, Calvin inferred that a new manner of confirmation of the covenant tended to magnify God's grace more in relation to the comparative limitation of the former signs to the Jews.^{e2} But his main outline of the differences between the Testaments was given earlier in the *Institutes* when he spelt out five variations of administration in the covenant.^{e3}

First, the spiritual blessings in the Old Testament which were real and equal to those in the New, were nevertheless symbolized by temporal blessings which mirrored the heavenly heritage and acted as aids to the understanding and nourishment of hope. But this 'lower mode of training' had been laid aside and the Lord now led his people to meditate directly upon the grace of the future life.^{e4} All the earthly blessings, physical benefits and punishments were necessary tutelage then because the church was still in its infancy in the Old Testament. They were never intended 'to be the final goal of their hopes', but were simply designed to lift up their eyes to the more glorious spiritual promises which were available then but were now more openly displayed.^{e5}

Secondly, in the Old Testament, images and ceremonies were used as types, to make known the truth of Christ, whereas the very substance of what was typified in the Old was present in the New. The basic covenantal structure of Old Testament religion did not depend on these temporary ceremonies and observance of the Mosaic law. They were

not necessary for its survival, and though the Jews thought otherwise, they could 'be abolished without ruining the whole religion along with them'. Their sole function was tutelary, merely to serve as 'an introduction to the better hope'. The spiritual worship of God and the fundamental matters of faith, justice and judgment were not dependant on ceremonial worship.^{e6}

This basic covenantal structure did not change, it merely 'became new and eternal...after it was consecrated and established by the blood of Christ'. The ceremonies were 'only the accidental properties of the covenant, or additions and appendages, and in common parlance, accessories of it', and like scaffolding they were taken away when the building was completed.^{e7} Many in the Old Testament excelled in the knowledge of Christ which they received through these aids (eg. the faith of Abraham or the ministry of the prophets in the power of the Spirit), but were still classed as children in comparison with what was now made known.^{e8}

Calvin's third difference concerned the literal character of the Old Testament and the spiritual nature of the New. He took this difference from the words of Jer. 31:13-34, and the use which the apostle Paul made of them in II Cor. 3:6-11.^{e9} This passage is crucial to Calvin's understanding of the covenant and it is essential to read it in conjunction with his more extended treatment in the *Commentary on Jeremiah*. Calvin began by making two hermeneutical observations. One was that Paul's apparently opprobrious attitude when speaking of the law was not directed against the law itself, but rather against 'some mischief makers wrongly jealous for the law' (legis κακόζηλοι), and who by their zeal for ceremonies had obscured the gospel. The second was the need to recognize that while the law embodied many promises of mercy and grace through Christ, when Jeremiah and Paul were contrasting the Old and New Testaments, they were dealing

only with the bare nature of the law: 'they...consider nothing in the law except what properly belongs to it', that is, it instructs in what is right and wrong, promises rewards and threatens punishments, but it cannot change man's sinful nature.⁹⁰ A clearer statement is found in the *Commentary on Romans*: 'Although the covenant of grace is contained in the law, yet Paul removes it from there for in opposing the Gospel to the law he regards only what was peculiar to the law itself, viz. command and prohibition, and restraining of transgressors by the threat of death.'⁹¹ In other words, the apostle and the prophet were speaking to a situation where the law was separated from the Christ who gave it, and when 'Christ be taken away' from the law all that remained was 'a rule of the most perfect doctrine'.⁹²

From this perspective then, the Old Testament was a bare outward letter, the New was a spiritual engraving in the heart; the Old could only bring death and the curse, the New brought life and freedom; the Old condemned man in unrighteousness, the New ministered righteousness bringing mercy and justification; the Old had weak ceremonial attachments which had to die, while the New, having revealed their substance, stood forever. The weakness of the ceremonies and of the law through its violation by an ungrateful people, was not due to any weakness in the covenant itself, but was due to the people who confined themselves only to the letter of the law, and ignored the spiritual purpose for which it was given, that is, 'by way of comparison to commend the grace abounding, wherewith the same Lawgiver, assuming, as it were, a new character, honoured the preaching of the gospel'.

Calvin made clear, however that it was not to be assumed from 'this difference between letter and spirit' that all Jews failed in this respect. There were many who 'embraced the covenant' and were numbered with those gathered into the church and regenerated by the Spirit.⁹³

Therefore, when God spoke of 'the *new* covenant, it is not so called because it is contrary to the first covenant; for God is never inconsistent with himself...the first covenant was inviolable; besides he had already made his covenant with Abraham and the law was a confirmation of that covenant. As then the law depended on that covenant which God made with his servant Abraham, it follows that God could never have made a new, that is, a contrary or a different covenant'.⁹⁴ In the *Harmony of the Gospels*, Calvin made the same point in commenting on Matt. 5:17: 'God had promised a new covenant at the coming of Christ; but had shown at the same time that it would not be different from the first, but rather this would be his object - the covenant that he had originally struck with his people would be confirmed for perpetuity'.⁹⁵

In other words, God could never alter his original purpose, which was bound up in the covenant made with Abraham and which was the one, eternal, perpetual covenant of grace in Christ. The law was given in conjunction with this, therefore the law was never intended to be separated from Christ in the way the Jews had done and elevated into another different kind of covenant, for 'God has never made any other covenant than that which he made formerly with Abraham, and at length confirmed by the hand of Moses'.⁹⁶ (This latter statement has sometimes been cited as evidence that Calvin could not have conceived of a pre-lapsarian covenant of works or a pre-temporal covenant of redemption. But this is to take it entirely out of its context, where Calvin was speaking about the situation of fallen man, and merely saying that the Sinaitic covenant did not differ in kind or substance from the Abrahamic covenant, but was rather intended to be a confirmation of it).⁹⁷

The 'newness' of the covenant, then, was that the law would be united with the regenerating operation of the Spirit in a new way, that is, in a fully open way - 'shewn more at large'.⁹⁸ The 'oldness' of the old covenant made

with the fathers, was the bare law separated from the confirming purpose for which it was given and tenaciously held without thinking 'it possible that God would add anything to the law'. By separating the law from its purpose, the Jews 'made void' God's covenant, and this called for a 'new' revelation. The old administration had become characterized by the 'letter'. The chief characteristic of the new was to be 'the grace of regeneration' by the Spirit. This did not mean that the fathers lacked the grace of regeneration under the law. That, Calvin said, would be 'quite preposterous'. They too received that favour, but not through the law apart from the gospel, 'It was a benefit transferred to the law from the gospel'.⁹⁹

Calvin's comparison of the law and the gospel, then, was a letter/spirit one. But this was not a letter/spirit distinction that identified the letter solely with the law and the Old Testament and the spirit solely with the gospel and the New Testament. Calvin was considering what belonged to the law in itself and what was peculiar to the gospel in itself.¹⁰⁰ He never separated the law from the gospel, or said that the one had nothing to do with the other or that they did not belong together, after the manner of Luther. He saw that it was the right use of the law by the fathers that had led them to regeneration through Christ, and as he went on to explain, that same law still had a prominent place under the new administration. But in neither case was that the bare letter of the law. It was rather what God referred to when he said, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, I will write it in their hearts', so that men would call upon God with their hearts inclined towards him and to the keeping of his law.

This promise was in fact describing the nature of the Spirit's regenerating work. For that in which 'God comprehends generally the substance of his covenant...is the design of the law'.¹⁰¹ In other words, Calvin

regarded the law united with Christ and the Spirit (in the way that was always intended) as the gospel. These were never meant to be separated. The Jews by separating them 'had shamefully mutilated the law of God, for they rejected its soul and snatched at the dead body of the letter.'¹⁰² Calvin added in another commentary: 'The law and the gospel are not at variance except when men seek justification by the merit of works. But the fact that salvation, even before Moses, was by free promise and therefore called a covenant, should have made it clear that the law was not to be considered soteriologically apart from the promise'.¹⁰³ Nijssel was quite correct to say that for Calvin, 'Christ is the foundation of the divine covenant to which both the Old Testament and the New bear witness'.¹⁰⁴

It was only by holding to a rigid separation of the letter of the law from its spirit that Moses could be irreconcilably set against Christ. But a proper interpretation of Scripture rendered this impossible, Calvin insisted, for although 'Christ excels Moses', Moses was the herald and witness of Christ because 'his doctrine also contained promises of a free salvation'. When John said that 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ', he did not mean that there was no grace and truth in the law. Those under the law had received the benefits of the gospel, therefore these benefits were in the law in an 'adventitious' manner, even if they did not properly belong to it when considered by itself. It was only when considered apart from Christ that Moses became a bare lawgiver. In the fulness of his ministry he was Christ's witness.¹⁰⁵ Calvin, therefore, would not have regarded the thunders of Sinai as being void of any manifestation of grace, or that such would tend 'to undermine some of the fundamental postulates of Pauline theology'.¹⁰⁶ This position could only be maintained by interpreting Paul in terms of a rigid law/gospel

separation, rather than with the letter/spirit principle which Calvin employed.

This third difference between the Old Testament and the New involved then a twofold use of the law - a mere letter use which separated the law from Christ, and a spiritual use bound up in God's covenant of salvation, which, while not unknown in the Old Testament, was more fully manifest in the New. Calvin interpreted Paul in the *Epistle to the Romans* as expressly declaring 'that the salvation which Christ has brought was the peculiar privilege of the Jews by covenant, because...the old covenant was in fact spiritual, although it was annexed to earthly types'.¹⁰⁷ Thus while the 'new' covenant had respect to God's saving relationship with his people in all ages, its 'newness' lay in the open revelation of Christ, shed of ceremonies and types, and the fuller, clearer, more manifest, regenerating operation of the Spirit among men.

Calvin's fourth difference was really only the experiential extension of what he had expounded in his third difference, that is, the comparative bondage of the Old Testament and the freedom of the New.¹⁰⁸ Consideration of the mere letter of the law engendered fear, holding men's consciences in a yoke of bondage, whereas the gospel freed men by lifting them up to trust and assurance. Those of old who embraced the gospel were granted that same spirit of freedom, even though they could have not enjoyed it to the same extent as New Testament Christians because of obscurer knowledge, and also because they still had the burdensome obligation of punctiliously observing all the ceremonial attachments of the law which were later abrogated. In this sense they could still be said, by contrast, to be under bondage.

The final difference was the manner in which in Old Testament times the covenant of grace was largely confined to one nation, whereas in the New it was extended to all nations.¹⁰⁹ In Old Testament times God had set the people

of Israel apart and 'lodged his covenant, so to speak, within their bosom'. When others remained 'strangers', Israel revelled in God's paternal attentions. But God's intention to extend his covenantal care beyond Israel was not new. It was reflected in the way God even in olden times had called some Gentiles and 'engrafted them into Abraham's family'. The prophets had foretold it, but such was the spirit of exclusiveness that had been cultivated in Israel that even to the apostles the call to take the gospel to the Gentiles had appeared 'so new and strange...that they shrank back from it as a monstrous thing'.¹¹⁰ What had been a hidden mystery - the oneness of the church of both Jews and Gentiles with God as their Father - was now manifest as a 'new' thing in which there was greater confidence and familiarity than was ever known before. 'Believers also called God Father under the law,' said Calvin, 'but not with such free confidence as now'.¹¹¹

The important thing, stressed Calvin, in all these differences was 'that God ought not to be considered changeable merely because he accommodated diverse forms to different ages, as he knew would be expedient for each'. Different ways of teaching, according to the age of pupils, did not imply a different purpose in teaching. It was man who had changed, and 'God has accommodated himself to man's capacity, which is varied and changeable'.¹¹² This stress on God accommodating himself to man was foundational in Calvin's concept of covenant, and was a measure of God's goodness and kindness to man. That was why God engaged in covenant with man, because 'the word covenant, was more honourable to the people. For when a king enjoins anything on his people, it is called an edict; but God deals with his own people more kindly, for he descends and appears in the midst of them that he may bind himself to his people, as he binds the people to himself'.¹¹³ Here in a nutshell is Calvin's view of the nature of a covenant.

Calvin's care to stress both the similarities and

differences of the Testaments was crucial in the development of his thought. He has since been accused of degrading Christ 'to the position of an interpreter of the ancient lawgiver Moses'.¹¹⁴ But this is to misunderstand Calvin, who was rather exalting Christ as the eternal giver of the law and was therefore its best and proper interpreter, but more especially as the one Mediator through whom those in both Testaments, including Moses, were united to God and brought to share in his promises of salvation.¹¹⁵ The discussion of differences was, as Wolf noted, not to posit two covenants, but simply to outline the different administrative features of one, identical covenant which existed with the fathers and was established with New Testament believers.¹¹⁶ Moses and the prophets were merely guides to show the way to Christ, because 'from the law we may properly learn Christ if we consider that the covenant which God made with the fathers was founded on the Mediator'.¹¹⁷ It is important therefore to look more closely at the relationship of the law to the covenant. The covenant in Christ did not begin with his coming into the world, since, as Calvin succinctly put it, 'Christ did not first begin to be manifested in the gospel'.¹¹⁸

NOTES: Chapter Eight

1 W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, trs. H. Knight, (London, 1956), 9-21.

2 R.N.C. Hunt, *Calvin*, (London, 1933) 122; A.M. Hunter, *The Teaching of Calvin: A Modern Interpretation*, (London, 1920), 88f. Both alleged that Calvin's predestinarian scheme left little place for Christ; see also B. Hall, 'John Calvin: Humanist and Reformer', *Historical Ass. Pamphlets*, (London, 1956), 20. German writers who held this view include: A. Schweizer, *Die Glaubenslehre der evangelisch-reformierten Kirche*, 2 vols. (Zurich, 1844-1845); O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, (Göttingen, 1926), 3.156, 167; F. Schnabel, *Deutschlands geschichtliche Quellen und Darstellungen in der Neuzeit: Part I: Das Zeit alter der Reformation*, (1931), 51, cited by Niesel, 159;.

3 N.H.G. Robinson, *The Groundwork of Christian Ethics*, (Grand Rapids, 1970), 20; H.J. Forstmann, *Word and Spirit*, (Stanford, 1962), 136 'a legalistic understanding of the Christian faith'; T.C. Hall, *History of Ethics Within Organized Christianity*, (New York, 1910), 530 'For Calvin the Christian life is bounded by an almost pharisaic attempt to determine the exact letter of the written law'; G. Harkness, *John Calvin: The Man and His Ethics*, (Nashville, 1958), 63 'Unlike Jesus, he conceived the will of God in terms of biblical literalism and set up a legalistic moral code.'

4 Barth, *CD*, 1¹.25ff; 2².8; 4¹.36ff,45; T.F. Torrance, 'The Place of Christology in Biblical and Dogmatic Theology', *Essays in Christology for Karl Barth*, ed. T.H.L. Parker, (London, 1956), 13-14, 18-19; C. Brown, *Karl Barth and the Christian Message*, (London, 1967), 138-139; Chalker, 'Calvin and English Calvinists', 12-18. A more recent suggestion for Calvin's central theme, has been made by Charles Partee, 'Calvin's Central Dogma Again', *SCJ*, 18. (1987), 191-199, is the doctrine of union with Christ.

5 A. Göhler, *Calvins Lehre von der Heiligung*, (Munich, 1934), 81, quoted by Niesel p.19.

6 eg. Hoekema, 'Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching', 134-136; E.A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, 39-40; H. Bauke, *Die Probleme der Theologie Calvins*, (Leipzig, 1922), 16-19,30; Niesel, *op.cit.*, 9-21.

7 W. Van den Bergh, *Calvijn over het Genadeverbond*; P. Lillback, 'The Binding of God';

8 Hoekema, *op.cit.*, 133-136; 'Calvin's Doctrine of the Covenant of Grace', 1, 8.

9 Eenigenburg, 'The Place of the Covenant in Calvin's Theology', 2-3.

10 Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, 180; cf. Lincoln, 'Development of the Covenant Theory', 131.

11 Miller, *New England Mind*, 336, .

12 F.L. Battles and C. Miller, *A Computerized Concordance to Institutio Christianae Religionis 1599 of Ioannes Calvinus*, (Pittsburgh, 1972), Reel 7.308 (Reel 3.2842-2843).

13 *Ibid.*, Reel 7.522 (Reel 4.5118).

14 *Ibid.*, Reel 7.746 (Reel 6.7426-7427).

15 For a fuller account of Calvin's use of these terms, see Lillback, *op.cit.* 221-224.

16 Eenigenburg, *op.cit.*, 4; also J.L. Witte, *Het Probleem Individu - Gemeenschap in Calvins Geloofsnorm*, (Franeker, 1949), 2.170, who refers to the 'few and scattered references' or 'infrequent data' concerning the covenant in Calvin (quoted by M.E. Osterhaven, 'Calvin on the Covenant', *RR*, 33.1980), 147 n.7); and Miller, 'The Marrow', 29, who claimed that Calvin 'made hardly any mention of the covenant'.

17 Calvin, *Inst.*, IV.14-17.

18 *Ibid.*, IV.16.3ff.

19 *Ibid.*, II.1-4.

20 *Ibid.*, II.10-11; II.6-9; II.12-17.

21 *WCF*, VI-VIII, XIX, and XXVII-XXIX.

22 Calvin *Inst.*, II.7.

23 J-D. Benoit, 'The History and Development of the Institutes: How Calvin Worked', *John Calvin*, ed. G.E. Duffield, (Abingdon 1966), 102-103; see also H.W. Simpson, 'The *Editio Princeps* of the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* 1536 by John Calvin', *Calvinus Reformator*, (Potchefstroom, 1982), 26-32.

24 Calvin, *Comm.on Ps.*, Preface 1.xl-xliv. See also McNeill, ed. *Inst.*, Intro. xxxi-xxxiv; *The History and Character of Calvinism*, (Oxford, 1962), 119-124; Wendel, *Calvin*, (London, 1963), 46-47, 112-113; E. Doumerge, *Jean Calvin, les Hommes et les Choses de son Temps*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1899-1917), 1.487-516.

25 see Schaff, *Creeds*, 3.74-92; Calvin, *CR*, 29.29-247; E.A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, (New York, 1952), 232.

26 Calvin was reading Melancthon and Bucer, and had begun to correspond with Bullinger, Viret, Capito and Bucer. See Wendel, *op.cit.*, 46.

- 27 R. Friedmann, 'Anabaptist', *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, 1.114; P.J. Klassen, *Europe in the Reformation*, (New Jersey, 1979); H. Jedin and J. Dolan, *History of the Church*, 10 vols. (London, 1980-1981), V.185; B.M.G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Reformation*, (London, 1981), 219-220; Zuck, *Christianity and Revolution* 81-104.
- 28 Calvin, *Inst.* (1939), XI.1, (CR, 29.802) 'Quin etiam quod utilissimum alioqui futuram erat, necessarium nobis fecerunt furiosi nonnulli ex Anabaptistarum secta.' cf. *Har. of Gosp.*, 'Theme', 1.xii.
- 29 *Inst.*, I.6.1.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 *Inst.*, I.14-II.5 on creation and providence.
- 32 *Inst.*, II.6-9; II.10.1.
- 33 *Inst.*, II.7.2; III.2.22; *Com. on Ezk.*, 16:8; *Com. on Hosea*, 12:3-5; and *Inst.*, III.21.7 where the ideas of election, adoption and the covenant are all interrelated.
- 34 *Inst.*, II.10.1; cf. IV.16.10-16; see Lillback, 'Calvin's Covenantal Response', 185-232.
- 35 *Inst.*, II.10.2.
- 36 *Inst.*, II.10.2-3; cf. III.22.6.
- 37 *Inst.*, II.10.7-8.
- 38 *Inst.*, II.10.9-23; cf. *Com. on Ps.*, 67:2; *Com. on Zech.* 12:1.
- 39 *Inst.*, II.10.4.
- 40 *Inst.*, III.14-18 esp. 14.6; see also III.17.2,5-6; *Com. on Ps.*, 89:28; *Com. on Isa.*, 55:3; *Com. on Dan.* 9:4.
- 41 *Inst.*, II.10.20.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Inst.*, II.10.4.
- 44 *Com. on Gal.*, 3:23.
- 45 Wendel, *op. cit.*, 209.
- 46 *Com. on Gal.*, 3:20; *Inst.*, II.6.2 'Apart from the Mediator, God never shewed favour towards the ancient people, nor ever gave hope of grace to them.' See also *Com. on Gen.*, 22:18; *Com. on Isa.*, 42:6; *Har. of Gosp.*, 1.46-47 (Lk.1:72); *Com. on Rom.*, 15:8; *Com. on II Cor.*, 1:20; *Com. on Eph.*, 2:1.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 3:23; cf. *Inst.*, II.9.1.
- 48 *Inst.*, I.8.3; I.10.1; *Com. on Gen.*, 17:4.7; *Com. on Rom.*, 15:8.
- 49 *Inst.* II.6.2.

- 50 *Com.on Gen.*, 9:27; cf. *Inst.*, II.10.1; II.10.20.
- 51 *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.215 (Lk.22:20).
- 52 *Inst.*, II.6.3. On the everlasting nature of the covenant Calvin cites such texts as Isa. 55:3-4, Jer. 23:5-6, and Ezk. 34:23-25, 37:24-26.
- 53 *Inst.*, III.20.25.
- 54 *Inst.*, II.5.12; II.7.1.
- 55 *Inst.*, III.21.5; *Com.on Isa.*, 54:10.
- 56 *Inst.*, II.6.3,4; cf. IV.1.17.
- 57 *Inst.*, III.20.25; *Com.on Ps.*, 132:12.
- 58 *Com.on Isa.*, 55.3.
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 *Inst.*, II.10.5-6.
- 61 *Inst.*, IV.1.1.
- 62 *Com.on Gen.*, 17:9; cf, *Inst.*, IV.14.17.
- 63 *Inst.*, IV.19.2. This definition is further expanded and explained in IV.16.1-6.
- 64 *Inst.*, IV.16.4; IV.16.6. See R.S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, (London, 1953), 192ff.
- 65 *Inst.*, IV.14.7-8.
- 66 *Inst.*, IV.14.9-10.
- 67 *Inst.*, IV.14.11.
- 68 *Inst.*, IV.14.20; IV.15.9; IV.16.11.
- 69 *Inst.*, IV.14.20-21.
- 70 *Inst.*, IV.16.1ff.
- 71 *Inst.*, IV.16.4.
- 72 *Inst.*, IV.16.5,16.
- 73 *Inst.*, IV.16.17-20.
- 74 *Inst.*, IV.16.21-29.
- 75 *Inst.*, IV.16.12.
- 76 *Inst.*, IV.16.24.
- 77 *Inst.*, IV.16.23-24.
- 78 *Inst.*, IV.16.7.
- 79 *Inst.*, IV.16.21.
- 80 *Inst.*, IV.16.9,21-22,26.
- 81 *Inst.*, IV.16.14-15.
- 82 *Inst.*, IV.16.8.

- 83 *Inst.*, IV.11.
- 84 *Inst.*, II.11.1.
- 85 *Inst.*, II.11.2-3; cf. *Com.on Acts*, 7:53; *Com.on II Cor.*, 3:10.
- 86 *Inst.*, II.11.4; cf. *Com.on Acts*, 6:11-14; 8:27; 13:38; 15:9
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Har.of Gosp.*, 2.69 (Lk. 10:24); *Inst.*, II.11.6. Calvin maintained that ceremonies had no further use after the coming of Christ, but that several degrees of attitude to ceremonies persisted in the church after Christ. One was that ceremonies were abolished and no longer pertained to the worship of God. The second allowed the free use of ceremonies until the truth of the gospel would be more plainly manifest. The third was that retention of ceremonies was unlawful, except where they served for the edification and profit of the church and did not serve any superstitious end. See *Com.on Acts*, 16:3 and 18:8.
- 89 *Inst.*, II.11.7-8; *Com.on II Cor.*, 3:6-11.
- 90 *Inst.*, II.11.7.
- 91 *Com.on Rom.*, 8:15.
- 92 *Com.on Jer.*, 31:31.
- 93 *Inst.*, II.11.8.
- 94 *Com.on Jer.*, 31.31-32.
- 95 *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.180 (Mt.5:17).
- 96 *Com.on Jer.*, 31:31-32.
- 97 Torrance, 'Cal. and Pur.', 272; 'MacLeod Campbell', 299; Toon, *Hyper-Calvinism*, 20-21; Bruggink, 'Calvin and Federal Theology', 16; Butler, 'Religious Liberty and Covenant Theology', 54; J. Crichton, 'The Westminster Doctrine of Predestination'. MTh Thesis (Glasgow University, 1975), 91; .
- 98 *Com.on Jer.*, 31:31-32; cf. *Com.on Joel*, 2:28; *Com.on John*, 1:16; *Com.on Acts*, 2:17.
- 99 *Ibid.*
- 100 *Com.on Rom.* 8:15.
- 101 *Com.on Jer.*, 31:33.
- 102 *Com.on Rom.*, 10:4.
- 103 *Com.on Gal.*, 3:17.
- 104 Niesel, *op.cit.*, 104; see *Com.on Acts*, 13:16 'This is the main point of the law, and the foundation of God's covenant, that they may have Christ as Leader and Governor'; also 28:23.

- 105 *Com. on Jer.*, 31:34.
- 106 Trenchard, 'Grace, Covenant and Law', 142.
- 107 *Com. on Rom.*, 15:8. There can be little doubt about what Calvin's response would be to Ebling's question, *Word and Faith*, (London, 1963), 263, concerning the Pauline interpretation of the law: 'Is Paul really engaged in a debate with the Old Testament law, or only with a deformed view of the Old Testament law?' cf. also *infra*, 2.363.
- 108 *Inst.*, II.11.9-10; cf. *Com. on Rom.*, 8:15.
- 109 *Inst.*, II.11.11-12.
- 110 *Ibid.*
- 111 *Com. on Rom.*, 8:15.
- 112 *Inst.*, II.11.13.
- 113 *Com. on Jer.*, 31:32.
- 114 P. Wernle, *Der Evangelische Glaube nach den Hauptschriften der Reformatoren*, vol. 3, (Tübingen, 1919), 268, 13, 30; cited by Niesel, *op.cit.*, 104.
- 115 *Inst.*, II.10.2; *Com. on Ezk.*, 16:61.
- 116 H.H. Wolf, *Die Einheit des Bundes: Das Verhältnis von Altem und Neuem Testament bei Calvin*, (Neukirchen, 1958), 19.
- 117 *Har. of Gosp.*, 3.235-236 (Lk.24:27)
- 118 *Com. on John*, 5:39.

CHAPTER NINE

Covenant, Law and Grace

The importance of the law of God in Calvin's covenantal theology has already become evident in discussing the unity of the covenant. The relationship of law and gospel has always been a prominent feature of Christian theology, but the need for Calvin to spell out the place of the law in the Christian schema was heightened by dual opposition. On the one side there was the 'legalism' of the Roman Church which gave to the law a place in the doctrine of justification that was contrary to the central reformation dogma of justification by faith alone. On the other side were the Anabaptists, some of whom expressed strong antinomian or libertine views.¹

Basic to Calvin's understanding of the law was the character and will of God: 'God has so depicted his character in the law that if any man carries out in deeds whatever is enjoined there, he will express the image of God, as it were, in his own life.'² Again, 'God has revealed his will in the law, whatever is contrary to the law displeases him...sin...is rebellion against the will of God.'³ The covenant, likewise, upon which the law was based and built, was founded upon the perfect immutability of the divine nature, Calvin wrote on Psalm 98:34, and he preached the same message in his *Sermons on Deuteronomy*: 'The Lawe was not only given as a rule whereby to live well: but also grounded upon the covenant...it is founded upon the everlasting covenant, from whence as from the true fountaine therof our salvation springeth.'⁴

The law, therefore, taught what God was like, and what he required of men, how their lives should be conducted according to his will.⁵ The 'perfect pattern of righteousness' stood forth in his law.⁶ This was not,

however, to say that the character and righteousness of God was *exhaustively* revealed in the law, but it was to say that it was *truly* revealed. It is this distinction which explains Calvin's presentation of a 'double righteousness' in God as especially set forth in his *Sermons on Job* (1554).⁷ This is an aspect of Calvin's doctrine of the law which appears to have been entirely overlooked by those who have written on the subject.⁸ There is, said Calvin, an 'infinite rightfulness of God', which is so 'perfect and peerlesse a thing' that in its presence even the angels are 'not cleere before him'.⁹ Even if a man kept perfectly the entire law of God, he would still come far short of that righteousness.¹⁰ When God gave man 'a patterne and image of rightfulness in his law', this was given according to man's ability (ie. as a creature, not as a sinner), 'bounde within the measure of man's capacitie...''

This 'lower' righteousness, however, still reflected truly God's will and character, and was given as 'a full and certaine rule whereby to live well'. If men were to do and perform it, though they would still come short of God's 'higher' righteousness, they would be reckoned as righteous before God in all perfection and goodness because of his promise that 'those who do them shall live in them'.¹² But since the fall no man has been able to come up even to this 'lower' righteousness. Christ is the only one who ever fulfilled the 'lower' righteousness which is in the law. This he did for his people. But he did even more. The gift of Christ's righteousness with which he clothes sinful man answers also to the 'higher' righteousness of God and therefore surpasses that which was reflected in the revealed law, and even that displayed by the angels.¹³

For Calvin, the knowledge of the law did not come into being when it was recorded at Sinai: 'For all be it that the law were not wrytten...yet was this record

ingraven in men's hearts.'¹⁴ Calvin based the constitution of the law in a natural equity which was the same for all men. He said, 'The law of God which we call the moral law is nothing else than a testimony of natural law and of that conscience which God has engraved upon the minds of men'.¹⁵ In his *Commentary on Romans*, he described this as 'the knowledge of himself'.¹⁶ In fallen man this knowledge of God as Creator was limited by reason of sin, but it was nevertheless sufficient to convince man of his sinfulness before God, leaving him condemned and inexcusable.¹⁷

Calvin defined natural law as 'that apprehension of the conscience which distinguishes sufficiently between just and unjust, and which deprives men of the excuse of ignorance, while it proves them guilty by their own testimony'.¹⁸ The decalogue was given as a clearer delineation of this natural law, which 'asserts the very same things that are to be learned from the two Tables'.¹⁹ J.T. McNeill correctly stated that Calvin desired 'to emphasize the normative authority of natural in relation to positive law. In all this Calvin has no notion of modern secular interpretations of natural law. It is part of the divine endowment of the natural man'.²⁰

This natural law or 'lower' righteousness was known to Adam before the fall. God graciously condescended, or accommodated himself, to man's capacity as a creature by establishing a relationship with him based on his will and character, that is, his law. As Calvin put it: 'God in his lawe applieth himselfe to us, and requireth not so much as we owe him, but according to mannes abilitie to performe: I meane not his abilitie now that he be corrupted: but his abilitie when he was in his perfect soundnesse, such as Adam had before he fel...the state wherein we should have continued safe and sound, if corruption had not entered into our nature.'²¹ Doweay saw the importance of this when he warned that we must

carefully understand that law for Calvin was 'a necessary part of the life of man as a creature...lest we see in Calvin's idea of law a "legalism" which does not belong essentially to it'.²²

God's will for mankind - 'everything applicable to the perfect rule of the good life' - was revealed in his law.²³ To depart from it was not just to violate a piece of legislation, it was to depart from the Lord himself.²⁴ Man's relationship with God before the fall was maintained by his obedience to that rule, and in order to test man's willingness to do God's will a specific prohibition was imposed: 'Adam was denied the tree of knowledge of good and evil to test his obedience and prove that he was willingly under God's command.'²⁵ 'God, from the beginning, imposed a law upon man, for the purpose of maintaining the right due to himself', and threatened death on disobedience.²⁶

From the beginning then the law of God, both naturally and verbally expressed, was designed to govern man's relationship with God. This was God's way of accommodating himself, and revealing something of himself, to his creature. The law was an expression of the God who gave it. ²⁷ Because the idea of a kind and loving personal relationship was involved here, the purpose of the law was not some kind of tyrannical imposition of the divine will on man. It was given for man's good. Its intention was to keep man bound close to God - 'united and bound to his Maker'. Just as in giving the law later on to Israel, God was graciously binding himself to his people in order 'to bind them more and more to their benefactor'.²⁸ This was the original, positive, and unchanging function of the law.

According to Calvin, then, the Edenic arrangement was a 'gracious' arrangement, in which God condescended to deal with man according to man's ability as a creature. Bruggink is correct at this point in saying that 'There

is no conflict of gracious and non-gracious elements in Calvin', but this does not imply, as Bruggink, following T.F. Torrance, insisted, that in an unfallen state there was no place for works in the sustenance of the *imago dei*. Calvin clearly stated that the *imago dei*, which man was to reflect, was expressed in the law which man as a creature was to obey.²⁹ The 'gracious' accommodation of God in Eden was decidedly expressed in a legal manner designed to bind and unite Adam to God. It promised implicitly to obedience the continuance of life, that is, in loving and serving God.

Calvin suggested that Adam's obedience would have enabled him 'if he so willed, to attain to eternal life', meaning, as he put it elsewhere that he would 'have passed into heaven without death', because death was explicitly threatened for disobedience.³⁰ And in promising such blessings to man for obedience, God was in no way under any obligation to give such to man. It was an expression of his sheer goodness and liberality to make this promise or 'covenant' with man in this way. A 'legal' element in this arrangement did not at all imply 'a cold, contractual' sense of relationship as opposed to a religious sense.³² The essence of law was to love and serve God with all the soul and mind and strength. The legal factor did not make such a relationship less religious or consign it to the realm of 'mere mental acquiescence'.³² The modern trend of contrasting Calvin's 'warm piety' with the Calvinists' 'cold legalism' reflects more a pictorial use of language than a proper portrayal of the use of law in Reformed theology, both in Calvin and his successors.

Calvin did not use the term 'covenant of works' in this context, but the kind of language he did use is worth noting: divine condescension, accommodation to man's capacity, binding and uniting man with God, a promissory agreement of life with legal and ethical obligations. It might well be asked, What more is needed to constitute a

covenant of works arrangement? Certainly Calvin had no scruples about referring to the continuing validity of this arrangement in covenantal terms: 'Since then it pleased God to descend so far as to promise life to men if they kept his law, they ought to accept this offer as springing from his liberality. There is no absurdity, then, if men do live, that is, if they deserve eternal life according to agreement'. Indeed Calvin went so far as to equate this with the situation before 'man's declension' or fall, as he proceeded to explain: 'God...treats according to an agreement, and so there is a mutual obligation between himself and his people. No one will surely deny that God here exhibits a specimen of his mercy when he deigns thus familiarly to make a covenant with man.'

Encountering some imaginary objector who might say that this is all in vain, and that it would make God's promise of no effect since no one is now able to keep the law, Calvin continued, 'I confess it, but *man's declension* cannot as I have said, abolish the glory of God's goodness, since that always remains fixed, and God *still acts liberally* in being willing thus to enter into covenant with his people...God then put forth a remarkable proof of his goodness in promising life to all who kept his law: and this will remain perfect and entire'.³³ In other words the gracious arrangement of life as the promise for keeping the law given before man's declension, still stood and it was reaffirmed in the giving of the law. According to Calvin 'man's declension is accidental', and calls for the recovery of life through the saving grace of Christ, which otherwise would not have been needed if man had kept the law. For, said Calvin, 'if anyone keeps the law, it will follow that he has no need of the grace of Christ'.³⁴

It may be objected that this passage from the *Commentary on Ezekiel* only applied to the Siniatic arrangement and not to Eden. But it has already been pointed out that Calvin regarded the Siniatic law as

precisely the same as that which governed Adam's relationship with God in Eden. The denial of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was just a single commandment reflecting Adam's obligation to the entire moral law. And that 'legal' arrangement in which there was a promise of life for obedience and a threat of death for disobedience continued and was not to be treated as an absurdity simply because it was now 'far above human capacity'.³⁵ And the reason it was not to be viewed as absurd was because such an arrangement expressed the unchanging character and will of God, and because 'the gospel...did not bring forward a different way of salvation. Rather, it confirmed and satisfied whatever the law had promised'.³⁶

When Calvin compared 'the covenant of the law' and 'the covenant of the gospel', his comparison did not reflect a different way of salvation from the perspective of God's righteousness and character.³⁷ The way of salvation was still perfect obedience to his law. The difference lay only in the question of who rendered the obedience necessary to satisfy the law. While man's obedience was no longer sufficient to justify him before God, the essential covenant of the law remained an integral part of the covenant of grace which provided justification through Christ's obedience and death alone. (This will be considered more fully later.) Any contrast or change in the covenant was only in the shadows, images and ceremonies, the appendages or 'accidental properties of the covenant', which, while simply the means of administering the covenant, had come to bear the name 'covenant' themselves. This 'covenant' was done away, but the essence of the true covenant as a gracious, legal arrangement remained.³⁸

This kind of arrangement corresponded to that which was made with Adam, except that before the fall it was effectual through Adam's obedience, whereas after the fall it was effectual only through Christ's obedience on behalf

of his people. It corresponded also with that arrangement made with the patriarchs before Sinai. Abraham was justified not just simply because 'he laid hold on a single word, respecting the offspring to be brought forth', said Calvin, but because his faith borrowed a righteousness from elsewhere, of which he himself, like all fallen men, was destitute. He was justified because he 'obtained righteousness in the sight of God, and that by imputation'. That righteousness was the righteousness of faith and could not be ascribed to Abraham's obedience to the covenant of the law. Nevertheless what Abraham borrowed was related to, and satisfied the requirements of the law, because Abraham's circumcision was 'put as the earnest and symbol' of the covenant of the law.³⁹

In other words, Calvin was saying that the covenant of the law, while not fully verbalized until the time of Moses and not entirely fulfilled until the time of Christ, was still an integral part of the covenant of grace made with Abraham. It is impossible to oppose grace to law absolutely in Calvin's thought without distorting it, and this is nowhere more true than with reference to the pre-fall situation. Adam stood in a 'gracious' relationship with God, but a law was imposed upon him to regulate that relationship. If this was not so then there could have been no real fall, and no place for the kind of recovering grace, consistent with the law of God, that was manifest in the redemption purchased through Christ.⁴⁰

The fall of man did not change the character or will of God. God's nature and will, said Calvin, is 'single and simple', 'one and undivided.'⁴¹ That will was revealed in the law, therefore it remained unchanged. Calvin did, of course, speak of God's 'hidden will' or 'secret counsels', which are as 'a deep abyss' and beyond the comprehension of man.⁴² With respect to the destinies of men, the effects of God's secret choice may be eventually manifest, but the reasons behind his choice

remained concealed.⁴³ This did not, however, imply a double will in God, but 'to suit our infirmity, the will of God is set before us as double'.⁴⁴ Calvin was simply saying that exhaustive knowledge of God's will lay beyond the capacity of man in the *arcanum Dei consilium*, and that where men cannot relate the statements concerning what is hidden with what has been revealed, then they must resort to the reverent adoration of the apostle Paul: 'O the depth...'⁴⁵ That was why Calvin could make what he acknowledged to be an apparently paradoxical statement in this context: 'The will of God is the cause of all things that happen in the world; and yet God is not the author of evil.'⁴⁶ For Calvin this twin affirmation was something clear from what God had revealed to be true about himself in Scripture, but *how* this could be remained a secret in the counsels of God that were not to be pried into by man.⁴⁷

The moral law, therefore, remained, after the fall, as the measure of God's will for man, his 'eternal rule of righteousness' for his creatures.⁴⁸ But while the standard and obligation of the law remained unchanged, the law did take on 'accidental' functions with the advent of sin which it did not have before. Before the fall, the law was solely a minister of life, guiding man's life of obedience and binding him closer to his God. After the fall, it became 'the minister of death' (II Cor.3:7), but this 'is so accidentally, and from the corruption of our nature'.⁴⁹ What was natural in Eden was no longer 'natural', because the 'nature' God created was now depraved and corrupted.⁵⁰ And that corruption, Adam not only brought upon himself by his disobedience, but with it 'he infected all his posterity', so that they were identified with him in his guilt and loss.⁵¹ All men needed to be reconciled with God now, so the law began to operate in relation to the covenant of grace, which came into effect immediately as God's way of reconciliation.

In contrast to Luther's mainly dual use of the law,⁵² Calvin clearly outlined a three-fold use of the moral law before going on to expound the decalogue in the *Institutes*, and this he did 'in a manner appropriate to the covenant setting'.⁵³ Calvin drew attention to the fact that in being given the law, the Jews were repeatedly being reminded 'of that freely given covenant made with their fathers of which they were to be the heirs'.⁵⁴ The use of the law, therefore, must be seen supremely in relation to the eternal covenant of grace in Christ.⁵⁵

The first use of the law in relation to man as a sinner, was to impress upon men how far short they came of that divine standard of righteousness - 'it warns, informs, convicts, and lastly condemns, every man of his own unrighteousness'.⁵⁶ It showed man what he should be, and promised the reward of eternal life upon condition of perfect obedience. As Calvin put it: 'We cannot gainsay that the reward of eternal salvation awaits complete obedience to the law as the Lord has promised...the promises of the law, in so far as they are conditional, depend upon perfect obedience to the law.'⁵⁷ But because no man can observe the law perfectly, all are thereby rendered inexcusable and condemned to certain death'.⁵⁸ The law mirrored the selfishness of man, and causing him to despair of help in himself, it moved him to seek a remedy, which was to be found in Christ alone, for his condition under the law.⁵⁹ In the reprobate, the law fulfilled this same function of condemnation, the difference being that they did not proceed to the remedy of regeneration and repentance through Christ.⁶⁰

It is only against this background that the basic emphases in Calvin's presentation of the work of Christ as the confirmation and establishing of the covenant of grace can be understood. Peterson has pointed out that '*the free love of God in Jesus Christ is the starting place for Calvin's doctrine of the atonement*', and not the doctrine

of sin, which is nevertheless 'theologically prior to his doctrine of atonement'.⁶¹ It is true that in Calvin the primary source of Christ's work goes back to the eternal counsels, but he never lost sight of the fact that the wonder of the eternal free love of Christ, which Peterson demonstrated from Calvin's *Commentary on John 3:16* etc., was always directed, even from eternity, to perishing sinners. He loved us... 'when we were enemies'.⁶²

While Peterson was correct to draw attention to Calvin's stress on the free love of God which preceded man's salvation, particularly in relation to the doctrine of election which made him 'loved in a double sense',⁶³ yet atonement could only be discussed meaningfully in relation to human sin. It was, therefore, the incarnation - God becoming man - which 'makes the atonement intelligible'.⁶⁴ Because of the nature of sin, infecting all men and leaving man incapable of self-salvation, if there was to be any salvation it must come from outside, from God himself. Hence Calvin's stress on the necessity of a Mediator who was truly God and truly man.⁶⁵ Christ was fully divine, the eternal Son of God, and remained so when he became incarnate in the womb of Mary. He was 'God manifest in flesh', and yet remained God outside of the flesh. This was the meaning of the so-called *extra-Calvinisticum* in Calvin's theology.⁶⁶ Only one who was both Life and Righteousness itself could 'conquer sin' and 'swallow up death'.⁶⁷ At the same time only one who was truly man could counter man's disobedience with the obedience necessary to 'satisfy God's judgment, and pay the penalties for sin'.⁶⁸ And such a man must be untainted by the original sin of Adam and remain sinless during his life. The first of these requirements was accomplished by the secret work of the Spirit in the virgin birth of Christ, and the second by his perfect fulfilment of the law of God.⁶⁹ In this way God 'coupled human nature with divine that to atone for sin he might submit the weakness of the

one to death, and that wrestling with death by the power of the other nature, he might win the victory for us'.⁷⁰ Christ was therefore a Mediator according to both his divine and human natures, able to reconcile God with men, and men with God.⁷¹ In the covenant of grace, 'He is the Mediator of reconciliation, by whom we are accepted of God, and the Mediator of intercession, through whom the way is opened for us to call upon the Father'.⁷² Calvin went on to stress that Christ was always the 'Mediator of all teaching' that God ever imparted to man, for it was always in Christ that he revealed himself to men, and this was impressed upon those to whom the apostles wrote in order that they might learn 'that He who is the foundation of the free covenant held also the primacy in giving the law'.⁷³

In the chapter following the section on the person of Christ in the *Institutes*, Calvin linked the doctrine of Christ's person with that of his work by unfolding the doctrine of the threefold office (*munus triplex*) of the Mediator of the new covenant, in order to show why Christ was sent as Messiah by the Father and what he has conferred upon his people.⁷⁴ As prophet, Christ proclaimed God's will, and continued to fulfil the ministry of 'an unbroken line of prophets' who taught the doctrine of God's salvation. He was therefore the unifier of Scripture, the sum of doctrine and perfect wisdom - 'outside Christ there is nothing worth knowing'.⁷⁵ As king, Christ demonstrated his eternal dominion over the whole world,⁷⁶ but more especially his spiritual rule, and the enrichment and protection of his own people, who 'with the greatest eagerness to the divine will...submit willingly and obediently'.⁷⁷ It was as priest, however, that Christ fulfilled the chief task (or 'principal point') which God willed and ordained, and upon which 'our whole salvation turns', that is, the offering up of himself as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God and expiate the sins of his people in order to reconcile them with God. And having

provided the grace of forgiveness and sanctification, Christ continued to apply the fruits of his death to his people through an ongoing intercessory ministry.⁷⁸

Peterson has isolated six basic biblical themes in Calvin's presentation of the work of Christ - the obedient second Adam, the Victor, our legal substitute, our sacrifice, our merit, and our example.⁷⁹ There is considerable overlap in these, but each of them is important, because they answer directly to the human predicament highlighted by Calvin's first use of the law, and demonstrate that Calvin viewed Christ's work in relation to man's salvation as a legal work.

It has already been noted that Adam's relationship with God was guided by God's righteous law, and that the severing of that relationship and Adam's ruin was brought about by disobedience to that law.⁸⁰ Obedience was necessary to satisfy God's righteous judgment, and restore man's nature to its former condition. 'Accordingly, our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved.'⁸¹ It was the ruin which the first Adam caused that Christ as the second Adam, or the antitype, came to remedy: 'He came to restore everything which had been brought to ruin in Adam'.⁸² Consequently, said Calvin, 'He became the Author of our salvation...when he remedied the disobedience of Adam by a contrary act of obedience'.⁸³ This meant not just obedience in going to death, although Calvin did stress that 'even in death itself his willing obedience is the important thing', or what later theologians called his 'passive obedience'.⁸⁴ It also embraced Christ's 'active obedience' to the law of God during his lifetime. Christ, as it were, lived over again the lives of his people as they should have lived it in perfect conformity to God's

law. In doing so he acquired for them that standard of righteousness acceptable to God, in order 'to render God favourable and kindly toward us'.^{e5} Indeed the righteousness of Christ not only answered to what Adam lost and would have retained had he been obedient to God's law, but it actually 'surpasses Adam'. In the covenant of grace the believer is better off than Adam was in paradise. Calvin's famous passage in his *Commentary on Romans* in this respect must be related to what he said about 'double' righteousness in his *Sermons on Job*.^{e6}

Secondly, Adam's disobedience to the law brought him under a curse. This involved a terrible bondage, servitude, and oppression. Sin, death, and the devil were the enemies. 'Adam, through the hatred and deceit of the devil, fell into disobedience, doing and striving in opposition to the commandment of his Creator; and by his sin, so brought into the world the infection and poison of sin, that all who descended from him, were from birth deserving of the wrath and punishment of God, partakers of death and damnation, enslaved under the power and tyranny of the devil'.^{e7} The remedy, therefore, was set forth also as a victory over the oppressors of man. Christ, the God-man, came as Conqueror of these enemies, 'and by His conquest has obtained the victory for us, and redeemed us from the curse of the law'.^{e8}

It was in relation to the substitutionary work of Christ, however, that the legal element really came to the fore. Sinful man's predicament before the law was twofold: he could no longer live up to the standard of God's righteousness in his law, by which alone he could merit salvation.^{e9} Even if he could start again and begin to do that, he would still be under a sentence of punishment for having previously broken the law, and God, as 'a righteous Judge...does not allow his law to be broken without punishment'. Man, therefore, said Calvin, lay under God's wrath and curse until some way of appeasing God

and absolving him of his guilt could be found.⁹⁰ Christ, 'made under the law', was God's answer. He lived a substitutionary life for his people, in perfect obedience to God's law in every detail.⁹¹ It was Christ's life of obedience to the law that was imputed as God's gift to man in justification. The life Christ lived was reckoned as the sinner's life.⁹²

But Christ not only lived the sinner's life over again, he died the sinner's death - the punishment incurred by breaking the law. The heart of the atonement, according to Calvin, was that Christ as the Mediator of the new covenant not only took the sinner's part, he actually took his place as a violator of God's law. That was the place of a 'wicked and profane' person. He was ranked as an evil doer, a criminal, a malefactor, 'the most wicked of all', when he took the sinner's guilt and punishment.⁹³ He paid the sinner's penalty.⁹⁴ He subjected himself to the sinner's curse and the wrath of God.⁹⁵ He bore the sinner's judgment.⁹⁶ He died the sinner's death.⁹⁷ He suffered the sinner's hell of estrangement from God.⁹⁸ And all this Christ did to satisfy the demands of a broken law. In this work Christ was undoing what Adam's disobedience had done. He was taking Adam's place. 'Our Lord came forth as true man and took the person and name of Adam in order to take Adam's place in obeying the Father, to present our flesh as the price of satisfaction to God's righteous judgment, and, in the same flesh, to pay the penalty that we had deserved.'⁹⁹ Both Christ's perfect obedience and sacrificial death were essentially substitutionary acts of the second Adam.

The righteousness with respect to the law which mankind had lost in Adam, was restored in Christ to the elect. And not only was righteousness with respect to the revealed law imputed to them, but righteousness with respect to the glorious righteousness of God himself, so that redeemed man, renewed by the Holy Spirit, was better

off than Adam was in his first creation. Adam's condition was always 'liable to change' through failure to obey. The redeemed man has been given an incorruptible righteousness, and, through the Spirit, an 'indefectible constancy' in the covenant of grace.¹⁰⁰

Christ, as the fulfilment of the entire corpus of Old Testament religion, made it necessary that he not only be a substitute, but a sacrificial substitute - 'the Lamb of God', who was foreshadowed in the Old Testament types and sacrifices. Christ also fulfilled this role.¹⁰¹ He was the perfect, unique, once-for-all sacrifice, without any defect or blemish, so that he 'could pacify His (God's) wrath', by removing both the penalty and guilt of sin.¹⁰² 'For we could not believe with assurance that Christ is our redemption, ransom, and propitiation unless he had been a sacrificial victim', said Calvin,¹⁰³ but 'since he alone is the Lamb of God, he also is the sole offering for sin, the sole expiation, the sole satisfaction'.¹⁰⁴ Christ's sacrifice paid the price of redemption,¹⁰⁵ and reconciled men with God,¹⁰⁶ having turned away the anger and wrath of God against sin.¹⁰⁷

It is practically impossible to separate the theme of Christ as our merit from that of Christ as our substitute. Willis and Peterson have pointed out that separate consideration is justified because in debate with Laelius Socinus 'Calvin was forced to give expanded clarification to the doctrine of the merit of Christ', and devote to it an entire chapter in the *Institutes*.¹⁰⁸ Socinus thought that the idea of Christ meriting salvation obscured God's grace. Calvin replied that these could not be separated, because salvation through the merit of Christ's obedience and death was according to the will of God: 'God solely of His own good pleasure appointed him Mediator to obtain salvation for us....Christ's merit depends upon God's grace alone, which has ordained this manner of salvation for us'.¹⁰⁹

What was foundational in, and common to, all these themes related to the atonement of Christ in Calvin's thought was that God was acting consistently with what he had revealed of his will and character as the directive for man's life. Man having violated the initial arrangement, God introduced another arrangement in the eternal covenant of grace, (always prior as far as the eternal counsel of God was concerned) which was consistent with the righteousness of God, and satisfying to that righteousness on behalf of those who stood condemned in unrighteousness before the law. 'God appoints nothing at random, and hence it follows that the cause of his death is lawful...in no other way than by his death could the justice of God be satisfied',¹¹⁰ said Calvin. What this meant first and foremost was that Christ's work of redemption, in constituting a covenant of grace for sinful man, was essentially a law-work.

From this discussion of the first use of the law by Calvin, it becomes very evident how disastrously writers like Kendall have erred in saying that the function of the law prior to conversion was merely 'an accidental effect of the law'.¹¹¹ Kendall implied that it was accidental in the sense of being unnecessary and irrelevant. This was to read more into the use of the word 'accidental' than Calvin intended. Certainly, Calvin referred to this use of the law as 'accidental', but this was only in comparison with its original function with respect to unfallen man.¹¹² In relation to sinful men, Calvin emphatically insisted that the law had a primary and essential task in convincing man of sin specifically in order to lead them to faith in Christ. To say that Calvin never does 'hint that this effect is necessary before faith', is to misrepresent Calvin completely.

The enormity of this error is compounded by Kendall's accompanying assertion that it was only in its second use that Calvin mentioned the law as having the 'effect of

showing man his need'.¹¹³ That this was Calvin's express purpose in teaching the first use of the law has been demonstrated beyond question. This bending of the evidence by Kendall was designed to demonstrate that Calvin could not have entertained any thought remotely similar to a covenant of works because faith precedes repentance and that 'faith corresponds to the freely given promise and repentance refers to our obedience'.¹¹⁴ This was to separate what Calvin viewed as inseparable. For him true repentance and faith accompanied each other and were manifested not only in conversion, but continued seriously to be exercised throughout the Christian's life when he knew himself to belong to God.¹¹⁵ 'Repentance and faith are thynges coupled together', he preached.¹¹⁶ And he wrote, 'We recognize more fully from the definition of repentance and faith how the two are uniquely conjoint'.¹¹⁷ It was the continuing nature of repentance that Calvin was teaching in the *Institutes* when he said that repentance was the fruit of faith and 'flows from it...as fruit from a tree'. He continued, 'It constantly follows faith, *but it is also born of faith*'.¹¹⁸ In other words the moment faith was created by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, repentance was born also, and continued to be an expression of true faith in the Christian.

Calvin stressed this continuity of repentance contrary to the Anabaptist and Jesuit teaching, which, he claimed, limited repentance 'to a paltry few days'. Repentance, like the faith in which it was begotten extended throughout the Christian's life.¹¹⁹ Repentance, therefore, had its foundation in the gospel, which was embraced by faith when the preaching of repentance and the announcement of the gospel came. To present the righteousness of the law was an integral part of such preaching, for the simple reason that for Calvin the law was an integral part of the gospel and repentance was for the violation of the law. For Calvin the clear function

of the law in this context of conversion was to awaken the conscience to its guilt, until the sinner 'realizing that he does not possess the ability to pay the law what he owes, and despairing in himself, he is moved to seek and await help from another quarter'.¹²⁰ The first use of the law, therefore, both revealed to man his real need as a sinner before the law and pointed him to Christ as the one who has paid on his behalf what he owed to the law.

Unlike this mainly personal dimension in the first use of the law, Calvin's second use had a more social and civil function. Here the law acted as a restraint or a deterrent to the behaviour of those who were not believers, and whose depravity could otherwise boil over into all manner of lawlessness and contempt for God.¹²¹ Calvin further developed this second use of the law in the context of his discussion of 'Civil Government', where he described the moral law as the basis for nations framing laws such as were expedient for them 'providing they be framed according to the perpetual rule of love, so that although they vary in form they may have the same principle'.¹²²

The third use of the law (*usus tertius legis*) in Calvin's thought followed on from what has been already discussed concerning the relationship of the law and the gospel. For Calvin, this was the 'principal use, which pertains more clearly to the proper use of the law, [and] finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns'.¹²³ What Calvin obviously meant here was that in the believer the law reverted again to having the function which it originally had before 'man's declension'. For the believer it could no longer be a minister of death, or condemnation, or curse, because all these had been removed in Christ. Therefore it assumed once more the role it had with Adam, that of regulating the new life-giving covenantal relationship established with God.

But the parallel was not exactly the same, however.

If Adam needed the regulation of divine law in his relationship with God, the believer needed it more so. Although the believer had the law engraved in his heart by the indwelling Spirit, he was not yet free in this life from all the limitations of depravity, therefore he could still benefit from the written law in two ways. It could be a teaching instrument for believers 'to learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in their understanding of it'.¹²⁴ Secondly, it could help them in the struggle against 'the bitter flesh', by exhorting them in the pursuit of God's righteousness.¹²⁵

It was failure to appreciate the true nature of the law as 'one everlasting and unchanging rule to live by', said Calvin, that caused 'certain ignorant persons not to recognize this distinction and to separate Moses from Christ'.¹²⁶ The condemnation and curse of the law was abrogated for believers, since Christ had taken that, as was the use of Old Testament ceremonies, since Christ had fulfilled these ancient types of his work.¹²⁷ But Christ, by his teaching and example, upheld the force and perpetuity of the moral law: 'Therefore through Christ the teaching of the law remains inviolable' as an instrument to teach, correct and admonish,¹²⁸ and to bind the regenerate closer to Christ, 'For if the law and the prophets be most thoroughly searched, there is not to be found in them one word which does not refer and lead to Him'.¹²⁹

Here, then, was the twofold base for Calvin's *usus tertius legis*. First, it was God's law, expressing the will and character of God, therefore it was unchangeable and made a total claim upon every area of life. Secondly, and following from that, Christ was the visible expression and fulfilment of the law. It was failure to understand this that has caused Calvin, and his successors, to be accused of departing from Jesus and returning to a legalistic code.¹³⁰ For Calvin there was no disharmony

between the law and Christ. The perpetuity of the law was grounded in Christ.¹³¹ This was the error of the Pharisees and Judaizers, who followed their own interpretation of the law rather than 'Christ, its best interpreter.... They thought that Christ added to the law when he only restored it to its integrity'. Christ spelt out the positive, spiritual, inward meaning which the law had always had, and which the Pharisees had ignored.¹³²

When Calvin therefore opposed the *damnationis ministerium* of the law to the gospel, it was not the law or the Old Testament in their fullness that he was opposing to the New as 'litera' to 'spiritus' in the way Møller has implied.¹³³ It was rather a limited view of the 'bare' nature of the law that was being spoken of. Calvin made it clear that 'the gospel points out with the finger what the law foreshadowed under types...where the whole law is concerned, the gospel differs from it only in clarity of manifestation'.¹³⁴

Calvin's 'sober interpretation of the law', therefore, is to be seen not only in terms of words, but in a practical outworking of the Christian life.¹³⁵ There was a remarkable unity or parallel with his teaching on love of God and neighbour, the sermon on the mount, the life of Christ, life in the Spirit, and the restoration of the image of God in man.¹³⁶ There was no conflict between the law and love, between the decalogue and the sermon on the mount, between Moses and Christ. There was no disharmony between the purpose of the law and the operation of the Spirit and the likeness of God in man. Profitable as further explication of these points would be, it can only be noted in passing that their importance lies in that they were all expressions of the Christian life, which Calvin with his usual safeguards concerning justification, invariably introduced in the context of the law: 'Nor can any man infer...that the law is superfluous for believers.... The whole life of Christians ought to be a

sort of practice of godliness, for which we have been called to sanctification. Hence it was the function of the law, by warning men of their duty, to arouse them to a zeal for holiness and innocence'.¹³⁷

Calvin's third use of the law was unfolded in the doctrine of the Christian's sanctification, or 'rightly ordered life', by which God's image was restored.¹³⁸ As expressions of the Christian life these figures were all evidences of true and genuine faith,¹³⁹ and were bound up in the context of the covenant, for 'perfect obedience to the law...is contained in the covenant of grace under which are contained both forgiveness of sins and the spirit of sanctification'.¹⁴⁰ Calvin brought these together again in discussing the fifth and sixth petitions of the Lord's Prayer: 'The spiritual covenant that God has made for the salvation of his church rests on these two members', that is, forgiveness, and the warfare of the Christian life guided and supported by the law within the heart.¹⁴¹

For Calvin, therefore, the covenant of grace did not end with the forgiveness of sins and the justifying of ungodly sinners through the work of Christ. It also incorporated the entire Christian life of obedience, prayer, warfare and good works. This was the message Calvin not only wrote in the *Institutes* and *Commentaries*, but that which he preached to his congregation in Geneva, when he told them that the preaching of the Word and the proper ministering of the sacraments were marks of a 'regular and well-managed church', and 'are the means by which the children of God may be confirmed in the faith, and are incited to live and die in the obedience of His law'.¹⁴²

All this poses the very important question of the place of good works in the covenant of salvation, and what significance Calvin attached to them. Against his Roman opponents, Calvin maintained the distinctive Reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone as the 'one sole

means of recovering salvation' for men cursed under the law.¹⁴³ Justification meant gracious acceptance by God and free forgiveness of sins through the righteousness of Christ imputed to us.¹⁴⁴ This, Calvin maintained against Osiander's doctrine of 'essential righteousness', or the Scholastics' doctrine of good works as effective for justification.¹⁴⁵ It was covenant mercy to which man contributed nothing.¹⁴⁶ But for Calvin, justifying faith was never alone. In the covenant God's people always 'receive a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness, we may have in heaven instead of a Judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's Spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life'.¹⁴⁷ Calvin never separated justification and sanctification. They were as indivisible as the light and heat of the sun.¹⁴⁸ These blessings were in Christ, and 'Christ cannot be torn into two parts'.¹⁴⁹ He 'justifies no-one whom he does not at the same time sanctify'.¹⁵⁰

The question then arose: Did the inseparability of justification and sanctification imply that the works of the believer were in some sense meritorious and acceptable to God in relation to justification? Luther's answer was a tendency rigidly to separate law and gospel at this point and consider all works of the believer, no matter how good, as sinful and totally unacceptable to God, while maintaining, however, that good works were the fruit of salvation.¹⁵¹ But Calvin maintained that the good works of the believer had their source in God, and therefore must in some sense be acceptable to him: 'For the Lord cannot fail to love and embrace the good things that he works in them through his Spirit'.¹⁵²

Calvin, therefore, while considering justification and sanctification to be inseparable, considered them distinguishable with respect to justification. There was a righteousness arising from man's works which was

acceptable to God, for in 'all covenants of his mercy the Lord requires of his servants in return uprightness and sanctity of life'.¹⁵³ But this 'works righteousness', Calvin said, was 'always in some part faulty because of its imperfections',¹⁵⁴ and was therefore inadequate for justification, which could only come through the righteousness which is by faith (ie. the righteousness of Christ) from which all works were excluded.¹⁵⁵ Works righteousness 'should be subordinate to it, so as to leave the latter in full possession of the salvation of man'.¹⁵⁶

How then was this 'works righteousness' acceptable to God? Through the covenant, was Calvin's answer. The believer's good works and observance of the law, Calvin viewed as the fulfilment of the conditions of the covenant, and were therefore acceptable to God on the basis of the covenant only. It was at this point that Calvin agreed with the medieval nominalists that good works were acceptable to God 'by reason of the covenant'.¹⁵⁷ The scholastics, however, still taught that merit was obtained for these works by the covenant, whereas Calvin saw them as still defiled and full of 'blemishes and spots', and empty of merit.¹⁵⁸ They were acceptable only because God promised in the covenant to accept them as good; and not only to accept them, but also to reward them.¹⁵⁹

It is only by continuing to read the scholastic view of the covenant into the Reformed view that modern misconceptions of the latter as 'oppressive legalism' can still persist. Møller, for example, speaking of the reformation doctrine of salvation through faith in the gospel, said that 'The idea of the covenant tends to displace this fundamental insight', and that 'The ultimate consequence is that we are saved by faith *and* deeds'.¹⁶⁰ Karlberg has replied properly to this charge: 'If that were the case, the difference between the Old and New covenants would be substantial, not merely accidental'.¹⁶¹ The very nature of the covenant itself excluded the possibility of

Møller's ultimate conclusion.

The question remains, however, how a holy God, even out of his covenantal goodness, could presume to accept and reward works which were imperfect and so far short of his righteousness, and still remain consistent with his righteous character. Calvin's answer to this was ingenious and complete. It was through the justifying grace of the covenant. Not only were believers with all their defilement justified by Christ and accepted and adopted by God for his own as 'pleasing and lovable to him'. Everything pertaining to the entire life of the believer was included in that justification. Therefore, the believer's works, though still defiled, were also justified by Christ in the covenant of grace and were as acceptable and pleasing to God as the believer's person.¹⁶²

Justification by faith was the basis of 'works righteousness', and it was only in this light that works could be referred to as the reason for the bestowal of divine benefits.¹⁶³ 'God imputes the works of the faithful to them for righteousness, not in consequence of any intrinsic merit which they possess, but of his own free unmerited grace'.¹⁶⁴ It was in this way that when 'in all covenants of his mercy the Lord requires of his servants in return uprightness and sanctity of life, lest his goodness be mocked...he wills to keep in their duty those admitted to the fellowship of the covenant'.¹⁶⁵

In other words, Calvin was insisting that the conditions of the covenant, or the obligations of the moral law, were contained in the covenant itself. The true believer was enabled to fulfil them acceptably, though still imperfectly, through the grace of the covenant and the power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, he was rewarded for such works not because of any merit attached to them, but simply out of the sheer goodness of God's generosity.¹⁶⁶ In his *Sermons on Job*, Calvin pointed out that when the believer engaged in the service of God, God

was never in debt to the believer for the service to which he must dedicate himself, nevertheless, he graciously promised to reward it.¹⁶⁷ In the *Institutes* he gave three reasons for the rewarding of the believer's works under the covenant: One was that the believer was reconciled to him in Christ without the help of works. The second was his own fatherly generosity and loving-kindness which placed value on these works without regard to their worth. And the third was that imperfections and corruptions which would otherwise identify them as sins and not virtues were not imputed: 'Works enjoined by God have their reward because the Lawgiver himself accepts them as evidence of obedience. Therefore, such works do not derive value from their own worth or merit but because God highly values our obedience to him.'¹⁶⁸ Reward, therefore, as much as 'acceptability' was also based in the first member of the covenant - forgiveness, or justification by faith.¹⁶⁹

If Holmes Rolston at this point was looking to Calvin to rescue him from the plague of 'oppressive legalism' in the Calvinists and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, he would find in him little comfort. If he wanted to condemn the *Confession* for retaining the law of God as a non-meritorious 'duty and...obligation' within the framework of the covenant, he would clearly have needed to condemn Calvin as well.¹⁷⁰ The truth is that in neither Calvin or the *Confession* was there anything 'legalistic' about the believer's duty to observe the law of God. All legal requirements in the sense of penalties or punishment had been fully met in the justifying grace of the covenant in Christ. Nor was there anything 'oppressive' about it, since the believer's obedience was entirely within the framework of the covenant of grace. It arose from, and was made possible by, the operation of the Spirit of God, and was accepted and rewarded by God again only through the justifying grace of Christ. Calvin did not make such a rigid 'definite distinction between law and grace in a

covenant context' as has been alleged. This allegation and the conclusion drawn from it that 'Calvin became the fountain-head of a second stream of thought which contributed to the development of covenant theology' fails to stand up in the light of the evidence examined.¹⁷¹ For Calvin the law did 'constitute an inalienable part' of the covenant, but it was no 'petty casuistic legalism' which was mediated through the commandments. It was rather the will of a gracious God, who having reconciled his disobedient and ungrateful people to himself, was to be known in a living personal relationship through obedience to the demands of his character and will.¹⁷²

NOTES: Chapter Nine

1 Calvin, *Inst.*, II.5.9; II.7.13; *Reply to Sadolet*, CR, 33.393 (Olin ed. 61).

2 *Inst.*, II.8.51; cf. II.7.13. cf. Zwingli, *Opera*, 4.102 'Law is the command of Deity, which expresses his nature and will'; Bullinger, *Decades*, (PSoc. 2.194f); *Confessio Helvetica Posterior*, XII.1

3 *Inst.*, II.8.59; cf. I.17.2 'the precepts of the law comprise God's will'; *Com.on Jer.*, 9:15.

4 *Com.on Ps.*, 89:34; *Ser.on Deut.*, 4 (1:1-3).

5 *Inst.*, II.7.2,6,12; III.7.10; III.8.4; *Com.on Isa.*, 8:20.

6 *Inst.*, II.7.13.

7 CR, 61.1-62.514; *Sermons of Maister John Calvin upon the Booke of Job*, trs. A. Golding, (London, 1584).

8 R.R. Sundquist, 'The Third Use of the Law in the Thought of John Calvin: An Interpretation and Evaluation', PhD Thesis. (Columbia University, 1970); I.J. Hesselink, 'Christ, the Law, and the Christian: An Unexplored Aspect of the Third Use of the Law in Calvin's Theology', *Reformatio Perennis*, ed. B.A. Gerrish, (Pittsburgh, 1981), 11-26 (Also in *Readings in Calvin's Theology*, ed. D.K. McKim, (Grand Rapids, 1984, 179-191); A.J. Bandstra, 'Law and Gospel in Calvin and Paul', *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*, ed. D.E. Holwerda, (Grand Rapids, 1976), 11-39; J.H. Leith, 'Creation and Redemption: Law and Gospel in the Theology of John Calvin', *Marburg Revisited*, eds. P.C. Empe and J.I. McCord, (Minneapolis, 1966), 141-151; R.A. Gessert, 'The Integrity of Faith: An Inquiry into the Meaning of Law in the Thought of John Calvin', *SJT*, 13. (1960), 247-261; Dowey, *op.cit.*, 222-242; Niesel, *op.cit.*, 92-103.

9 Calvin, *Ser.on Job*, 413 (23:1-7).

10 *Ibid.*, 172 (9:29-35); 238 (13:16-22); 273 (15:11-16); 414 (23:1-7).

11 *Ibid.*, 171 (9:29-35).

12 *Ibid.*, 186 (10:16-17); 413 (23:1-7); 172 (9:25-35). For other passages making the same distinction, see 71 (3:12-19); 325 (19:1-12); 455 (27:1-4); 655 (36:1-7).

13 *Ibid.*, 275 (15:17-22); cf. *Inst.*, III.19.2.

14 *Ibid.*, 186 (10:16-17). For Calvin on natural law, see McNeill, 'Natural Law' 179-182; 'Natural Law in the

Thought of Luther', *CH*, 10. (1941), 212-215; ed. *God and Political Duty*, Intro. xv-xvii; Sundquist, *op.cit.*, 106ff.

15 *Inst.*, IV.20.8; cf. I.3.1,3; I.15.2; II.2.13,18,22,24; II.8.1-2; IV.20.6,16; *Com.on Acts*, 17:28-30; *Com.on I Cor.*, 9:19-22. Calvin made this equation continually with respect to sexual purity in his exposition of the Mosaic law - see *Har.of Pent.*, 2.433f (Ex.20:8); 3.97ff (Lev.18).

16 *Com.on Rom.*, 1:21.

17 *Ibid.*, 1:20; 2:12-13; cf. *Inst.*, I.3.1; I.4.1-4; II.22-24; *Com.on Hab.*, 1:16; *Ser.on Titus*, 1:15-16.

18 *Inst.*, II.2.22.

19 *Inst.*, II.8.1.

20 McNeill, ed. *God and Political Duty*, xiv.

21 Calvin, *Ser.on Job*, 414 (23:1-7)

22 Dowey, *op.cit.*, 223.

23 *Inst.*, IV.10.7; II.8.5; *Har.of Pent.*, 1.411 (Dt.29:29); *Com.on Ps*, 19:7. See also *Com.on Isa.*, 8:20; *Com.on Acts* 2:23; *Com.on Rom.*, 8:7; *Com.on I John*, 2:17.

24 *Com.on Hos.*, 12:6.

25 *Inst.*, II.1.4; cf. IV.10.15.

26 *Com.on Gen.*, 2:16.

27 See *Inst.*, II.8.8; III.7.10 where Calvin says that to break the law is to rail against God himself. cf. *Com.on Gen.*, 2:16; *Com.on Jonah*, 1:1-2; *Com.on Ps.*, 19:8.

28 *Inst.*, II.1.5; *Com.on Ezk.*, 20:11-12.

29 Bruggink, 'Calvin and Federal Theology', 17-18. See T.F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man*, 52. There is confusion in both Bruggink and Torrance as to the meaning of grace *pre-lapsus*. No distinction is made as to the nature of grace before the fall and after, whereas Calvin clearly understood the difference, as we shall see later.

30 *Inst.*, I.15.8; *Com.on Gen.*, 2:16.

31 cf. *Com.on Rom.*, 11:35.

32 Eenigenburg, *op.cit.*, 5.

33 Calvin, *Com.on Ezk.*, 20:11 (ital.mine); cf. *Inst.*, III.17.2,6-7; *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.35 (Lk.10:26).

34 *Ibid.*; contra Rolston's view of grace, *John Calvin versus the Westminster Confession*, 17, 22 etc.

35 *Har.of Pent.*, 3.203-205 (Lev.18:5).

36 *Inst.*, II.9.4; *Har.of Gosp.*, 2.253-257 (Mt.19:16-20).

37 *Inst.*, II.11.4.

- 38 *Ibid.*.
- 39 *Com.on Gen.*, 15:6.
- 40 *Com.on Gen.*, 2:16; *contra* Rolston, 16-22, 41-45; Bruggink, *op.cit.*, 17-18; T.F. Torrance, *op.cit.*, 52-53.
- 41 *Et.Pred.*, in *CR*, 36:364 'una. et simplex' (Reid 182-183); *Inst.*, I.17.1-2; *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.69 (Mt.23:37).
- 42 *Inst.*, I.17.2.
- 43 *Inst.*, III.22.11; III.23.1-3; *Har.of Pent.*, 1.410-411 (Dt.29:29); *Com.on Isa.*, 10:6 'When the Lord reveals his will in the law, I must not ascend to his secret decree, which he intended should not be known to me, but must yield explicit obedience.'
- 44 *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.69 (Mt.23:37).
- 45 *Inst.*, I.17.2; III.23.4-5; *cf.* *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.69-70 (Mt.23:37).
- 46 *Eternal Pred.*, in *CR*, 36.169 (Reid 169); *Articuli de Praedestinatione* C.R. 37.174; *Inst.*, I.17.3-5; II.23.2-5.
- 47 *Inst.*, III.21.2; III.22.1-7.
- 48 *Inst.*, IV.20.15. Calvin sometimes uses the word 'law' to refer to the entire form of religion given through Moses, and sometimes with particular reference to the temporary ceremonial and civil regulations (II.7.1-2,16; IV.20.14-21), but the 'true and eternal rule of righteousness', or the unchanging will of God, is the moral law summarized in the decalogue and in Christ's teaching (I.8.11; II.8.7,51-59).
- 49 *Com.on Gen.*, 2:16; *Com.on Rom.*, 7:10-11; *Com.on II Cor.*, 3:7.
- 50 *Inst.*, II.1.8-11.
- 51 *Inst.*, II.1.6-7; *Christ the End of the Law*, 36.
- 52 Luther, *Com.on Galatians*, 3:19; 4:3, *WA*, 40¹.479ff 'Hic sciendum est duplicem esse legis usum'; 40¹.554-557 esp.556.
- 53 McNeill, *Inst.*, II.7.6. n.9.
- 54 *Inst.*, II.7.1.
- 55 *Inst.*, II.8.51-59; *Har.of Pent.*, 'The Use of the Law', 3.196-201; *Com.on John*, 5.38; *Com.on Acts*, 13:39.
- 56 *Inst.*, II.7.6.
- 57 *Inst.*, II.7.2-4.
- 58 *Inst.*, II.7.3-5.
- 59 *Inst.*, II.7.6-9; *Com.on Gal.*, 3:10.
- 60 *Inst.*, II.7.9.

61 R.A. Peterson, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, (Phillipsburg, 1983), 1.

62 Calvin *Com.on John*, 3:16; *Har.of Gosp.*, (Mt.3:2); *Com.on Rom.*, 5:10,20; *Com.on Gal.*, 2:20; *Com.on Eph.*, 5:2; *Com.on Heb.*, 2:9.

63 Peterson *op.cit.*, 5-10; cf. Calvin *Com.on John*, 17:23; *Inst.*, II.16.3; III.21.1-7.

64 *Ibid.*, 11ff.

65 Calvin *Inst.*, II.12-14; *Com.on John*, 8:52; *Comm.on Phil.*, 2:5; *Com.on Col.*, 2:9; *Christ the End of the Law*, 9

66 *Inst.*, II.13.4; IV.17.30; I.13.8; II.12:2; *Har.of Gosp.*, 3.69 (Mt.23:37), 1.28-29; 3.203-204 (Lk.1:35; 23:43); *Com.on John*, 14:12; *Com.on Acts*, 1:11; *Com.on Heb.*, 1:14; *Comm.on I John* 1:1-2; 4:1-2. See also H.A. Oberman, 'The Extra Dimension in the Theology of Calvin', *JEH*, 21. (1970), 43-64; E.D. Willis, *Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-called 'Extra-Calvinisticum' in Calvin's Theology*, (Leiden, 1966); Wendel, *op.cit.*, 223-225.

67 *Com.on John*, 5:17.

68 *Com.on John*, 1:14; cf. *Com.on Heb.*, 4:15; *Inst.*, II.12.3; II.13; II.16.12.

69 *Inst.*, II.13:3-4; *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.28-29; 1.106-107 (Lk.1:35; 2:40); *Com.on John*, 11:33; *Com.on Rom.*, 8:3; *Com.on Heb.*, 4:15.

70 *Inst.*, II.12.3; cf. *Com.on I.Pet.*, 1:21; *Com.on Gal.*, 3:13; *Ser.on I.Tim.*, 1:9-10.

71 *Inst.*, II.14; cf. *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.32-33 (Lk.1:43); *Com.on John*, 1:14; *Com.on Gal.*, 4:4; *Com.on Phil.*, 2:5-10. For discussion of this aspect of Christ's incarnation, see J. Raitt, 'The Person of the Mediator: Calvin's Christology and Beza's Fidelity', *Occasional Papers No.1*, American Society of Reformation Research, (1977). MSS courtesy of the author; Peterson, *op.cit.*, 21-26; Willis, *op.cit.*, 61-100; J.N. Tylenda, 'Christ the Mediator: Calvin versus Stancaró', *CTJ*, 8. (1973), 5-11, 131-144; 'Calvin's Understanding of the Communication of Properties', *WTJ*, 38. (1975-76), 54-65.

72 *Com.on Gal.*, 3:19; cf. *Com.on Acts*, 10:43.

73 *Ibid.*.

74 *Inst.*, II.15. See also J.F. Jansen, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, (London, 1956), 26-59, who argues that the *munus triplex* was never a proper expression of Calvin's theology and was only introduced because of his love of systematizing. For contrary views see Willis, *op.cit.*, 86 n.1; Peterson, *op.cit.*, 27-28 n.2; G.C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ*, (Grand Rapids, 1965), 61ff.

75 *Inst.*, II.15.1-2; *Har. of Gosp.*, 2.201-202 (Mt.17:5); *Com. on John*, 14:24; *Com. on Acts*, 3:22; *Comm. on I Cor.*, 1:30.

76 *Inst.*, II.15.3; *Har. of Gosp.*, 3.112-113 (Mt.25:31).

77 *Inst.*, II.15.4-5.

78 *Inst.*, II.15.6; *Com. on Heb.*, 7:10,23; cf. *Inst.* II16:16; *Com. on Isa.*, 53:10; *Com. on I John*, 2:1.

79 Peterson, *op.cit.*, 40-82.

80 Calvin, *Inst.*, II.1.4ff.

81 *Inst.*, II.12.3,7; see Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ*, 321ff; P. van Buren, *Christ in our Place: The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation*, (Grand Rapids, 1975); Peterson, *op.cit.*, 40-45; Willis, *op.cit.*, 84ff.

82 *Com. on I Cor.*, 15:21f; *Com. on Rom.*, 5:12ff; *Com. on Heb.*, 2:5; *Christ the End of the Law*, 9.

83 *Com. on Heb.*, 5:9.

84 *Inst.*, II.16.5; *Com. on Isa.*, 53:7; *Com. on Phil.*, 2:8; *Com. on Heb.*, 10:10.

85 *Inst.*, II.16.5; *Har. of Gosp.*, 3.126-127 (Mt.26:17); *Com. on John*, 2:13; *Com. on Gal.*, 4:4.

86 *Com. on Rom.*, 5:17; see *Infra*, n.7.

87 *Christ the End of the Law*, 36.

88 *Com. on I Cor.*, 15:57; *Inst.*, II.12.2-3; II.16.1-16; cf. *Com. on Isa.*, 9:6; 53:12; *Com. on Eph.*, 4:8; Jensen, *op.cit.*, 88-90; G. Aulen, *Christus Victor*, trs. A.G. Herbert, (New York, 1969), (Aulén, however, does not consider Calvin's work on the atonement); Peterson, *op.cit.*, 46-54; L. Morris, *The Cross in the New Testament*, 372-374, 381-382; B.B. Warfield, 'Atonement', *NSHE*, 6.349-356.

89 *Inst.*, II.17.4. See also Van Buren, *op.cit.*, 31ff; Peterson, *op.cit.*, 55-63; Morris, *op.cit.*, 404-419; W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 2.309-314.

90 *Inst.*, II.16.1.

91 *Har. of Gosp.*, 1.30; 3.126-127 (Mt.3:14; 26:17); *Com. on John*, 2:13; *Com. on Rom.*, 6:14; *Com. on Gal.*, 4:4-5.

92 *Inst.*, II.16.5; *Com. on Rom.*, 5:18-19.

93 *Com. on Isa.*, 53:5-12 esp. v.12; *Inst.*, II.16:3.

94 *Com. on Rom.*, 4:25; 8:34; *Com. on Gal.*, 2:19; *Com. on II Cor.*, 5:21.

95 *Inst.*, II.16.6; *Com. on Gal.*, 3:13.

96 *Har. of Gosp.*, 3.147-148,207-208 (Mt.26:37; 27:46).

- 97 *Har. of Gosp.*, 3.188-189 (Mt.27:26).
- 98 *Inst.*, II.16.7-12.
- 99 *Inst.*, II.12.3.
- 100 *Ser. on Job*, 275 (15:17-22); *Com. on Jer.*, 32:40.
- 101 *Com. on Isa.*, 53:10; *Com. on John*, 1:29; *Com. on Eph.*, 2:16; *Com. on Heb.*, 9:1-27. See Warfield, 'Christ our Sacrifice', *PTR*, 5. (1917), 385-422; Peterson, *op.cit.*, 64-71; Cunningham, *op.cit.*, 283-286.
- 102 *Com. on I Pet.*, 1:19; 2:24; *Inst.*, III.4.30.
- 103 *Inst.*, II.16.6; *Com. on Acts*, 13:39; *Com. on I John*, 2:1.
- 104 *Inst.*, III.4.26.
- 105 *Inst.*, II.17.5; *Com. on Rom.*, 3:24-25.
- 106 *Inst.*, III.2.2; *Com. on II Cor.*, 5:18; *Com. on Eph.*, 2:16; *Com. on Col.*, 1:21; *Com. on Heb.*, 9:25.
- 107 *Inst.*, III.4.26; *Com. on I John*, 2:1.
- 108 E.D. Willis 'The Influence of Laelius Socinus on Calvin's Doctrine of the Merits of Christ and the Assurance of Faith', *Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus*, ed. J.A. Tedeschi, (Firenze, 1965), 231-241, cited by Peterson *op.cit.*, 72.
- 109 *Inst.*, II.17.1.
- 110 *Com. on Isa.*, 53:10; *Com. on Rom.*, 1:17.
- 111 Kendall, *English Calvinism*, 26.
- 112 Calvin, *Com. on Gen.*, 2:16; *Com. on Rom.*, 7:10-11.
- 113 Kendall, *op.cit.*, 27.
- 114 *Ibid.*
- 115 *Inst.*, III.3.2.
- 116 *Ser. on Jonah*, 51-52.
- 117 *Har. of Gosp.*, 1.115 (Mt.3:2).
- 118 *Inst.*, III.3.1.
- 119 *Inst.*, III.3.2.
- 120 *Inst.*, III.8.3; *Reply to Sadolet*, in *CR*, 33.397 (Olin ed. 66-67).
- 121 *Inst.*, II.7.10-11; *Com. on Rom.*, 1:28-32; 2:8; *Com. on I Tim.*, 1:9-10.
- 122 *Inst.*, IV.20.15.
- 123 *Inst.*, II.7.12; *Com. on Gal.*, 5:23.
- 124 *Inst.*, II.7.12; cf. II.8.57; III.6.2; *Com. on Ps.*, 1:1-2; *Com. on Acts*, 15:10.

125 *Inst.*, II.7.12; cf. II.8.10; III.6.1; *Com.on Ps.*, 1:1-2; *Com.on Acts*, 14:22; *Com.on Rom.*, 7:15; *Com.on I John*, 5:3.

126 *Inst.*, II.7.13.

127 *Inst.*, II.7.14-16; *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.175-182 (Mt.5:17-19); *Com.on Acts*, 6:14; 15:9; *Com.on Rom.*, 3:31; 6:15; 7:2; *Com.on Gal.*, 3:19ff; 4:4; *Com.on I Cor.*, 9:19-20.

128 *Inst.*, II.7.14; *Com.on Rom.*, 6:14; 7:2,6; *Com.on Gal.*, 5:1.

129 *Christ the End of the Law*, 31-32.

130 Harkness, *John Calvin*, 63. Sundquist's excellent study is weak at this point. Calvin's 'elaboration' or 'simplification' must be viewed in the light of Christ's interpretation - Sundquist, *op.cit.*, 139-143.

131 Calvin, *Com.on Acts*, 15:9.

132 *Inst.*, II.8.7-8; *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.178ff (Mt.5:17ff). See also Hesselink, 'Christ, the Law', 15-16.

133 Møller, 'The Beginnings', 50.

134 Calvin, *Inst.*, II.9.3-4; cf. II.5.12; II.7.4; II.11.4; *Com.on Isa.*, 25:6; 27:6; 62:2; *Com.on Ezk.*, 20:11; *Com.on Jer.*, 31:31-32; *Com.on Rom.*, 10:5.

135 *Inst.*, II.8.8.

136 On love of God and neighbour *Inst.*, II.8.11-57; III.2.26; 7.1; *Com.on Zech.*, 5:1-4; *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.198; 3.35-37 (Mt.5:44; 22:37,39); *Com.on Acts*, 10:35; *Com.on Rom.*, 13:8-10; *Com.on II Cor.*, 3:13; *Com.on Gal.*, 5:13-14; *Com.on Col.*, 3:14; *Com.on I.Th.*, 3:12; *Com.on I John*, 2:5,9; 3:10ff; *Ser.on Deut.*, 5:16; 22:1-4.

On Sermon on the Mount *Inst.*, II.8.7,26,57,59; *Har.of Evang.*, 1.167ff (Mt.5:1ff); P. Lehmann, *Ethics in a Christian Context*, (New York, 1963), 78, says the reformer saw 'an intrinsic parallel between the Sermon on the Mount and the decalogue'.

On the life of Christ *Inst.*, III.6.3 'God has destined all his children to the end that they be conformed to Christ.' cf. III.7-8; *Har.of Gosp.*, 2.26,194 (Mt.11:29; 16:24); *Com.on John*, 1:17; *Com.on Acts*, 7:30; *Com.on Rom.*, 6:11; 8:29; 10:4; *Com.on I Cor.*, 11:1; *Com.on II Cor.*, 3:16; *Com.on Eph.*, 4:23-24; *Com.on Phil.*, 3:10,17; *Com.on Col.*, 1:24; *Com.on I John*, 2:5-6; 3:3-6; *Ser.on Deut.*, 8:10-14; *Ser.on Job*, 4:7-11; 42:9-17; R.S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*, (London, 1959), 42ff.

On life in the Spirit *Inst.*, I.9.3; III.7.10; *Com.on Ps.*, 19:8; 40:8; *Com.on John*, 1:17; *Com.on Rom.*, 8:9-11; *Com.on Gal.*, 5:18,22-25; *Com.on Eph.*, 4:22-23; *Com.on Heb.*, 8:10; *Ser.on I.Tim.*, 1:8-11; Wallace, *op.cit.*, 120-121; B.C. Milner, *Calvin's Doctrine of the*

Church, (Leiden, 1970), 78-81.

On the image of God *Inst.*, III.6.1 'The law of God contains in itself that newness by which his image can be restored in us.' cf. II.8.51; III.3.9,16; 6.3; *Com.on Rom.*, 6:8; *Com.on I Cor.*, 15:4-9; *Com.on Eph.*, 4:23; *Com.on Col.*, 1:22; *Com.on Jas.*, 1:25; *Ser.on Deut.*, 5:16,23; *Ser.on Job*, 9:29-35; 10:16-17; *Ser.on Tit.*, 1:15-16; Wallace, *op.cit.*, 103-115.

137 *Inst.*, III.19.2; cf. II.7.2; II.6.1; III.6.3.

138 *Inst.*, III.6.1; see Hesselink, *op.cit.*, 17.

139 *Inst.*, II.8.53; III.2.7,41; *Comm.on Ps.*, 18:1; *Comm.on Acts*, 10:2; *Com.on Phil.*, 4:18; *Com.on I Th.*, 3:6,12; *Com.on I Tim.*, 1:5; *Com.on I John*, 3:23; 4:7.

140 *Inst.*, IV.13.6.

141 *Inst.*, III.20:45-46; cf. *Com.on Ps.*, 89:1; 102:12; *Har.of Pent.*, 3.239-243 (Lev.26.40ff).

142 *Four Sermons on Important Practical Subjects*, trs. H. Beveridge, in *Com.on Phil., Col., and Thess.*, trs. J. Pringle, (Edinburgh, 1851), 396, 438.

143 *Inst.*, III.11.1.

144 *Inst.*, III.11.4,17ff; III.12-14.

145 *Inst.* III.11.5 15; *Articles of Faith with the Antidote*, in *Tracts and Treatises*, (hereafter *TT*) 1.80-82; *Acts of the Council of Trent*, in *TT*, 3.92-97.

146 *Inst.*, III.14:6.

147 *Inst.*, III.11.1; *Com.on Gen.*, 17:3; *Com.on Ps.* 119:106; *Com.on Ezk.*, 11:19-20; *Com.on Col.*, 1:22; *Com.on Heb.*, 8:10.

148 *Inst.*, III.11.6.

149 *Ibid.*

150 *Inst.*, III.16.1; III.20.4-5; *Har.of Pent.*, 3.218-219 (Lev.26:9); *Har.of Gosp.*, 1.65, 145-146, 211; 2.109-110; 3.246 (Mt.1:21; Mk.1:14; Mt.6:12; Mt.22:11; Lk.24:46); *Com.on John*, 1:13; 14:15; 15:10; *Com.on Acts*, 5:31; 2:38; *Com.on Rom.*, 8:13; *Com.on I.Cor.*, 1:30; *True Method* 3.245-246.

151 Luther, *De Libertate Christiana*, WA, 7.61-62. It is wrong, as McDonough states 'to infer that Luther is opposed to good works and the observance of the commandments' McDonough, *The Law and Gospel in Luther*, 47.

152 Calvin *Inst.*, III.17.5.

153 *Inst.*, III.17.4-5; *Com.on Acts*, 10:34-35.

154 *Inst.*, III.17.7. Calvin also discussed these distinctions under the categories of 'imputed' and 'inherent' righteousness as raised by his Catholic

opponents. See *The Adultero-German Interim* and Calvin's answer in *The True Method*, in *TT*, 3.197-198, 145ff.

155 *Inst.*, III.17.8; *Acts of the Council of Trent*, in *TT*, 3.98-99, 128-130.

156 *The True Method*, in *TT*, 3.247; cf. *Acts of the Council of Trent*, in *TT*, 3.128; *Har. of Pent.*, 3.214 (Lev.26:3).

157 *Inst.*, III.17.3,15; *Com. on Gal.*, 3:17.

158 *Inst.*, II.17.5,8; *Har. of Pent.*, 3.204-205 (Lev.18:5); *Com. on Hab.*, 2:4; *Com. on Rom.* 3:20; *Com. on Gal.*, 3:17.

159 *Inst.*, III.18.1-8; *Har. of Gosp.*, 2.122-124 (Lk.17:7-10).

160 Møller, *op.cit.*, 50.

161 Karlberg, 'Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant', *WTJ*, 43. (1980), 16.

162 Calvin *Inst.*, III.17.5.

163 *Inst.*, III.17.9; III.14.21.

164 *Com. on Ps.*, 106:31; *Com. on Acts*, 10:35; cf. *Com. on Gen.*, 15:16 Calvin ensured that the faith which is imputed for righteousness could not be construed as a meritorious work. Using classical distinctions he pointed out that faith was only the *formal* cause and not the *efficient* cause of righteousness. cf. also *Com. on Mal.* 3:17; *Com. on Jas.*, 2:21-23; *Ser. on Jonah*, 49 (3:6-10).

165 *Inst.*, III.17.5.

166 *Inst.*, III.18.1-8; cf. *Har. of Gosp.*, 2.123-124 (Lk.17:7-10).

167 *Ser. on Job*, 377-378 (21:13-15); cf. *The Catechisme or Maner to Teiche Children*, 33-35.

168 *Inst.*, III.17.3; IV.10.15.

169 *Inst.*, III.18.4; *Com. on John*, 2:17; 15:10; *Com. on I John*, 2:3,5; 3:5.

170 Rolston, 'Responsible Man', 146; *John Calvin versus the Westminster Confession* 48. See *WCF*, XVI; XIX.5-7.

171 Greaves, 'Origins', 26.

172 Eichrodt, 'Covenant and Law', 309,311.