

A STUDY OF THE RELATION OF THE
OLD AND NEW COVENANTS IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS,
IN THE LIGHT OF SCHOLARSHIP 1938-1980

by

Mary Ann Lilian Beavis

Thesis

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ABSTRACT

One of the main concerns of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to explain the relation of the old (Mosaic) covenant to the new covenant initiated by Christ. Scholars writing on Hebrews in the period from 1938-1980 are divided on the question of whether the Epistle describes the two covenants as continuous or discontinuous.

Scholars who see the two covenants in Hebrews as fundamentally continuous formulate the relation between the covenants in three main ways. First, there is the position that the new covenant is a renewal of the old, and that covenant is a category that unifies salvation history (e.g., C. Spicq). Second, some scholars see the two covenants in Hebrews as related dialectically (e.g., E. Käsemann, O. Michel, H. Zimmermann). Third, there is the position that the old and new covenants are points on a continuum of revelation history (e.g., C.K. Barrett, G. Hughes).

There is more variety in the scholarly descriptions of the relation of the two covenants in terms of discontinuity. Some scholars regard Christ as the sole point of contact between the old and new covenants (e.g., A. Cody, G.W. Buchanan). Some see the Abrahamic (and not the Mosaic) covenant as continuous with the new covenant (e.g., R.C.H. Lenski). Other scholars think that the author of Hebrews regarded the old covenant as a "tutor unto Christ" (e.g., H. Montefiore, U. Lutz), or that the old covenant serves as an example of the inadequacy of human religious institutions (e.g., W. Loew). A few scholars see the old covenant and its institutions denigrated by the author of the Epistle (e.g., J. Héring). Finally, some scholars think

that the old covenant functions merely as a literary motif in Hebrews (e.g., J. Smith).

A new approach to the question of the relation of the old and new covenants in Hebrews is suggested by the presence of Davidic imagery in the Epistle. An examination of Hebrews' use of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) and its biblical context (i.e., the "Little Book of Comfort"; Jer 30-31 [LXX:37-38]), the Nathan Oracle/Oracle to Eli (1 Chr 17, 1 Sam 2:35), and the Psalms (especially Ps 110 [LXX:109]), suggests that the "new covenant" of Hebrews is the fulfillment of the Davidic (messianic) covenant. The blood of Jesus is regarded by the author of Hebrews as providing the blood necessary to covenant-making which the Davidic covenant lacked.

On this "new" interpretation of Hebrews, there is little continuity between the Mosaic and the new covenants. The insight that the "new covenant" of Hebrews is the Davidic/messianic covenant fulfilled, however, provides an indissoluble link with the history of Israel. Few of the scholars writing on Hebrews in the period from 1938-1980 have recognized the importance of the Davidic imagery, and none has seen the full implications of the Davidic content for the question of the relation of the two covenants.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Note: the abbreviations in this table apply to both footnotes and bibliography.

AB	Anchor Bible
ALBO	Analecta lovaniensa biblica et orientala
<u>AUSS</u>	<u>Andrews University Seminary Studies</u>
BAG	W. Bauer <u>et al.</u> , <u>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</u> (University of Chicago, 1957, 1979)
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
<u>CBQ</u>	<u>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</u>
<u>CTJ</u>	<u>Calvin Theological Journal</u>
<u>DBSup</u>	L. Pirot <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément</u> (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1966)
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EBib	Etudes Bibliques
<u>EvQ</u>	<u>Evangelical Quarterly</u>
<u>EvT</u>	<u>Evangelische Theologie</u>
<u>ExpTim</u>	<u>Expository Times</u>
<u>GOTR</u>	<u>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</u>
HNTC	Harper's New Testament Commentaries
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<u>HTR</u>	<u>Harvard Theological Review</u>

<u>IB</u>	G.A. Buttrick <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>Interpreter's Bible</u> (New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1952)
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<u>IDB</u>	G.A. Buttrick <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</u> (4 vols.; New York/Nashville: Abingdon, 1962)
<u>IDBSup</u>	K. Crim <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplement</u> (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975)
<u>IEJ</u>	<u>Israel Exploration Journal</u>
<u>JBC</u>	R.E. Brown <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>Jerome Biblical Commentary</u> (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968)
<u>JBL</u>	<u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u>
<u>LQ</u>	<u>Lutheran Quarterly</u>
LXX	Septuagint
MeyerK	H.A.W. Meyer, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
MT	Masoretic Text
<u>NCCHS</u>	R.C. Fuller <u>et al.</u> (ed.), <u>New Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture</u> (rev. ed.; London: Nelson, 1969)
<u>Neot</u>	<u>Neotestamentica</u>
NICNT	New International Critical Commentary on the New Testament
<u>NovT</u>	<u>Novum Testamentum</u>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NT	New Testament
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
<u>NTS</u>	<u>New Testament Studies</u>
OT	Old Testament

<u>PCB</u>	M. Black and H.H. Rowley (ed.), <u>Peake's Commentary on the Bible</u> (London: Nelson, 1962)
<u>RB</u>	<u>Revue Biblique</u>
<u>RevQ</u>	<u>Revue de Qumran</u>
RNT	Regensburger Neues Testament
<u>RSPT</u>	<u>Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques</u>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SB	Sources Bibliques
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<u>SE</u>	<u>Studia Evangelica</u>
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
<u>SJT</u>	<u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SPB	Studia postbiblica
<u>TBl</u>	<u>Theologische Blätter</u>
<u>TDNT</u>	G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (ed.), <u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u> (10 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964)
<u>TDOT</u>	G.H. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (ed.), <u>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</u> (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978)
<u>TRu</u>	<u>Theologische Rundschau</u>
VS	Verbum salutis
<u>WTJ</u>	<u>Westminster Theological Journal</u>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

PREFACE

This thesis was originally conceived as a survey of the scholarly literature concerned with the theme of the two covenants in Hebrews, including an exegetical chapter that was to have examined the same issues brought out by other scholars. The structure of the thesis has remained the same, but the exegetical chapter has turned out quite differently than I had envisioned it. Instead of covering the same ground as the scholarship described in the first half of the thesis, the exegetical chapter takes a new approach to the theme of covenant in Hebrews, concerned to discover the OT background of the new covenant in the Epistle, which, I suggest, is to be found in the OT traditions surrounding the covenant with David. For the inspiration for this "new" approach I am especially indebted to the work of M.R. D'Angelo, whose recently published study in the Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series has brought out the role of the Davidic imagery in Hebrews so clearly. My contribution has been to apply D'Angelo's insight that, for Hebrews, Jesus is the Davidic messiah to the theme of covenant in the Epistle.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Larry Hurtado, for his help and supervision, and Drs. J. Brown and R. Egan, who have read and commented on the chapters of the thesis as they were completed. I would like especially to express my gratitude to Dr. William Klassen both for his interest in this thesis, and for his support and encouragement over the years. Finally, I must thank Joann Beavington for her help in typing the thesis.

This thesis is dedicated, with gratitude, to my mother, Mrs. Ann Beavis.

M.A.L.B.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem

It is a scholarly commonplace, in the area of Biblical Studies, that the Epistle to the Hebrews is one of the most enigmatic of the New Testament writings. Conjectures abound on such questions as the authorship of the Epistle, the conceptual background of the Epistle, and the reason for the writing of the Epistle. One fact upon which scholars agree is that the theme of covenant is of great importance to the argument of Hebrews, although there are considerable differences of opinion on what function the conception of covenant has in the Epistle's argument. Thus, virtually every commentary and monograph on Hebrews written in the twentieth century deals to some extent with the theme of covenant.

Scholarship on Hebrews agrees, by and large, that the author of Hebrews was concerned with the question of how Old Testament (OT) persons, institutions, and events are related to the (new) dispensation initiated by Christ. That is, scholars agree that the writer of Hebrews was interested in the relation of the "old covenant" to the "new covenant". They disagree, however, in their individual assessments of Hebrews' valuation of the old covenant in the light of the new revelation. Scholarly literature on Hebrews often gauges the attitude of the Epistle to the old covenant by attempting to answer two related questions. First, did the author of Hebrews regard the two covenants as continuous or discontinuous? Second, did the author regard the Jewish past (i.e., OT persons, institutions, etc.) as a necessary background to Christ?

The first part of this study will describe, classify, and criticize the conclusions of some representatives of recent scholarship on the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews. This description of the scholarly literature will serve as a background for a fresh exegesis of Hebrews, primarily concerned with providing answers to the two questions listed above.

More will be said later about the method by which this study will proceed. Before a more detailed description of the nature of the study can begin, however, a general description of the conception of covenant as it is developed in the Old and New Testaments is in order.

2. Background

This study is not an examination of the biblical conception of covenant per se, but rather a study of the idea of covenant as it was understood by the author of Hebrews. For this reason, the discussion of covenant given here will concentrate mainly on the aspects of the conception that are developed in the Epistle. The author of Hebrews relied heavily on the canonical books of the OT, and perhaps on some kind of early Christian teaching about a "new covenant," for his understanding of covenant.¹ Therefore, the question of the idea of covenant in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature will not be taken up here.² A description of the idea of covenant in the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) will be included, as an example of a development of the idea of a "new covenant" different from that contained in the New Testament (NT) in general, and Hebrews in particular. After a brief description of the use of the covenant concept in some other NT writings, the discussion will call attention to some salient features of Hebrews' understanding of covenant.

2.1 Covenant in the OT

A good basic definition of the biblical meaning of covenant is given by G.E. Mendenhall. According to Mendenhall, a covenant is "A solemn promise made binding by an oath, which may be either a verbal formula or a symbolic action."³ It would be inaccurate, however, to speak of a single "OT idea of covenant". There are many kinds of "covenants" (Hebrew: berit) described in the OT documents,⁴ some secular, some religious. "Secular" covenants were pacts between human parties, "religious" covenants were agreements between God and man.⁵ For the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is the religious kind of covenant, the covenant involving God and man, that is important.

Two basic kinds of religious covenant are described in the OT, both of which are part of the conceptual framework of Hebrews. These are covenants in which God is bound, and covenants in which Israel is bound.⁶

The example par excellence of the first kind of religious covenant, the covenant in which God is bound, is the covenant with Abraham (Gen 15; 17:1-14). In Gen 15, the "J" account, Abram asks for an assurance that the Lord will keep his promise to make a "great nation" of the patriarch's descendants (Gen 15; 17:1-14). After a sacrificial ritual specified by the Lord (Gen 15:9-10), the Lord makes a covenant with Abram, promising the land of Palestine to Abram's posterity (vv. 18-21). In the "P" account (Gen 17:1-14), a similar promise is made to Abram by God (vv. 4-8), and circumcision is given to the patriarch and his descendants as a "sign" of the covenant between God and Abraham (vv. 10-14).

Two features of the transactions between God and Abraham are significant for understanding the nature of this kind of religious covenant. First, the ceremony described in the "J" account (Gen 15:7-18), in which Abraham

cuts up a heifer, and the Lord passes between the parts as "a smoking brazier and a flaming torch" (v. 18),⁷ is a very ancient ritual. The symbolism involved identifies the promisor (the Lord) with the slaughtered animal.⁸ The implication is that the Lord invokes a curse on himself if he does not keep his promise.⁹ Second, God's requirement of the circumcision of Abraham and his descendants in the "P" account (Gen 17:9-14) is not so much an obligation placed upon the patriarch as a sign of the covenant, comparable with the rainbow in the account of God's covenant with Noah (Gen 9:12-17).¹⁰ Mendenhall explains that circumcision as a sign of the covenant "serves to identify the recipient(s) of the covenant, as well as to give a concrete indication that a covenant exists. . . .for the protection of the promisee. . . ."11

These two points bring out the fact that, in both accounts of the covenant between God and Abraham, only God is bound. God, by far the more powerful party in the transaction, symbolically brings down curses upon himself if he does not fulfill his promise to the patriarch, and establishes a sign for the identification and protection of Abraham and his issue.

There is no real extra-biblical parallel for the kind of covenant described in Gen 15 and 17,¹² but it seems probable that the Abrahamic covenant was the model for later biblical covenant traditions.¹³ The covenants with Noah (Gen 9) and David (2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:3; Jer 33:20-21) are also covenants in which only God is bound.¹⁴ The Davidic covenant and its place in the development of biblical ideas of covenant will be discussed in more detail later. Before this, however, something must be said about the second kind of religious covenant described in the OT documents, the covenant in which Israel is bound.

The covenant that became regarded as pre-eminent in the history of

Israel was the covenant at Sinai (Horeb), mediated by Moses.¹⁵ This Mosaic (or Sinai) covenant is particularly interesting because it shows parallels with ancient Hittite suzerainty treaties (second millenium B.C.¹⁶). The Hittite treaties are agreements which establish a relationship between two parties, the Hittite king (or suzerain), and a vassal king. The relationship established by the suzerainty treaty is essentially unilateral; the vassal is bound by oath to fulfill a set of stipulations specified by the Hittite king, while it is assumed by the vassal that the suzerain will protect him and his state.¹⁷ The texts of these treaties have been analyzed by V. Korosec¹⁸ into six elements which nearly always occur: preamble; historical prologue; stipulations; provision for deposit in the temple and periodic public reading; list of gods as witnesses, and curses and blessings formula.¹⁹ Mendenhall suggests that in addition to these six elements, there were three unwritten elements involved in the ratification of the treaty: a formal oath whereby the vassal pledged obedience to the suzerain; some solemn ceremony accompanying the oath, and some provision for retaliation against a rebellious vassal.²⁰ In the account of the making of the covenant at Sinai (Exod 20), there are parallels between the text of the Decalogue and the first three elements of the Hittite suzerainty treaty form, i.e., the preamble (Exod 20:2a), the historical prologue (Exod 20:2b), and the stipulations (Exod 20:3-17).²¹ Similarities among the other parts of the Hittite treaty form and traditions surrounding the Mosaic covenant are present in other parts of the OT.²² A description of the making of a formally similar covenant -- probably an adaptation of the covenant idea to a new cultural situation -- is present in Joshua 24.²³

The kind of relationship established by the Mosaic covenant is strikingly different from the relationship implied in the accounts of the

Abrahamic covenant. In the Abrahamic covenant, God makes a promise to the patriarch, binds himself to keep his promise by a ceremony, and gives Abraham and his descendants a sign to identify and protect them. The obligation to keep the covenant is on God's side alone. In the Mosaic covenant, God presents Israel with a set of stipulations, which Israel chooses to accept. It is assumed that God will protect Israel if her people keep the covenant stipulations, but God is not bound by any specific obligations.²⁴ The obligations are all on Israel's side.

The covenant relation between God and Israel established at Sinai was instrumental in the emergence of Israel as a nation. Mendenhall asserts that

Early Israel emerged as a religious community on the foundation of this covenant, in which the relation to Yahweh was established in a fashion analogous to that between a suzerain of the Late Bronze Age empires and his vassals.²⁵

But neither the Mosaic covenant, nor the covenant at Shechem (Josh 24), marked the end of the development of the idea of a covenant between God and Israel. Two important later developments of the covenant theory in the history of Israel are the idea of the Davidic covenant, and the prophetic announcement of a "new covenant".

As previously mentioned, the Davidic covenant is like the Abrahamic covenant in that in both covenants, only God is bound. In the case of the Abrahamic covenant, God promises the patriarch the land of Palestine. In the Davidic covenant, which was either modeled on²⁶ or developed concurrently with²⁷ the idea of the Abrahamic covenant, God promises David and his line the throne of Israel forever (2 Sam 7:16; 23:5). The notion of the eternity of God's covenant with David became the basis of Jewish messianic expectations.²⁸

The idea of the Davidic covenant seems to have fallen into disfavour during the reign of Josiah of Judah (c. 640-609 B.C.), when the discovery of a scroll resembling the book of Deuteronomy (2 Kgs 22-23) led to a renaissance of the Mosaic covenant, again altered to fit the cultural situation of the time.²⁹ Some scholars think that during this period the theory arose that the renewed efforts of the people to keep the stipulations of the Sinai pact would render Judah impregnable to foreign invasion.³⁰ The prophet Jeremiah (6th century B.C.) disagreed with this theory. He was certain that the people had broken covenant with God so completely that God would no longer protect them, and so Judah would fall to the armies of the Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar (Jer 2:27; 4:5-8; 7:14; 28-29; 37-40). In Jeremiah's view, "the Sinai covenant was dead".³¹

But Jeremiah did not regard the "death" of the Sinai covenant as the end of God's covenant relation with Israel. The Book of Jeremiah also contains a collection of hopeful oracles known as the "Little Book of Comfort" (Jer 30-31).³² The "Book of Comfort" includes oracles which predict the return of the exiles to their homeland (Jer 31:2-14), the restoration of Jerusalem (Jer 31:38-40), the appearance of a Davidic king (Jer 30:9, 20-21), and the making of a "new covenant" between God and his people (Jer 31:31-34).³³ This new covenant, to be made in the indefinite future,³⁴ has four characteristics: God's will will permeate the will of the people; God will restore his covenant relation with the people; the people will know God; God will forgive the people, and forget their sin.³⁵ Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant between God and his people later became important to the early church in general, and the author of Hebrews in particular.³⁶ Hebrews' use of the oracle of the new covenant and the "Little Book of Comfort" will be discussed at length in Chapter V of this thesis.

The history of biblical ideas about the covenant relation between God and Israel up to the emergence of Jeremiah's oracle of the new covenant illumines the argument of Hebrews. More will be said about this later. Also important to the argument of the Epistle are conceptions derived from the cult of ancient Israel, as it is described by the Priestly writer ("P") of the Pentateuch. As Hillers points out, the Israelite cultus originally had "no necessary connection to the covenant".³⁷ According to Hillers, it was "P"'s concern to justify Israel's cultic institutions by relating them to the Sinai pact.³⁸ "P" did this by attributing the cultic ordinances of Israel to a divine command associated with the making of a covenant (Exod 25-31).³⁹ This effort to relate covenant and cultus was so successful that, as Mendenhall observes, "Since the cultus was at least connected with the covenant proclamation or renewal, . . . in early Israel, history, cultus, and 'law' were inseparable. ."⁴⁰ In the traditions surrounding the Davidic covenant, the association of covenant and cultus is especially strong.⁴¹ This intimate relation among covenant, cultus, and law informed the theology of the author of Hebrews, as well as of other Jewish and Christian writers in the Greco-Roman period. Before going on to discuss Hebrews, a brief description of the ideas about covenant in some exemplars of the latter two groups is in order.

2.2 Later Developments

Two developments in the history of the idea of covenant in Israel help to clarify the kinds of beliefs about the covenant relation between God and his people in early Judaism and primitive Christianity. First, the reform of Josiah, although it failed,

. . .established a pattern which held until the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and after, in that it completely identified covenant obligations with a law code (or rather, a collection of laws), and attempted to enforce them by political means.⁴²

The second development is the covenant of Ezra. After the second return of Jews from Babylonia to Palestine (5th century B.C.), the dedication of the people to the covenant was reaffirmed under the auspices of the religious and political leaders of the nation (Neh 9-10). This event reinforced the identification of law (Torah) and covenant, and the right of the Jewish state to enforce observance of the law.⁴³ This amounted to a national religion, founded on the harmonization of the two kinds of religious covenant described above: "Yahweh is bound by the covenant with Abraham; and Israel is bound by the Sinai covenant as expanded in the collected law codes. . ."⁴⁴ The collection of laws associated with the Sinai covenant became the law of Judaism.

The religious and political climate of Judaism in the centuries preceding the advent of Christianity, then, was conditioned by the notion of covenant which crystallized around the time of Ezra. Two recent studies⁴⁵ have shown how completely the related concepts of law and covenant permeated the consciousness of various representatives of Judaism and Christianity in Greco-Roman times. Useful examples of the kind of beliefs held in this period are to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in the New Testament. Both these examples form a part of the background necessary to understanding the idea of covenant in Hebrews.

Covenant in the DSS

The Qumran sectaries regarded themselves as the community of the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.⁴⁶ As in other forms of Judaism of the time, the covenant was identified with the biblical law.⁴⁷ The sectaries

regarded their own interpretation of the law as the only true one,⁴⁸ and were obligated to follow the stipulations of the law with extreme rigour.⁴⁹ On initiation, the members of the sect bound themselves to "return . . . to every commandment of the Law of Moses in accordance with all that has been revealed to the sons of Zadok . . ." (CR V).⁵⁰ Thus the idea of covenant in the community of the DSS was not that of a radically new covenant, but rather of a renewed covenant, analogous to the reform of Josiah, or the covenant of Ezra.⁵¹ Hillers, following Mendenhall,⁵² concludes that "for all their sincerity, Essene [sic]⁵³ ideas about covenant are essentially conservative and recapitulate familiar patterns."⁵⁴

Covenant in the NT

There are many indications in the various documents of the NT that the early church regarded itself as participating in a covenant relation with God analogous to the covenants described in the OT, especially the "new covenant" prophesied by Jeremiah.⁵⁵ The Epistle to the Hebrews, of all the NT writings, is the one most concerned with the idea of covenant.⁵⁶ Examples of the NT ideas about covenant which serve as a useful background to the study of the concept in Hebrews follow.

First, there is the eucharistic saying of Jesus over the cup at the Last Supper: τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν (Mark 14:24; cf. Matt 26:28; Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25). Mendenhall notes that "In every source the blood is very specially related to the (new) covenant, with obvious reference to the blood of the old covenant in Exod 24:8."⁵⁷ It is important to note that the close relation of the blood of Jesus and the new covenant is also important in the argument of Hebrews.

Second, there is the contrast between the two covenants developed in the letters of Paul. As the eucharistic saying recorded in 1 Cor 11:25 shows, Paul

believed that the blood of Jesus was the means by which the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah came into effect. Paul discusses the consequences of Christ's initiation of the new covenant in two main passages:

2 Cor 3. Here, Paul works out a series of contrasts between the old (Mosaic) covenant and the new covenant.⁵⁸ These contrasts are so marked that it seems that Paul regarded the new covenant as the opposite of the old.⁵⁹

Gal 3. In this passage, Paul distinguishes between the "law" given to Moses and the "promise" given to Abraham (vv. 15-18). Since the covenant with Abraham predates the covenant at Sinai, Paul argues, the promise to Abraham was not invalidated by the law (Mosaic covenant) (v. 17). On the contrary, the law was given as a *παυδαγωγὸς*, a "custodian until Christ came" (v. 24), and the promise to Abraham, the covenant which preceded Sinai, is fulfilled in Christ (vv. 16, 24). As we shall see later, some scholars see a similarity between the thought of Paul in Gal 3 and the argument of Hebrews (in Heb 10:1-3, 11-12).

Finally, there is the speech of Stephen (Acts 7). Here, the history of Israel is depicted as a record of the nation's disobedience to the law mediated by Moses (v. 53). The tone of the discourse is decidedly anti-cultic (vv. 48-50). The record of the members of the "covenant of circumcision" (v.8), is one of resistance to the Holy Spirit, betrayal, murder, and disobedience to the law (vv. 51-53). Some scholars (notably, W. Manson) have posited a connection between the theology of Stephen and the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁶⁰

The Pauline material and the speech of Stephen are of some interest in the context of this study. Both provide NT perspectives on covenant with both similarities and differences to that of Hebrews. In Chapter V, the exegetical part of this study, the implications of Paul's work and Acts 7 for

the understanding of Hebrews will be discussed. For the present, it is important to note that both the Pauline passages and the speech in Acts identify the Mosaic covenant with the law, and that both Paul and Stephen (or the author of Luke's Gospel) are aware of the distinction between the covenant of Abraham, where God binds himself to a promise, and the Mosaic covenant, where the people of Israel take on the obligation of keeping the law. Of the two, only Paul speaks specifically of a "new covenant" (2 Cor 3:6), although both tend to spiritualize the idea of covenantal obligation (Acts 7:51; 2 Cor 3:6).

Scholars differ on the question of whether the OT idea of covenant as a relationship between God and man founded on obligation -- an idea which, as we have seen, was very much alive for the writers of the DSS -- survived in the primitive church. Mendenhall, for one, sees in the NT a very real continuation of Mosaic religion:

It is historical event which establishes obligation; the preceding act of God which confers a benefit upon the individual and the group both forms the motivation and ground for a lasting relationship by covenant, and at the same time brings about a willing obedience to the divine command.⁶¹

Hillers disagrees:

The Essenes had a covenant, but it was not new; the Christians had something new, but it was not a covenant. . . . For Christians, the coming of the substance made shadows out of a rich array of Old Testament events, persons, and ideas, among them covenant.⁶²

This kind of disagreement is related to the question of the language used by the NT writers in general, and the author of Hebrews in particular. Does the term διαθήκη as it is used by the writers of the NT have a meaning substantially similar to that of berit in the OT, or even in the DSS? Or, are OT events, persons, and institutions, including covenant, so transformed by the NT writers that they bear little resemblance to their sources? These questions will be discussed briefly in the next section of the idea of cove-

nant in Hebrews, and at greater length in the exegetical part of this study.

Covenant in Hebrews

As previously mentioned, the Epistle to the Hebrews is the NT document most concerned with the idea of covenant, especially the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34, which is quoted in full at 8:8-12. A. Vanhoye's structural analysis of the Epistle suggests that the section from 8:1-10:18, which deals with the differences between the old (Mosaic) covenant and the new covenant mediated by Jesus Christ, is the central section, the "chief point," of Hebrews' argument.⁶³

Unlike Paul and the speech of Stephen, Hebrews not only identifies the Mosaic covenant with the law of Judaism, but also with the cult, specifically with the cultic ordinances stipulated in the Pentateuch. The argument is that Christ initiated the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah by providing a better sacrifice, with better effects, in a better ("heavenly") sanctuary (9:11-14). The difference between the two covenants is developed by the use of such terms as "new" (καινή), "better" (υπείττω), and "perfect" (τέλειος), among others.

It has frequently been asserted by scholars that although Hebrews' emphasis is different from Paul's, the Epistle's assessment of the relation between the two covenants is similar: "[in almost exactly the same way as in Paul] Every possible argument is drawn on to show that the new covenant both fulfills and abrogates the old."⁶⁴ Others find the contrast developed in Hebrews to be less marked: "In Hebrews the stress is on the new as foreshadowed in the old. . . . In Paul, on the other hand, the two are contrasted so sharply that there is no apparent continuity left."⁶⁵ In other words, a very real question in the interpretation of Hebrews is whether

the author of the Epistle saw the relation between the old and new covenants as one to be developed in terms of comparison or contrast, continuity or discontinuity. This question is related to the issue of the nature of the language used in the Epistle, referred to above.

The idea that many of the NT writers used typology to relate the persons, events, and institutions of the OT to the situation of the primitive church is well-accepted by biblical scholars.⁶⁶ There are many definitions of typology, but for the purposes of this introductory chapter, a rather useful description, which explains what kind of typology the NT writers used, is given by K.J. Woolcombe:

The New Testament writers held that Heilsgeschichte exhibited a consistent pattern -- it was like the weaving of a carpet, from its inception on the loom to the central motif, and from the central motif to its completion; all the parts of the pattern were closely related to each other and converged on the central motif, and the pattern between the beginning and the central axis mirrored the pattern from the central axis to the end. Consequently the main object of their exegesis was to show how the parts of the pattern were related, and how they converged on the centre -- to bring to light the evidence of God's consistent purpose in history.⁶⁷

The event at the "centre" of salvation history was the cross of Christ; the pattern between the beginning and the centre was the history of Israel as recorded in the OT, and the pattern from the centre to the end was the history of the church. The NT writers found both similarities and differences among OT persons, institutions, and events and the situation of the early church.

Many scholars agree that the author of Hebrews was a master of typological interpretation.⁶⁸ Even a cursory reading of the Epistle shows that its author used OT motifs such as high priesthood, sacrifice, and covenant to bring out the meaning of the Christ-event, and of the place of the church in the world. In Chapter V of this study, Hebrews' use of various kinds of typology will be discussed in some detail.

The recognition that OT motifs are important in the argument of Hebrews is related to an issue which, until very recently, has remained "hidden" in the various scholarly interpretations of Hebrews, i.e., the question of how literally the typological language of the Epistle is to be taken.⁶⁹ Are the OT persons, institutions, and events which the author of Hebrews relates to Christ and his work merely literary images meant to be taken metaphorically? Or did the author see a more substantial connection between the past and the present? For example, did the author of Hebrews regard the "new covenant" as the literal fulfillment or renewal of another covenant in the OT record? Scholarly interpretations of the Epistle give widely divergent answers to the question of the nature of the language.⁷⁰ Thus, in Chapters II and III of this study, which will deal with scholarship on Hebrews from 1938-1980, an attempt will be made to identify the various scholars' explicit or implicit positions on how the typological language of Hebrews functions. In Chapter V, on the basis of a fresh exegesis of the Epistle, a judgement will be made on the nature of the language of Hebrews, since this issue is closely related to the question of whether the author of the Epistle regarded the OT as a necessary background to Christ.

3. The Nature of the Study

The discussion above clarifies the meaning of the two questions with which this study is primarily concerned:

Continuity or discontinuity. Does Hebrews conceive of the old covenant as foreshadowing the new covenant, as Hillers asserts, or does the new covenant abrogate the old covenant, as Mendenhall holds?

The significance of the past. Does Hebrews regard the persons, institutions,

and events of the OT merely as a fund of literary motifs with which to illumine the meaning of Christ and the church? Or, does Hebrews detect a more substantial connection between the OT record and the history of the Christian dispensation; is there a necessary connection between the old covenant and the new, the past and the present?

Chapters II and III of this study will examine the answers of some prominent students of the Epistle in the period from 1938-1980 to these questions. The various scholarly positions will be categorized under the convenient headings "continuity" (Chapter II) and "discontinuity" (Chapter III). As we shall see, these headings somewhat oversimplify a complex issue. Most scholars see elements of both continuity and discontinuity in Hebrews' description of the two covenants. There is, however, a difference of emphasis in the scholarship that is well-described by these two terms. Most scholars tend to stress either the continuity or the discontinuity of the two covenants in Hebrews, so that the discontinuity of the old and the new orders overshadows their continuity in some expositions, and vice versa in others. For example, H. Montefiore maintains that the OT cultus in Hebrews functions like the law for Paul, as a "tutor unto Christ". That is, the inefficacy of the Levitical ritual to cleanse the conscience throws the unrighteousness of men into relief, and points to the necessity of something better, the efficacious sacrifice of Christ.⁷¹ The dominant idea is that of the discontinuity of the old and new covenants.⁷² G. Hughes, on the other hand, sees the old and new covenants in Hebrews as parts of a single linear process of revelation; the new covenant is discontinuous with the old only in that the new is perfect and final while the old was fragmentary and subject to supplement.⁷³ On Hughes's interpretation, the idea of the continuity of the two covenants dominates.

Chapter IV will provide a transition from the survey of the literature in Chapters II and III to the exegesis of Hebrews in Chapter V. The discussion in this transitional chapter will be guided by three main concerns: in the light of Chapters II and III, to decide what can be validly presupposed about the background and purpose of Hebrews; to decide which of the scholarly positions on the relation of the two covenants described in Chapters II and III can be rejected; and, in the light of scholarship on Hebrews, to identify some questions to be asked of the text of the Epistle in Chapter V.

In Chapter V, a new approach to the question of the relation of the old and new covenants in Hebrews will be suggested. Unlike most of the studies described in Chapters II and III, the exegesis in Chapter V will be concerned to discover the OT background of the concept of the new covenant in Hebrews. The study will begin with a brief description of Hebrews' attitude to the old (Mosaic) covenant, and to the history of Israel in general. The bulk of the chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the scriptural "types" of the new covenant in Hebrews, concentrating particularly on an element in the argument of the Epistle that has often been overlooked by modern scholarship, i.e., the role of the Davidic imagery. In the light of this novel approach to the theme of covenant in Hebrews, the relation of the old covenant and the new, the past and the present, will be clarified.

Chapter V will also contain some comments on the relation of Hebrews to the thought of Paul and to the theology of Stephen. Some observations on the issue of the nature of the language of the Epistle will conclude the chapter.

Chapter VI, the conclusion of the study, will compare the results of

the exegesis in Chapter V with the scholarly opinions described in Chapters II and III. Chapter VI will also include a discussion of some implications of the findings of the study for other areas of Religious Studies and Theology. More will be said about the latter aspect of the concluding chapter in part five of this introduction.

4. The Chronological Limits of the Study

As E. Grässer notes in his important bibliographical and evaluative essay, the scholarly literature on Hebrews is copious, and calls for some kind of chronological delimitation.⁷⁴ Two authors of surveys of the literature on Hebrews (Grässer and G.W. Buchanan) have suggested turning points in the interpretation of Hebrews in the twentieth century;⁷⁵ but, since these two scholars have settled on different points from which to date significant trends in scholarship on Hebrews, the relative merits and deficiencies of the two suggestions must be examined.

Grässer calls the appearance of E. Käsemann's Das wandernde Gottesvolk in 1938⁷⁶ a turning point in the interpretation of Hebrews not to be overlooked.⁷⁷ Käsemann's study was the first to place Hebrews in a religions-geschichtliche context "in the realm of Hellenistic Judaism and of the primitive Gnosticism which was originally associated with certain segments of Hellenistic Judaism."⁷⁸ The importance of Käsemann's hypothesis, i.e., that the motif of "the journeying people of God" is closely related to Gnostic conceptions, has been well-received by German scholars, including Grässer,⁷⁹ but has been largely ignored by British scholarship.⁸⁰

The last observation also applies to North American scholarship, and is reflected by Buchanan. Buchanan's more recent article devotes some space to a discussion of Käsemann's monograph, but concludes that Käsemann's hypothesis has been invalidated by, among other things, the discovery of

the Dead Sea Scrolls.⁸¹ Buchanan divides the history of research on Hebrews into two periods, before and after the discovery of the Scrolls.⁸² Part of the reason for Buchanan's choice of this turning point is undoubtedly his own hypothesis about the provenance of Hebrews. Buchanan thinks that the recipients of the Epistle were a Qumran-like community of Jewish Christians, impatiently awaiting the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham.⁸³

Both Grässer and Buchanan, then, advocate the choice of a "watershed" in the interpretation of Hebrews in accordance with their own respective theories about the background of the Epistle: for Grässer, Gnosis is the key to its interpretation, while for Buchanan, the closest parallel to the kind of thinking found in Hebrews is to be found in the Qumran literature. Different as these positions may seem, they have an element in common, i.e., a concern with the religio-historical background of the document. This common element is an important feature of scholarship on Hebrews in the twentieth century. In 1920, A. Nairne noted that "the tendency of the latest criticism is to give up the search for the author's name, and the name of the place to which he sent his epistle."⁸⁴ The kind of work done by Käsemann, and later, by the advocates of hypotheses connecting Hebrews and Qumran, has opened up a new area of research on the origin of Hebrews, this time not so much concerned with the individual identities of the author and addresses, and more concerned with the richly varied historical milieu in whose light the Epistle must be read for maximum understanding. Käsemann's monograph, and the studies comparing Hebrews and the Scrolls, brought an important new focus to the study of Hebrews: the search for the conceptual provenance of the Epistle, taking into consideration the unfolding complexity of the Hellenistic background, whose picture is constantly being supplemented by the discoveries of scholars interested in such phenomena as Gnosis and

Qumran. This process is by no means yet complete,⁸⁵ but the new insights, as they come, affect every aspect of the interpretation of Hebrews, supplying new material for the formulation of hypotheses, invalidating older theories, and combining to give more depth to our understanding of the Epistle. Thus Grässer's choice of Käsemann's work as the twentieth century turning point in the study of Hebrews still stands, while Buchanan's preference for dating scholarship on Hebrews before and after the Scrolls also has some validity. Käsemann's book began a trend, the work comparing Hebrews and Qumran paralleled it. To these streams of interpretation, a third can be added: the numerous studies influenced by C. Spicq's work on the relation of the thought of Philo of Alexandria to Hebrews.⁸⁶ New ways of identifying the conceptual background of Hebrews are still emerging;⁸⁷ perhaps at some point in the future, these streams will converge. Käsemann's pioneer religions-geschichtliche study, then, is a real turning point in the interpretation of Hebrews in the twentieth century. This turning point has been adopted as the lower chronological limit for the scholarly works discussed in this study.

5. The Significance of the Study

A study of this kind has not appeared, in English, since 1964.⁸⁸ The date is significant, since it roughly coincides with the appearance of Grässer's comprehensive bibliographical essay. A new study, taking into account developments in the interpretation of Hebrews since the early 'sixties, will be doubly valuable: in addition to providing a fresh and updated exegesis, it will bring together the opinions of important exegetes on the issue of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, thus making this study a useful bibliographical tool.

A study of this kind will also have applications outside the area of

Biblical Studies. The conclusions of the study could give a New Testament answer to a question important to Christian theology, i.e., what is the application of the Old Testament to Christian faith? Such a study could also prove significant in the ongoing discussion of "anti-Semitism" in the New Testament. Finally, the study could be of some interest in its broader religionsgeschichtliche context, as an example of an interaction between two different, but related, religions.

Notes on Chapters II and III

Due to the almost overwhelming abundance of scholarly literature on Hebrews, this study will describe in detail only the main representatives of the most important variations of opinion on the two covenants. Judgements about which scholar out of a group is the most important representative of that group will be made on the basis of the significance of the study in the literature on Hebrews in general, and, more importantly, on the basis of the weight which the study gives to the question of the relation of the two covenants. By the latter criterion, an article which deals solely with the topic of the two covenants in Hebrews will be chosen as representative of a position over a commentary which takes the same position, but which treats the issue in less detail. In cases where a scholar chosen as representative has written more than one work on the Epistle, the study which best illustrates his opinion on the issue will be used to represent his work, although the other studies will be referred to if this helps to clarify his position. In cases where there is considerable variation of opinion within an identifiable group, several scholars will be chosen as "representative" of the group, in order to do justice to the diversity of scholarly opinion which can exist even where there is agreement on major points.

Each scholar selected by the criteria above will be classed under a label characterizing the position which he represents; the nature of his major work will be described; and his position on the questions of the continuity or discontinuity of the two covenants in Hebrews, the attitude to scripture of Hebrews, and the nature of the language of Hebrews, will be identified. Each discussion of a major representative will be followed by a list of other scholars who are fundamentally in agreement with his position. In cases where there are minor variations within a camp of opinion, the differences will be noted and briefly discussed. Chapters II and III will end with summaries, discussing some of the exegetical implications of the scholarly opinions described in each chapter.

The literature cited in Chapters II and III has been selected from the bibliographies on Hebrews in : Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux I, 379-411; id., "Hébreux (Epître aux)," DBSup, 272-79; id. L'Epître aux Hébreux (SB; Paris: Gabalda, 1977) 44-54; Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 138-44. New Testament Abstracts was consulted for titles of works on Hebrews in the period from 1977-1980.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

¹E. Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," TRu 36 (1964) 204-209. Hebrews usually cites the OT according to the Septuagint (LXX). See H.J.B. Combrink, "Some Thoughts on the Old Testament Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews," Neot 5 (1971) 23.

²In Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion (London: SCM, 1977), E.P. Sanders has demonstrated that the conception of covenant in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha is similar to that of other representatives of Judaism in the Greco-Roman period.

³G.E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," IDB 1, 714.

⁴D.J. McCarthy, Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions (Richmond: John Knox, 1972) 4.

⁵G. Quell, "Σαῖον," TDNT 2, 109-11. Quell has some reservations about using the terms "secular" and "religious" to describe the concepts of covenant in the OT, since "even the so-called secular covenant is usually surrounded by sacral assurances in the form of oaths or sacrifices," and "the religious covenant is not constructed in a specifically religious way but according to the juridical pattern of legal agreements" (ibid., 109-10). For the purposes of this study, however, it is convenient to designate as "secular" covenants between man and man, and as "religious" covenants between man and God.

⁶Mendenhall, "Covenant," 717-21.

⁷All OT quotations in this chapter are from The New English Bible unless otherwise indicated.

⁸Mendenhall, "Covenant," 718.

⁹D.R. Hillers, Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea (Seminars in the History of Ideas; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1969) 103.

¹⁰G.E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: Biblical Colloquium, 1955) 36.

¹¹Ibid., 36.

¹²Hillers, Covenant, 105.

¹³Mendenhall, "Covenant," 717.

¹⁴Ibid., 717.

¹⁵W.L. Holladay, "New Covenant, The," IDBSup, 623.

¹⁶Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 35.

¹⁷Ibid., 30.

¹⁸As cited by Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 29.

¹⁹Ibid., 32-34.

²⁰Ibid., 34-35.

²¹Ibid., 35-38.

²²Ibid., 35-38.

²³Ibid. 42-43.

²⁴Ibid., 36.

²⁵Mendenhall, "Covenant," 719.

²⁶Hillers, Covenant, 106-107.

²⁷M. Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," IDBSup, 190.

²⁸Ibid., 191.

²⁹Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 47-49; Hillers, Covenant, 146-48.

³⁰Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 623.

³¹Ibid., 623.

³²The "Book of Comfort" is generally recognized by scholars as an independent compilation, including oracles directly attributable to the prophet and much later additions. Some scholars have suggested that the "Book of Comfort" extends through Jer 33 (see J. Muilenberg, "Jeremiah the Prophet," IDB 2, 834).

³³See J. Bright, Jeremiah: Introduction, Translation and Notes (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965) 278-84.

³⁴Hillers, Covenant, 167.

³⁵Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 167-68.

³⁶Ibid., 625; Hillers, Covenant, 169-88.

³⁷Hillers, Covenant, 162-63.

³⁸Ibid., 162.

³⁹Ibid., 164-65.

⁴⁰Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 44.

⁴¹Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 188-89.

⁴²Mendenhall, "Covenant," 721.

⁴³Ibid., 723.

⁴⁴Ibid., 721.

⁴⁵G.W. Buchanan, The Consequences of the Covenant (NovTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1970); E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism.

⁴⁶Mendenhall, "Covenant," 721.

⁴⁷Ibid., 721.

⁴⁸Ibid., 721. Buchanan argues that there were many other Jewish sects at the time who believed that keeping the covenant and obeying the law were inseparable, and that the sectarian interpretation of the law was the only true one (see Consequences of the Covenant, 529 ff.).

⁴⁹G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English (2nd ed.; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975) 35-37.

⁵⁰Ibid., 79. Vermes's designations for the DSS will be used in this paper: (e.g., CR ≠ Community Rule) (see *ibid.*, 8).

⁵¹Hillers, Covenant, 178.

⁵²Mendenhall, "Covenant," 721.

⁵³Buchanan warns against a too-facile identification of the Dead Sea sect with the Essenes (Consequences of the Covenant, 259).

⁵⁴Hillers, Covenant, 178.

⁵⁵J. Behm, "διαθήκη," 128-29; Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 625; Mendenhall, "Covenant," 722-23.

⁵⁶Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 625.

⁵⁷Hillers, Covenant, 187.

⁵⁸See *ibid.*, 183 for a table of contrasts between the old and new covenants as developed in 2 Cor 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., 183; Behm, "διαθήκη," 128-29; Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 625.

⁶⁰See W. Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Historical and Theological Reconsideration (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951).

⁶¹Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 49; cf. Buchanan, Consequences of the Covenant, 272-81.

⁶²Hillers, Covenant, 188; cf. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 543-49.

⁶³A. Vanhoye, A Structured Translation of the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1964) 20-23.

⁶⁴Mendenhall, "Covenant," 723; cf. Behm, "διαθήκη," 131.

⁶⁵Hillers, Covenant, 182-83. Cf. S. Sandmel, A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1957) 227-35.

⁶⁶D.L. Baker, Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of Some Modern Solutions to the Theological Problem of the Relationship of the Old and New Testaments (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1976) 245-47.

⁶⁷K.J. Wollcombe, "The Biblical Origins and Patristic Development of Typology," Essays on Typology (ed. G.W.H. Lampe and K.J. Woollcombe; SBT 22; London: SCM, 1957) 68.

⁶⁸Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 209-10. Cf. J. Smith, A Priest For Ever: A Study of Typology and Eschatology in Hebrews (London/Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1969) 9-65.

⁶⁹W.G. Johnsson brings out this "hidden issue" in his article "Issues in the Interpretation of Hebrews," AUSS 15 (1977) 178-79; 184-87.

⁷⁰For example, note the difference between the positions on the nature of the language of Hebrews taken by P.S. Minear in "An Early Christian Theopoetic?" Semeia 12 (1978) 201-14, and L. Smith, "Metaphor and Truth in Hebrews" New Blackfriars 57 (1976) 227-33, and that of G.W. Buchanan in "The Present State of Scholarship on Hebrews," Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty (ed. J. Neusner; Leiden: Brill, 1975) 329-30. The conclusions of Minear and Smith, on the one hand, and Buchanan, on the other, are diametrically opposed.

⁷¹H. Montefiore, The Epistle to the Hebrews (HNTC; New York/Evanston: Harper & Row, 1964) 150-55; 165.

⁷²See especially Montefiore's comment on *ibid.*, p. 164, where he asserts that the law cannot even accurately foreshadow the realities of the new order.

⁷³G. Hughes, Hebrews and Hermeneutics: The Epistle to the Hebrews as a New Testament Example of Biblical Interpretation (Cambridge: University Press, 1979) 6.

⁷⁴Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 144.

⁷⁵Buchanan, "Scholarship on Hebrews," 299-330.

⁷⁶E. Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938).

⁷⁷Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 144.

⁷⁸W.G. Kümmel, Introduction to the New Testament (17th ed.; Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1975) 397.

⁷⁹Kümmel identifies Grässer as one of the German scholars who have

favourably received the "Gnosis" hypothesis. See *ibid.*, 396, n. 27.

⁸⁰W.G. Johnsson, "The Cultus of Hebrews in Twentieth Century Scholarship," *ExpTim* 89 (1978) 105.

⁸¹Buchanan, "Scholarship on Hebrews," 305.

⁸²*Ibid.*, 308.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 309-10. See also Buchanan's commentary To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1972) 255-56.

⁸⁴A. Nairne, The Epistle to the Hebrews with Introduction and Notes (Cambridge: University Press, 1921) 255-56.

⁸⁵See, for example, R. Williamson, "The Background of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *ExpTim* 87 (1975-76) 232-37. Williamson compares the thought of Hebrews with Jewish merkabah mysticism. Cf. O. Hofius, Der Vorhang vor dem Thron Gottes: eine exegetische-religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zu Hebräer 6, 19 f. und 10, 19 f. (WUNT 14; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1972). Hofius' examination of Hebrews against the background of ancient Jewish and Gnostic sources leads him to the conclusion that the idea of the "curtain" (Vorhang; καταπετασμα) before the holy of holies (in Heb 6:19-20; 10:19-20) sprang out of these traditions (*ibid.*, 95-96).

⁸⁶C. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux 1 (EBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1952-53) 39-87. More recent studies of Hebrews and Philo include: S.G. Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews: A Comparison of the Interpretation of the Old Testament in Philo Judaeus and the Epistle to the Hebrews (Basel Studies of Theology; Zurich: EVZ, 1965); R. Williamson, Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews (Leiden: Brill, 1970); G.W. Thompson, "'That Which Abides': Some Metaphysical Assumptions in the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1974); L.K.K. Dey, The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in Philo and Hebrews (SBLDS 25; Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975).

⁸⁷See Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 36.

⁸⁸D.M. Stine, "The Finality of the Christian Faith: A Study of the Unfolding Argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Chapters 1-7" (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1964).

CHAPTER II

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS IN HEBREWS
AS CONTINUOUS IN SCHOLARSHIP 1938-1980

Scholarship that holds that the two covenants in Hebrews are essentially continuous with one another can be broken down into three main categories. First, there are some scholars who regard the new covenant in Hebrews as the renewal in power of the old covenant. On this interpretation, "covenant" is seen as a category which unifies salvation history. This position is often taken by scholars who posit a connection between Hebrews and Qumran. Second, many scholars see the two covenants in Hebrews existing in a dialectical relation; the old covenant points to the new covenant, and the new covenant fulfills and terminates the old. Representatives of the third position accept the idea that the two covenants in Hebrews are related dialectically, but add the idea of development; the old and new covenants are seen as points on a continuum of revelation whose end point is the new covenant. The main representatives of these three positions will be discussed in detail in this chapter.

1. The new covenant as a renewal of the old; covenant as a category which unifies salvation history.

Spicq, C. "La théologie des deux Alliances dans l'Épître aux Hébreux." RSPT 33 (1949) 15-30.

This article appeared shortly before Spicq's important two-volume commentary on Hebrews,¹ and was incorporated into the second volume as

an excursus.² Since the article sums up Spicq's position on the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews admirably, it will be used here as the main source for Spicq's understanding of the issue, although references will be made to his other work on Hebrews.

Spicq begins the article by noting that Judaism and Christianity are unique in the history of religions, in that both conceive their relation to God in terms of the idea of covenant (15). He asserts that in Hebrews, the OT idea of covenant as a gift of God, associated with promises, to which the appropriate response is obedience, is maintained (19-20). In Hebrews, Christ is understood as the guarantor of covenantal promises, who seals the covenant in his blood (20). To this, Hebrews adds the idea of covenant (διαθήκη) as a "last will and testament" (Heb 9:16-17), in agreement with the Synoptic tradition, which sees the possessions of the man-God as transmissible by means of a testamentary disposition (Spicq gives the example of Luke 22:29-30 where Jesus "disposes" his kingdom to his disciples) (23). The double meaning which Hebrews gives to the term διαθήκη brings out the twofold aspect of the work of Christ: validation of God's promises, and redemption from sin. The ultimate objective of Christ's work is to effect the union of God and man (21-23).

Spicq's discussion of Hebrews' interpretation of Jer 31:31-34 (24-29) brings out the Epistle's reasons for seeing a change in the nature of the relation between God and man. According to Spicq, Hebrews regards the Mosaic covenant as merely provisional, subject to transgression by Israel, and possessing inadequate institutions, while the new covenant of Jeremiah is regarded as definitive (24). Hebrews

demonstrates the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy by showing how the characteristics of the new covenant are realized in Christ, and how the new covenant surpasses the old. Under the new covenant, people freely obey God (25). The sacrifice of the new covenant, unlike the sacrifices of the old, has the power to remove sin; likewise, the priesthood of the new covenant is more excellent than that of the old (26). The efficacy of the sacrificial death of Christ the high priest is expressed in the eucharist (27).

Since the new covenant, unlike the old, leads to the perfection of believers, God is made accessible, and complete knowledge of God becomes available to all (27). In the new covenant, the law is internalized (28). The focus of the new covenant is on the individual, not on a single nation; all believers are brothers, and salvation is universally available (28). The first covenant is earthly, the second, heavenly (29). The old covenant corresponds to "this age" (τὴν οἰκουμένην), while the new covenant is eschatological and corresponds to "the age to come" (τὴν μέλλουσαν) (29). The first is transitory, the second, stable and eternal (29). Believers are already tasting the power of the age to come (29). It is important to note that, on Spicq's understanding of Hebrews, the promises of the two covenants are identical; the difference between the two covenants is that under the new covenant, the promises are in the process of being realized (29).

Spicq concludes on the basis of these observations that the author of Hebrews regarded the idea of covenant as the "common denominator" in salvation history, which brings out the harmony between the religious institutions of Judaism and Christianity. The new covenant is not a "point of rupture" with Judaism, but rather the "fulfillment and

innovation" of Judaism. The knowledge that God's promises will be kept is not more certain under the new covenant than under the old. Since, however, God's promises are in the process of being fulfilled as the power of the age to come breaks into the present age, the realization of the promises is more immediate to believers under the new covenant (29-30).

On Spicq's interpretation of Hebrews, then, covenant is a category which overarches the two epochs of salvation history, the present age, and the age to come. The author of Hebrews chose to use the concept of covenant in this way, Spicq says, because it is a category broad enough to embrace the religious institutions of both Judaism and Christianity (30). Both covenants are associated with promises. The promises of the old covenant are not different from those of the new; rather, the promises made under the old covenant are fulfilled under the new covenant. The second covenant, then, is not so much a radically "new" covenant as it is the old covenant powerfully, surprisingly, and decisively renewed.

Spicq's article has little to say about Hebrews' attitude to the OT, although it can be inferred from the harmony which Spicq sees between past and present effected by the Epistle's use of the idea of covenant that the author of Hebrews had a high regard for scripture, and for the persons, institutions, and events described therein. Chapter eleven of the first volume of Spicq's commentary, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle to the Hebrews," supports this inference. Here, Spicq asserts that Hebrews derives its Christology and ideas about the new (Christian) cults from the OT (339). For Hebrews, all scripture is

messianic (341). Although the Epistle recognizes the literal sense of the OT, the earthly institutions and events described in scripture are regarded as human or material symbols of the heavenly and spiritual realities of the new covenant (343-46). Spicq prefers the designation "christological parabolism" to the more commonly used "typology" to describe Hebrews' hermeneutical method (346-47); the author of Hebrews, inspired by the Holy Spirit, saw correspondences between the old and new economies of salvation (349-50). Not only do the "things" described in scripture have a meaning other than the literal; the very words of scripture contain a "latent gospel" (349). The author of Hebrews, pneumatically inspired, perceived the sens plénier, the "fuller sense," of the words of the OT (348). According to Spicq, the author of Hebrews placed a very high value on the OT scriptures, deriving his Christology from them, seeing correspondences between past and present persons, events, and institutions, and drawing out the messianic implications of words which he saw as fully intelligible only in the light of Christ.

Spicq's understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews is complicated by the fact that he is the foremost representative in the twentieth century of the idea that the author of the Epistle was influenced by the Jewish Platonism of Philo of Alexandria.³ On Spicq's interpretation of Hebrews, the fundamental reason for the superiority of the priesthood and cultus of the new covenant to those of the old is that the former are original, heavenly, and eternal, while the latter are only earthly and transitory copies.⁴ For Hebrews, as for Philo,

history is significant only in that it contains reflections of heavenly realities, and edifying examples of the religious life.⁵ The language of Hebrews, then, betrays its author as one who thought primarily in ontological, as opposed to eschatological, categories, and who strove to harmonize his essentially Platonic world view with the apostolic (Johannine) doctrine which he had accepted;⁶ in Hebrews, eschatology is subordinate to ontology.⁷

Similarly

W.J. Dumbrell, "The Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect," EvQ 48 (1976) 154-59.

J. Jocz, The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968). Jocz thinks that "The 'new' covenant in Hebrews 8:13 and 12:24 directly relates to the hope of renewal in the Old Testament" (297).

G. Vos, The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956) 27-45; 117-24.

1.1 The new covenant as a renewal of the old: Hebrews and the DSS.

A group of scholars who have expressed the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews in terms of the new covenant being a renewal of the old share a common concern: to establish a relation between the Epistle and the Qumran community. The history of scholarship interested in establishing such a connection has been summarized elsewhere,⁸ and is sufficiently well-known so as not to warrant detailed description here. Since, however, the most prominent representatives of such

scholarship show similar attitudes to the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, this aspect of their work must be mentioned.

I.W. Batdorf⁹ has identified three main variations on the idea that Hebrews and Qumran are somehow related. First, Hebrews could have been written to an "Essene" congregation, in order to encourage their acceptance of Christianity. Second, Hebrews could have been written to a Christian congregation made up of former Qumraners, or Jewish Christians who had been influenced by beliefs like those found in the DSS. Third, Hebrews and Qumran may be related only in that they share in a common cultural milieu, which the discovery of the DSS has helped us to understand more fully.

The most important proponent of the first position, i.e., that Hebrews was written in order to persuade a group of "Essenes" to turn to Christ, is H. Kosmala.¹⁰ Kosmala relates Hebrews' references to the new covenant to the belief of the writers of the DSS that they were the community of the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah.¹¹ According to Kosmala, Hebrews' discussion of the new covenant of Jeremiah is concerned to prove that the real new covenant is a universal covenant, available to Jews and Gentiles alike; the understanding of the readers, i.e., that the new covenant could be participated in only by members of the DSS sect, is represented as a misconception by the author of the Epistle. Moreover, the new covenant, which admits Gentiles, and not just the "elect" of Israel, has been a part of God's plan from the very beginning.¹² Thus, in Kosmala's presentation, Hebrews regards the Qumraners' belief that the new covenant was in fact a renewal of the

old covenant as essentially correct; the only point on which the Epistle disagrees with the Qumran conception of the "renewed" covenant concerns the scope of its availability.

The second hypothesis relating Hebrews and Qumran, i.e., that the Epistle was written to a group of "Esseno-Christians" in order to dissuade them from clinging to remnants of their old beliefs, has been upheld by such scholars as Y. Yadin and C. Spicq.¹³ Yadin sees in Hebrews an attempt to counter Qumran-like beliefs (in the eschatological role of angels, the priestly messiah, the eschatological prophet, and Moses) by proving Jesus' superiority to them all.¹⁴ At the same time, Yadin argues, the author strove to accommodate his teaching to the beliefs of his readers as much as possible without compromising his own position, in order to enhance their understanding of his arguments.¹⁵

At about the same time as Yadin's essay appeared, an article by C. Spicq espousing a similar viewpoint was published in Revue de Qumran.¹⁶ In this article, Spicq combines the insights of his two-volume commentary with the new data provided by the discovery of the DSS. He maintains that Apollos, a hellenistic Jewish Christian familiar with the work of Philo, made contact with ex-Essene priests at Jerusalem, and wrote the Epistle in order to clear up their misconceptions about Christianity.¹⁷ According to Spicq, Hebrews presents Jesus as the "new Moses," in an effort to show that Jesus, and not the Teacher of Righteousness, is the "mediator" of the new covenant.¹⁸ Spicq's attempt to explain the "new covenant" of Hebrews in the light of the DSS accords well with the conclusion of his commentary that the new

covenant in Hebrews was not so much "new" as "renewed;" as we have already noted, the "new covenant of Qumran was, in fact, conceived as a renewed covenant, analogous to the reform of Josiah, or the covenant of Ezra.

The third view, i.e., that the DSS may shed light on the argument of Hebrews because both shared in a common cultural milieu, is held by many scholars.¹⁹ This view, unlike the first two, has no consistent effect upon the positions of the various scholars who hold it in their explications of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, since, as F.C. Fensham has observed: "The one problem with this kind of argument is that . . . the addressees of Hebrews are pushed into a dense fog of unrecognition."²⁰ The result of the scholarly acceptance of either of the first two hypotheses is either that the argument concerning the new covenant is regarded as a piece of "common ground," used by Hebrews in order to prepare the way for the criticism of other beliefs (Kosmala, Yadin, Spicq), or (less often) that the argument concerning the two covenants is seen as an example of anti-Jewish polemic (see n. 20). With the third hypothesis, however, the conceptual background of the Epistle is so ill-defined that it has little effect on the explication of the relation of the two covenants of the scholars who accept it (see the discussions of the scholars mentioned in n. 19 in other parts of this study).

2. Old and new covenants related dialectically.

In his important survey of the literature on Hebrews, E. Grässer opines that all scholars who describe the relation of the two covenants

in Hebrews as a dialectical one are essentially correct.²¹ On this view, the old covenant is seen as "established apart from power and yet an advance representation of the coming . . . It is not the relationship of polemical antithesis, but of more gradual differences . . ."²² The view that the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews is a dialectical one, i.e., that the old covenant points to the new and is in turn surpassed by it, has been expressed by many scholars, and is, in fact, one of the most common ways of describing the relation of the two covenants in the literature on Hebrews. There is, however, considerable disagreement among scholars on how the dialectic is conceptualized: is the relation between the two covenants conceived eschatologically, in terms of past and present, or ontologically, in terms of earthly and heavenly, material and immaterial--or in some other way? Since so many scholars advocate the idea that the two covenants in Hebrews exist in a dialectical relation, and because there is at the same time so much disagreement among them on the conceptual nature of the dialectic, this section will include descriptions of several different views on how the two covenants in Hebrews can be said to be related dialectically.

2.1 Dialectical relation of the two covenants conceived metaphysically.

Käsemann, E. Das wandernde Gottesvolk: Eine Untersuchung zum Hebräerbrief. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939.

This is the monograph described in Chapter I of this study as a "turning point" in the interpretation of Hebrews in this century.

Despite the appearance since 1938 of numerous studies postulating connections between Hebrews and Platonism, Philonism, and Qumran, Käsemann's hypothesis that the Epistle was influenced by conceptions from pre-Christian Gnosticism has remained a significant issue in the interpretation of the Epistle. As G.E. Tymeson points out in his recent dissertation on Hebrews and Gnosticism, scholarly interest in Käsemann's work on Hebrews has even shown a resurgence since 1969.²³

The points at which Käsemann sees Gnostic conceptions and the thought of Hebrews converging are conveniently summarized by E.M. Yaumachi:

- (1) the Gnostic "heavenly journey" is the idea behind the migration of the people of God and their search for rest (Heb. 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 10 f.);
- (2) the Gnostic myth of the Primal Man is behind the description of the Son of God as an "Anthropos" (Heb. 1-2);
- (3) the gathering of the godly seed is behind the idea that the Son of God brings the people of God to perfection (Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:19; etc.);
- (4) the Gnostic Anthropos myth is combined with Jewish messianic expectations in Hebrews concerning the heavenly high priest.²⁴

Käsemann reaches these conclusions by examining three main themes of Hebrews: "the pilgrimage of the people of God" (5-58); "the son and the sons" (58-116); and "the high priest of his people" (116-56). According to Käsemann, the first theme, contained in Heb 3:7-4:13, is the "basic motif" (Grundmotiv) of the Epistle; the wilderness generation of Israel is portrayed as a type of the community to which the Epistle was addressed, and this typology is based on the Gnostic idea of the "heavenly journey" of the soul from matter to the immaterial (52-58), adapted somewhat to Jewish eschatology (110-16). The purpose of Heb 3:7-4:13 is parenetic, and this section is not, properly speaking, a source of doctrine. Heb 7:1-10:18, the discussion of the high

priesthood of Christ and the two covenants, is the doctrinal section of the Epistle, which gives the readers a reason to hold fast to their faith: "in view of the heavenly high priest the certainty of the goal is demonstrated" (156). Thus, on Käsemann's interpretation, the doctrine of 7:1-10:18 serves the parenetic purpose of the Epistle, which is to "spur on" the weary followers of Christ (115-16).

It is important to note that Käsemann's hypothesis that Hebrews and pre-Christian Gnosticism arose out of a common tradition does not imply that the Epistle is a "Gnostic" document. Käsemann's argument is that Hebrews modified Gnostic doctrines for Christian use. Although the author of Hebrews was influenced by the Gnostic traditions in some respects, Gnosis is always subservient to Gospel:

The gospel makes use of it [Gnostic mythology] only insofar as it remains lord of the mythology, understanding the question of man standing in need of salvation, and Christ as the answer to this question.²⁵

Part one of Käsemann's monograph contains two sections which are particularly relevant to the concerns of this study: "Old and new people of God" (32-37), and "The divine $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ as the continuity of salvation history" (37-39). In the first of these sections, Käsemann rejects the commonly-held hypothesis that Hebrews was written in order to dissuade a group of Jewish Christians from returning to Judaism (32-34). The central contrast of Hebrews, says Käsemann, is not between Judaism and Christianity, but between the earthly and the heavenly (34). The covenant revealed through Moses at Mount Sinai contained an advance indication and imitation of the eternal and heavenly realities revealed through Christ, i.e., his heavenly high priestly ministry (35-36). This first covenant has been abolished by a solemn oath of God, because of

the disobedience of Israel (33). Furthermore, the institutions of the first covenant, by their very nature, were not able to cleanse the consciences of men, and thus to allow men access to God through cultic observance (34). The fault of the "old people of God" was that they searched on earth for what could only be found in heaven (37); they did not recognize the institutions of the old covenant for what they were: the shadows of the activity of Christ in heaven (35). The revelation of Christ, however, both reaffirms the original meaning of the old covenant, and opens the way to the heavenly realities to which it pointed (35-37). Thus the old covenant is the promise of salvation, and the new covenant is the actuality (35). The "new people of God" are "perfected" and "consecrated" through the high priestly work of Christ, and participate proleptically in the salvation which he has obtained for them, and which will be fully theirs in the age to come (88-89).

Käsemann takes exception to the implication of H. Strathmann's claim that the purpose of Hebrews was to persuade its readers to make a decisive break with Judaism. If this were so, Käsemann argues, the Jewish cult would be nothing but a "near at hand example" (nächst-liegendes Beispiel) of the inadequacy of the cultic institutions of this world (34). On Käsemann's interpretation, the contrast between old and new covenants is not one of polemical antithesis. Rather, the two covenants are related dialectically: "the old covenant is broken off and in turn surpassed, and hence is recognized as 'shadow' and 'example'" (35). It is no accident that Hebrews' message is always grounded in OT categories, for the OT points to heavenly realities.

Thus Hebrews speaks of a better hope, a better covenant, a different ministry, a greater and more perfect tent, better promises and sacrifices (35)--the reference is always to the OT.

It is important for our understanding of Käsemann's discussion of "The divine $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$ as the continuity of salvation history" that, for Käsemann, there is no earthly continuity between the two covenants in Hebrews (33). The word of God, concretized in scripture, is the element in salvation history which points beyond history to the eternal realities hidden in heaven (38). God's intention to save mankind has been the same since creation, but Israel has perverted the sense of the divine word by looking for salvation in the cosmic order (39). This is why the "old people of God" described in Heb 3:7-4:13 are held up by the author as an example of faithlessness (52-58). In contrast, the OT figures in Heb 11 are used as examples of belief:

Their faith is an echo of the divine election and is approachable only by recognition through the scriptures. As the divine word establishes and sustains the creation, so it alone guaranteed the continuity of salvation, broken often enough by the human (39).

Since the OT figures in Heb 11 were faithful to the meaning of the divine word of scripture, they are recognized, in the light of Christ, as comrades in the salvation which they looked forward to, and which Christ has now made accessible (39). Thus, on Käsemann's interpretation, the point of continuity in the dialectical relation of the earthly old covenant and the heavenly new covenant is the divine word of scripture, specifically, the witness to the heavenly ministry of Christ hidden in scripture, which enabled the OT faithful to look forward to heavenly salvation, and which is now being fully realized by the "new people of

God." This implies that the author of Hebrews held the OT scriptures in very high regard. The words of the OT, and the "things" described therein, if correctly interpreted, hold the divine promise of salvation in Christ.

Käsemann's hypothesis that Hebrews used pre-Christian Gnostic conceptions to explain the significance of Christ has, of course, affected his conception of the nature of the language of the Epistle. Some comments made by G.W. Buchanan bring out this aspect of Käsemann's work on Hebrews:

The true background for Hebrews is in gnostic thought and the wandering of the Christian is a gnostic ascension of the soul from the dark material world of demons to the heavenly city of light. The Son in Hebrews is the gnostic Anthropos, the little Jehovah, Savior Leader, Sophia, Logos, and Urmensch as in Philip. 2. Concepts like "enlightened", "psychic", and "perfect" are gnostic terms referring to those who are advanced in the gnostic myth.²⁶

Throughout the Epistle, then, Käsemann finds the language to be redolent of the distinction between the earthly and the heavenly, the material and the immaterial, and virtually all the dichotomies in Hebrews (old/new, imperfect/perfect, present age/age to come) are seen as conditioned by this distinction. It is easy to see how, on such an interpretation, the dialectic of old and new covenants can function largely apart from eschatology.

Similarly

E. Grässer, Der Glaube im Hebräerbrief (Marburger Theologische Studien 2; Marburg: N.G. Elwert, 1965) 171-83.



Compare

G. Bornkamm, "Das Bekenntnis im Hebräerbrief," TBl 21 (1942) 55-56. Bornkamm thinks that Hebrews' teaching concerning Jesus the heavenly high priest is an interpretation of the confession that Jesus is the son of God. With this teaching, Bornkamm asserts, the author of Hebrews sought to remedy his readers' misinterpretation of the meaning of Christ, whom they regarded as the kind of Gnostic redeemer so well-described by Käsemann. The Gnostic redeemer myth, says Bornkamm, blurred the events of Christ's life in a "mythical haze;" Hebrews counteracted this tendency by stressing the historical uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice, and of his role as guarantor and mediator of a new and permanent covenant (66).

2.2 Dialectical relation of the two covenants conceived eschatologically.

Michel, O. Der Brief an die Hebräer übersetzt und erklärt.

MeyerK; 12th ed.; Göttingen: Vandendoeck & Ruprecht, 1966.

Michel's commentary was, until the publication of Spicq's two-volume work, the most thoroughgoing treatment of the Epistle to the Hebrews in this century.²⁷ The commentary first appeared in 1936; the edition used here integrates subsequent developments in the interpretation of Hebrews, including such issues as the relation of pre-Christian Gnosticism to Hebrews (especially as explicated by Käsemann), and the impact of the discovery of the DSS on the exegesis of the Epistle (with special reference to the work of Yadin, Kosmala, and Coppens). In its

present form, Michel's commentary ranks as one of the most weighty works on Hebrews to have appeared in the period from 1938-1980.

Like many commentators (Käsemann, Spicq, et al.), Michel regards the primary purpose of Hebrews as parenetic; the doctrine in the second main part of the Epistle (8:1-10:18; 339) serves its parenetic aim, which is to counteract the lassitude of a post-apostolic Christian community (56). Both author and addressees, Michel claims, were Hellenistic Jewish Christians, the latter probably being Italian (56). The starting point of the author's train of thought is the hymn-like proclamation of Heb 1:1-4 (60-61), which is developed against a conceptual background with roots in Jewish apocalyptic thought and hellenistic Jewish wisdom teaching (61).

According to Michel, Hebrews' conception of the relation of the two covenants arises out of three main principles of interpretation. The first of these is correspondence (Übereinstimmung): "what the OT has, the new covenant also has." The second principle is that of surpassing (Überbietung): "if the OT already knows divine offerings and institutions, the new covenant has better and more efficacious ones . . . κρείττων is the characteristic word of surpassing." The third is the principle of perfection (Vollkommenheit): "the new covenant has over against the old the true sacrifice, the heavenly sanctuary, the eternal high priest" (285). Michel points out that Hebrews characteristically uses the concepts of shadow (σκιᾶ) and form (εἰκῶν), copy (ὑπόδειγμα), and original (τύπος) to express these relations (285). Other terms which express the relation of the two covenants are

earthly/heavenly, legal/true, and perfect/imperfect (286). Some of these dichotomies are, indeed, borrowed from Hellenism. It is important to note, however, that ultimately all these contrasts are historically conditioned; it is the realization in history of the heavenly originals in the new covenant which invalidates the shadowy copies on earth (286).

According to Michel, the concept which allows Hebrews to harmonize salvation history is the idea of promise (Verheissung), which is introduced by the author of the Epistle into his exegesis of OT texts. Promise (ἐπαγγελία) is, for Hebrews, the main focus of the scriptures: "instead of the Torah, the promise" (77). Promise encompasses the word of God in the old and new orders (192), but it is only perceived fully in the light of Christ (154). In turn, the death of Jesus is understood in images taken from the OT (316). Thus the shadowy copies which are the institutions of the old covenant point to and explain Christ (151-53; 292-93). The cross of Christ, and the forgiveness which it brings, however, have not yet brought about the final consummation of God's plan of salvation; this awaits eschatological fulfillment (341). Thus, for Michel, the people of God are not so much "journeying" (à la Käsemann) as waiting.

Michel's conception of the relation of the two covenants, then, can be described as an eschatological dialectic: the institutions of the old covenant correspond to those of the new covenant, and the new order surpasses and completes the old. Seen in the light of the idea of "promise," the old covenant points to, is antiquated by, and explains the Christ-event. The key to the continuity in the dialectic of old

and new is this notion of promise, which is the concept which runs through both covenants (76).

Predictably, Michel sees the author of Hebrews as having had a high regard for scripture; Hebrews "is much more scriptural interpretation than any other part of the New Testament" (5). The institutions of the OT are intimately related to those of the new covenant; the former are reflections of the latter (286).

This last observation is closely related to the question of the nature of the language of Hebrews. According to Michel, Hebrews' language of copy and original, shadow and form, earthly and heavenly is not to be interpreted as metaphysical speculation (5, 287-88). Nor is Hebrews' comparison (Vergleich) of the ritual of the Day of Atonement to the work of Christ to be taken as a mere "picture" (Bild); rather, this comparison is "a disclosure of a hidden divine decree of an eschatological order" (293). Hebrews' description of the high priestly work of Christ in heaven does not go beyond the word of the OT and the early Christian confession; the word of the OT, interpreted charismatically, bears an exegetical relation to Christ (151-52). Thus, for Michel, the language of Hebrews consists of "pictures" or "images" (Bilder) taken from the OT, which were used by the author to bring out the meaning of Christ. Hebrews' use of these images results in an "apocalyptic realism" (293) which is neither to be taken literally (287, 316), nor as metaphysical speculation (288):

Hebrews knows about the connection of the "new covenant" to the historical event of the death of Jesus, and seeks to understand the plan of God in this event, but can bring it to expression only in pictures (316).

Similarly

S. Amsler, "L'Epître aux Hébreux," L'Ancien Testament dans l'Eglise: Essai d'hermeneutique chrétienne (Bibliothèque Théologique; Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1960) 17-27.

T. Holz, "Einführung in Probleme des Hebräerbriefes," Die Zeichen der Zeit 23 (1969) 321-27.

F. Schröger, Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger (Biblische Untersuchungen 4; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1968).

D.M. Smith, Jr., "The Use of the Old Testament in the New." The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays (ed. J.M. Efird; Durham: Duke University, 1972) 58-61.

Compare

F.C. Synge, Hebrews and the Scriptures (London: S.P.C.K., 1959). Synge maintains that the relation of the old and new covenants in Hebrews is quite simply the relation of promise to fulfillment (58-64). According to Synge, the recipients of the Epistle were Jews on the verge of accepting Jesus as messiah:

. . . they are asked to abandon nothing of their old faith, but rather to follow it through to its logical, Scriptural conclusion, the fulfillment of its promise in Jesus Christ (56-57).

Synge is careful not to imply that the relation of promise to fulfillment involves the notion of "development culminating in Christ" (60). Rather, the whole OT is a book of promise, which comes to fulfillment only in Christ (61-64). (Cf. M. Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews,

An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics," Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation [ed. W. Klassen and G.F. Snyder; London: SCM, 1962] 53-78).

Similarly

J. Ungeheuer, Der Grosse Priester über dem Hause Gottes (Würzburg: H. Stürtz, 1939) 74-76.

See also:

S. Kistemaker, The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Amsterdam: G. van Soest, 1961). Similarly to Synge, Kistemaker holds that the OT word of God is interpreted by the author of Hebrews in terms of prophecy (old covenant) and fulfillment (new covenant) (88-94, 133). The foundation of the Epistle lies in four main Psalm citations: (Pss 8:4-6; 95:7-11; 110:4; 40:6-8) (95-130). According to Kistemaker, midrash pesher was the favourite hermeneutical method of the author of Hebrews (11-12).

2.3 Dialectical relation of the two covenants conceived in terms of a "double typology."

Zimmerman, H. Die Hohepriester-Christologie des Hebräerbriefes.

Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1964.²⁸

Zimmerman's study is concerned to show the relation of Hebrews' doctrine of Christ as high priest to the parenetic aim of the Epistle (7-9). The monograph contains a section entitled "The Relation of the

High Priesthood of Christ to the High Priesthood of the Old Covenant" (24-25) which contains some insights directly relevant to the interests of this thesis.

Zimmerman finds two groups of texts (Textgruppen) in the central section of Hebrews which contain two different understandings of the relation of the old and new covenants. Both are grounded in the "absolute and unconditionally binding word of God", i.e., the OT (24). Both are specifically concerned with the question of the relation of the high priesthood and sacrifices of the old covenant to the sacrifice of Christ the heavenly high priest.

The first Textgruppe identified by Zimmerman (Heb 7:4-25; 8:8-12; 10:5-9) regards the old order as the antithesis of the new order instituted by Christ (24). Christ is high priest after the order of Melchizedek, not of Aaron; the former commandment is "weak and useless" and brings nothing to perfection; God himself has declared the old covenant to be antiquated (24). The point of the antithesis is that "Christ terminates the sacrifices of the old covenant in order to place in their stead his perfect obedience to the will of God in power" (24).

In the second Textgruppe (5:1-10; 9:11-14, 18, 22-24, 26; 10:1), Zimmerman finds the relation of the two covenants and their cultic appurtenances to be one of correspondence, not antithesis: "an analogy, a surpassing and eschatological perfection determines the relation of Christ's high priesthood to the high priesthood of the old covenant" (24-25). Christ shares the human attributes and sacerdotal functions of the Aaronic high priests; the earthly tent is a copy and shadow of

the heavenly sanctuary (25). On Zimmerman's interpretation of this second Textgruppe, an important similarity between the two covenants is that

The old order, which is realized in the Old Testament in a sacrificial cult, and the new order founded by Christ stand under the same law of blood: as "the first covenant was not consecrated without blood" (9,18), so Christ became through his death "mediator of a new covenant" (9,15). Both orders stand under the law: "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (9,22) (25).

The relation between the two covenants in the second group of texts is best described in Heb 10:1: "The law holds only a shadow of the future blessings, not, however, the form of the things themselves" (25).

According to Zimmermann, then, Hebrews describes two kinds of typological relation between the old and new covenants, one antithetical, and one complementary. This formulation approaches the idea that the two covenants are related dialectically: the old covenant both points to and is ended by the new covenant. The overall impression given by this double typology is that the new covenant is better than, but not discontinuous with, the old covenant. Both typologies are firmly grounded in the "absolute and unconditionally binding word of God," the OT.

Zimmermann's opinion that the doctrine of Hebrews is subservient to the parenetic purpose of the Epistle (7-9; 32-33) is an important clue to his conception of the nature of the language of the Epistle. Hebrews' aim, Zimmermann says, was to counteract the tendency of a community of second generation Christians to be distressed by the humility of Jesus' life and death on the cross in contrast to the glory of the old order. The author of the Epistle achieved this aim by

interpreting the OT typologically, and thereby presenting the old order as a pointer to its fulfillment in Christ (32-33). The implication is that, for Hebrews, the relation of the two covenants is not one of strict historical correspondences which were necessary to the addressees' understanding of the nature of reality in the new order. Rather, the author of Hebrews developed two typologies, one antithetical, and one complementary, in order to make the parenetic point that Christ's death both fulfilled and surpassed the highly respected institutions of the OT.

Similarly

J. Moffatt, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (ICC; T. & T. Clark, 1924; reprinted 1952). Moffatt has a similar understanding of the purpose of Hebrews, and the nature of the typology. The consequences of such a reconstruction for the nature of the language are spelled out more clearly by Moffatt than by Zimmermann:

. . . nothing has so handicapped its [Hebrews'] appeal as the later use of it by dogmatic theology. While the author of Πρός Ἑβραίους often turned the literal into the figurative, his theological interpreters have often engaged in turning the figurative expressions of the Epistle into what was literal. . . There is no consistent symbolism, indeed, not even in the case of the ἀρχιερεὺς ; in the nature of the case, there could not be (xxxi; italics mine. Cf. xxiii-xxvii; xxxi-xxxix).

For Moffatt, as for Zimmermann, the message of the Epistle is more important than the language which bears the message.

3. Old and new covenants conceived as points on a continuum of revelation.

The idea that the old and new covenants were perceived by the author of Hebrews as points on a line of revelation from the beginning of history to the end of time is quite common in the literature on the Epistle. This formulation of the relation of the two covenants is usually accompanied, at least implicitly, by the idea that the thought of the Epistle is fundamentally eschatological. Such formulations either assert that the old covenant in some way "foreshadows" the new, or that the history of Israel actually leads up to the new by a process of progressive revelation. Representatives of each of these positions will be described below.

3.1 The old covenant conceived as "foreshadowing" the new.

Barrett, C.K. "The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

The Background of the New Testament and its Eschatology, 363-93.

Ed. W.D. Davies and D. Daube; Cambridge: University Press, 1956.

Barrett's well-known essay is concerned to prove that the thought of Hebrews is fundamentally eschatological, not Platonic. Barrett holds that although Hebrews developed the idealist element in apocalyptic thought in terms that Plato (or better, Philo) might have understood, the eschatological element remains dominant (393). That is, the "Platonic" elements in Hebrews are "horizontalized" to fit into an eschatological framework.

According to Barrett, Hebrews is acutely aware of the distinction between the "now" of salvation in Christ and the "not yet" of the eschatological cataclysm (363-64). The real meaning of the "parables" of the OT, i.e., the old covenant and its institutions, can only be fully understood in the light of Christ (392). The teachings of the OT remain true for Hebrews, and are recognized as having had a limited value in their own time. Much of the OT is read as simple predictive prophecy, some of which has already been fulfilled by Christ, and some of which awaits fulfillment in the eschaton (392). The institutions of the old covenant, such as the earthly tabernacle, are "parables" "not in the sense of being merely an imperfect image of the eternal, but a parable for the present time (ix. 9)--a pointer to the manifestation of the eternal in time" (392). The Christ-event illumines the meaning of the parables and prophecies of the old covenant for the Christian community.

Barrett's interpretation, then, strongly emphasizes the continuity of the old and new covenants in Hebrews. The author of the Epistle is depicted as having seen history as a continuum of revelation, beginning with OT institutions and prophecies, reaching partial fulfillment in Christ, and awaiting complete fulfillment in the eschaton. The new covenant inaugurated by Christ does not cancel the validity of the old order, but rather brings out its true validity; "Christians are . . . the first to perceive the true meaning of the OT cultus which they have themselves abandoned" (392).

Similarly

L.O. Bristol, Hebrews: A Commentary (Valley Forge: Judson, 1967) 13-18, 107-39; 185-86.

F.F. Bruce, The Epistle to the Hebrews (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964; id., "Hebrews," PCB, 1008-19.

J.H. Burtness, "Plato, Philo, and the Author of Hebrews," LQ 10 (1958) 54-64.

J. Casey, "Eschatology in Heb 12:14-29: An Exegetical Study" (Th.D. dissertation, Catholic University of Louvain, 1976). This study contains a lengthy discussion of the καινή διαθήκη in Hebrews (383-504). According to Casey, Hebrews' world-view is fundamentally eschatological; the new covenant is an "eschatological" covenant (503-504). The new covenant, depicted in Hebrews as being concluded at "Mount Sion" (Heb 12:22-24) is contrasted with the Sinai covenant (Heb 12:18-21) (499-500); the old covenant "foreshadows" the new (496). The "newness" of the eschatological covenant lies in its ability to bring about "a new union, a reconciliation between God and his people which has been ordained and initiated by God" (495-96).

J.H. Davies, A Letter to Hebrews (Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: University Press, 1967).

A. Feuillet, "Les points de vue nouvelles dans l'eschatologie de l'Épître aux Hébreux," SE 2 (1964) 369-87.

E. Fudge, Our Man in Heaven: An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973). Fudge denies that Hebrews was influenced by Platonism, but his exposition of the relation of the

two covenants is reminiscent of Barrett's:

On the one hand, there is an eternal realm which exists at the same time as, but transcendent to the first - covenant types and shadows based on it. On the other hand, this eternal realm was manifested in the course of human time and history, displacing the former types and shadows (93).

D. Guthrie, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," New Testament Introduction: Hebrews to Revelation (London: Tyndale, 1964) 11-59.

J. Hillmann, L'Épître aux Hébreux (Lumières Bibliques: Le Puy/Lyon: Xavier Mappus, 1967) 11-17; 62-78.

B. Klappert, Die Eschatologie des Hebräerbriefes (Theologische Existenz heute 156; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1969).

O. Kuss, Der Brief an die Hebräer (RNT; Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1966). According to Kuss, Hebrews, Philonism, Gnosticism, and the DSS belong to a similar cultural milieu (18-19). Hebrews has much in common with Paul (22). The relation of the two covenants is the "basic question" (Grundfrage) of the Epistle (23). "Old covenant" and "new covenant" are categories which overarch salvation history; the OT idea of covenant survives in Hebrews (109-12). The LXX translation of berit (διαθήκη) was meant to emphasize the one-sidedness of the arrangement; the "last will" analogy in Heb 9:16-17 merely presses this idea a little further (110-11; 120). The cultic language of Hebrews is highly metaphoric (126-38); the cultus of the OT is conceived as a pointer (Hinweis) to Christ (108; 139-40).

W. Michaelis, Einleitung in das Neue Testament: Die Entstehung, Sammlung und Überlieferung der Neuen Testaments (3rd ed.; Bern: Berchtold Haller, 1961) 267.

R.N. Nash, "The Notion of Mediator in Alexandrian Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews," WTJ 40 (1977) 89-115. Nash suggests an interesting reason for the decisive superiority of the new covenant to the old, based on the occurrence of the word ἐγγυος ("guarantor") in Heb 7:22: "Jesus, the guarantor (ἐγγυος) is not simply a go-between; he is personally responsible for that which he guarantees. The old covenant lacked anyone who could guarantee it" (115; cf. Bruce, Hebrews, 151, n. 70).

J. van der Ploeg, "L'exégèse de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Épître aux Hébreux," RB 54 (1947) 187-228.

S. Sandmel, A Jewish Understanding of the New Testament, 227-35; id., Anti-Semitism in the New Testament (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978) 120-22.

F.J. Schierse, The Epistle to the Hebrews (New Testament for Spiritual Reading; New York: Herder and Herder, 1969); id., Verheissung und Heilsvollendung. Zur theologischen Grundfrage des Hebräerbriefes (Münchener Theologische Studien 1,9; Munich, 1955).

S.G. Sowers, The Hermeneutics of Philo and Hebrews, 112-15.

Sowers contends that the idea of "perfection" in Hebrews includes the idea of the "perfecting" of the old covenant in the new. Cf. M. Silva, "Perfection and Eschatology in Hebrews," WTJ 39 (1976) 60-71; A. Wikgren, "Patterns of Perfection in the Epistle to the Hebrews," NTS 6 (1960) 159-67. See also: P.E. Langevin, "Le sacerdoce du Christ dans le Nouveau Testament," Le prêtre, hier, aujourd'hui, demain (Congrès d'Ottawa; Montreal: Fides, 1970) 63-79. As the title suggests,

the article is concerned primarily with the priesthood of Christ; Christ's priesthood perfects the priesthood of the old covenant (69-70; 75-76; 77-79).

J. Thompson, The Letter to the Hebrews (Living Word Commentary 15; Austin: P.B. Sweet, 1971) 11: 108-35. Thompson makes it very clear that the "Platanism" of Hebrews is "horizontalized" so that the old covenant "foreshadows" the new (111-112; 129). Thompson also asserts that Hebrews' distinctions between "shadow" and "form", "copy" and "pattern" bring out the inferiority of the old covenant and its institutions (ibid., 111-12).

Compare

W. Manson, The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Historical and Theological Reconsideration (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951). Manson's understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews is much like Barrett's:

. . . the writer to the Hebrews is not primarily a Platonic idealist but an eschatologist, and when he says (x.1) that the Law had in it the shadow of the Christian order, though not the reality, he means that the new order was at hand, at the door, projecting itself on the plane of the Old Testament history, announcing its advent. The history, the Law, and the cultus of Israel were to this extent witnesses in advance to the Christian salvation (184).

Unlike Barrett (and many other scholars), however, Manson does not see the primary purpose of the Epistle as parenetic (16-23; cf. Barrett, 368). Rather, Manson asserts, the purpose of Hebrews is grounded in the eschatology of Stephen (Acts 7) (25-46), who announced the "world

mission" of Christianity (23). The message of Hebrews is that the (Jewish Christian Roman) community to which it is addressed must emerge from "the covert of the Jewish religion" and embrace "the true horizon of the eschatological calling"--the mission to the Gentiles (24). The old and new covenants are continuous in that the scriptures, institutions, and prophecies of the old order witness to Christ (127-29; 184-87). The old covenant is discontinuous with the new, however, in that the old is identified with the eschatological "yesterday":

In Christ the Eternal World [sic] has announced itself, throwing all past religious history into the shadow, putting an end to the Law and the Cultus of Israel, and leaving no place in Christianity for Jewish-Christian archaizing (24).

On this interpretation, there is a necessary connection between the old covenant and the new, but, at the same time, there is no room for turning back, or even clinging too tightly to the past.

Cf. J.W. Bowman, Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter (Layman's Bible Commentary 24; Richmond: John Knox, 1962). Bowman's brief study is interesting because he combines Manson's hypothesis about the relation of the theology of Stephen to Hebrews with a suggestion inspired by the discovery of the DSS. According to Bowman, the recipients of Hebrews were hellenistic Jewish Christians who were attracted to Qumran-like teachings (9-19). See also: A. Snell, New and Living Way: An Explanation of the Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Faith, 1959) 36-40; 101-26. Snell accepts Manson's judgement that Hebrews shows affinities with the thought of Stephen (34-36), but believes that the author of the Epistle was Barnabas, and that the addressees lived in Antioch or Cyprus (17-20;

36; Manson leaves the question of the authorship of Hebrews open; see id., Hebrews, 169-72).

J. Thurén, Das Lobopfer der Hebräer: Studien zum Aufbau und Anliegen von Hebräerbrief 13 (Acta Academiae Aboensis, ser. A, 47, 1; Abo: Abo Akademi, 1973). Thurén, like Manson, believes that Hebrews reflects the author's perception of the moment in salvation history at which the Christian community stands: Christianity is realized Judaism, and those Jews who do not recognize Christ are no longer "true Jews" (248). Thus, "the minority must 'go forth' in order to prove their completeness" (248).

Thurén's study, as the title suggests, is an examination of Heb 13, a chapter whose relation to the rest of the Epistle has been questioned by some scholars (for a brief rehearsal of the arguments against the unity of ch. 13 with the rest of the Epistle, see Michaelis, Einleitung in das NT, 266). Most scholars hold that ch. 13 is by the same hand as Heb 1-12 (see R.H. Fuller et al., Hebrews - James 1 and 2 Peter - Jude - Revelation [Proclamation Commentaries; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977] 2, 21-22). Thurén believes that Heb 13 is an integral part of the Epistle, which illumines the argument of chs. 1-12 (cf. F.V. Filson, 'Yesterday: A Study of Hebrews in the Light of Chapter 13 [SBT, 2nd ser., 4; London: SCM, 1967]).

Thurén's understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews is based on his exegesis of Heb 13:20-21, which he, following Michel, describes as a hymn with two stanzas of two couplets apiece, plus invocation and doxology (221; cf. Michel, Hebräerbrief, 535).

Thurén sees in this passage the author's conviction that the blood of Jesus has established the new covenant (226); Jesus has been delivered from death, and is now "the great shepherd of the sheep" (Heb 13:20) (222-27). The resurrection of Jesus is typified in the OT by the deliverance of Moses from Egypt, and the rescue of the Psalmist from the realm of death (225). As the mediator of the new covenant, and the leader of his people, Christ is superior to his OT types (227). The proper response to the reality of the new covenant is the "offering of praise" (Lobopfer) of Heb 13:15 (234).

R. Williamson, "Platonism and Hebrews," SJT (1963) 415-24. Williamson agrees with Barrett that the thought of Hebrews is fundamentally eschatological, not Platonic, but he disagrees with Barrett's assertion that the author of Hebrews

. . . shows that the language of philosophy may be more serviceable in expressing Christian truth than some theologians are prepared to allow (421; cf. Barrett, 393).

Williamson argues that Hebrews' imprecise use of "Platonic" language in 9:23, 24 actually obscures and distorts the Epistle's thought (420-21). In using such language, says Williamson, Hebrews sets up two dualistic schemes, one "vertical" ("Platonic"), one "horizontal" ("eschatological"). These two schemes are fundamentally incompatible, and so, at some points in the Epistle (especially ch. 9) the author's argument approaches incoherence.

3.2 The new covenant seen as the end point of a developmental process.

Hughes, G. Hebrews and Hermeneutics: The Epistle to the Hebrews as a

New Testament example of biblical interpretation. Cambridge:
University Press, 1979.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the idea that the two covenants in Hebrews are related dialectically sometimes merges with the notion that the old and new covenants are parts of a linear process of development. This idea approaches the view of some ancient theologians that

The whole theological structure of the church is built upon the idea of promise and fulfillment: what is promised in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament. We achieve thus a straight line of progression: the Law--the Prophets--the Writings--the gospel--the church.²⁹

G. Hughes's explication of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews tries to integrate a "developmental" view of the history of revelation with the recognition that Hebrews sees both continuity and discontinuity between the old and the new.

The thesis of Hughes's book is that the author of Hebrews was, above all, a hermeneut, who was deeply concerned with the question of "how we may conceive the Word of God . . . as being subject to historical processes and yet remaining, recognizably, God's Word" (3). Hughes sees the prologue of the Epistle (1:1-4) as the key to Hebrews' understanding of the history of revelation (5-7).

According to Hughes, in Heb 1:2-4, the author of the Epistle sets forth the theme of the entire writing, i.e., that the Son is the new form of God's "address" (word) to his people, after having established in 1:1 that God has spoken "in many and various ways" through the prophets. That is, Hebrews is primarily concerned with what Hughes calls "revelation

history". The author of Hebrews, Hughes asserts, had a strong consciousness of the various moments in the history of revelation; the word spoken through the prophets and the word embodied in the Son are "parts of a single process" (6). This "process" can be characterized as an eschatological dialectic (70). The "new address" in the Son is discontinuous with the "old address" in the prophets in that the new is perfect and final, while the old was fragmentary and subject to supplement:

As the goal, or the end term, of any process of development is recognizably something different from the process itself . . . , so the Word in the Son stands over against the Word in the prophets (6).

This dialectical relation between the old and new forms of God's address also describes the relation of the two covenants (70). The "discontinuity" side of the dialectic is found in the theological parts of the Epistle ("realized" eschatology), where the author wants to emphasize the dignity of the son; the "continuity" of the two covenants is stressed in the exhortatory passages ("futurist" eschatology), where the author calls his readers to steadfast faith (66-70). Hughes maintains, however, that the idea of the discontinuity of the two covenants in the theological sections of the Epistle must not be exaggerated:

. . . even in the theological parts of the letter the same structures of priesthood, cultus and sacrifice are seen to be operative in the new as in the old, though now on an eschatological scale. Further, it is also clear that the Old Testament citations when brought forward from their original settings to function as Christian λόγος are seen not as outmoded but as present forms of the Word of God, whether in theology or paraenesis (70).

Hughes's interpretation, then, vigorously asserts that the theme of the continuity of the old and new covenants is a main theme of

Hebrews. The eschatological dialectic (as opposed to an ontological dualism, as in Philo; see 26, 34, 36, 42) ensures that the discontinuity of old and new does not overshadow their continuity:

. . . the relationship between the two forms of revelation--the perfect and the imperfect--is given not as between an imperfect human or earthly form and a spiritual or heavenly form, but as earlier and later forms (36).

The author of Hebrews had a high regard for both the words of scripture and the "things" described therein (70); even where Hebrews expresses the relation of Jesus to OT figures antithetically, it is significant that words from the OT itself are used to undergird the interpretation (21). On Hughes's understanding of Hebrews, the old covenant is not regarded merely as a source of scripture, a fund of typological motifs, or a dim shadow of the superior reality of the new order. Rather, the old and new covenants are seen as points on a continuum of revelation, and the different "words" spoken through the prophets are important precursors of the new covenant. The new covenant is regarded as discontinuous with the old only in that it is the perfect culmination of a linear process of development.

Similarly

J.-S. Javet, Dieu nous parla: commentaire sur l'Épître aux Hébreux (Livres de la Bible 3; Paris: "Je Sers," 1945); see especially 9-12, 15-17.

F. Laubach, Der Brief an die Hebräer (Wuppertaler Studienbibel; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1967) 11, 24-29, 159-203, 291.

W. MacDonald, The Epistle to the Hebrews: From Ritual to Reality (Neptune, N.J.: Loizeaux, 1971) 109-51.

W.A. Quanbeck, "The Letter to the Hebrews," Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible (ed. C.M. Laymon; Nashville/New York: Abingdon, 1971) 899; 907-12.

Compare

D.M. Stine, "The Finality of the Christian Faith: A Study of the Unfolding Argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Th.D. dissertation, Princeton, 1964). Stine's conclusions are similar to Hughes's, but the emphasis of his study is different. Hughes's book concentrates on the process of the development from old covenant to new covenant; Stine is more interested in the end point of the process:

The Messiah's age is here. The Messiah's coming has inaugurated the new age. This is the "end of these days" of the Old Covenant. The new age contrasts with that long period of preparation (129; cf. 126-31).

According to Stine, it is the purpose of Hebrews to present the finality of Christianity (222). Thus, although the old covenant is regarded as a "preparation" for the new (and so continuous with it), the accent in Stine's study is on the discontinuity of the two covenants. The difference between the explications of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews of Stine and Hughes shows how important the theological interests of an exegete can be: Hughes is interested in hermeneutics; naturally, he concentrates on Hebrews' attitude to the past. Stine, on the other hand, is interested in the uniqueness of the Christian

religion; thus he dwells on the aspects of Hebrews (and there are, admittedly, many of them) which suggest that Christianity is the definitive religion, established once for all through Christ and valid for all time. (Cf. F.C. Grant, The Epistle to Hebrews [Harper's Annotated Bible; New York: Harper & Brothers; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956] 6-7; 19). See also G.L. Archer, Jr., The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Study Manual (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957) 3-4; 49-62; A.M. Stibbs, So Great Salvation: The Meaning and Message of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Christian Student's Library; Exeter: Paternoster, 1970) 13-18; 58-64.

4. Summary

It is interesting to note that the two great commentators on Hebrews in this century, C. Spicq and O. Michel, both regard the old and new covenants in Hebrews as being continuous in important respects, as does E. Käsemann, the scholar whose monograph was identified as a "turning point" in modern interpretation of the Epistle.

The description of the literature in this chapter has placed scholarly opinion on the relation of the two covenants in three main categories, which can be characterized by the terms "renewal," "dialectical," and "developmental." The position that the new covenant in Hebrews is essentially a "renewal" of the Mosaic covenant (Spicq, Kosmala, et al.) depends largely on the interpretation of Hebrews' exegesis of Jer 31:31-34 (cf. Heb 8:8-13). If Hebrews' interpretation of the passage can be said to be consonant with the original meaning of the

prophecy (i.e., that the new covenant will be a renewal and internalization of the old), then the two covenants must be fundamentally continuous. More will be said about the "original meaning" of the Jeremiah oracle in Chapter V.

As we have seen, the "dialectical and "developmental" explications of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews have much in common. In fact, G. Hughes, the best representative of the latter position, actually calls the developmental process from the old covenant to the new an "eschatological dialectic." Hughes's understanding of this "eschatological dialectic" as a process of development, as we have noted, approaches a theory of "progressive revelation" beginning in the OT, and culminating in Christ. It is important to note, here, that Hughes uses the concept of "perfection" (τελειώσις) to describe the development from the OT to Christ: "There is certainly a conception of a longitudinal 'revelation history,' in which earlier and more fragmentary forms of God's address have been overtaken and replaced by a perfected form of the same thing" (6, italics mine). Several other scholars mentioned in this chapter (Sowers, Silva, Wikgren) have similar theories of the old being "perfected" in the new.

The idea that the old covenant is "perfected" in the new is a tempting solution to the problem of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, since the verb τελειῶν and its derivatives occur so frequently in the Epistle.³⁰ If the concept of "perfection" in Hebrews could be validly applied to the history of revelation (as G. Hughes, Sowers, et al. have attempted to do), then the task of the exegesis

in Chapter V of this thesis would be little more than that of enumerating the ways in which the old covenant is "perfected" in the new.

A careful study of the use of τελειοῦν and its derivatives, however, shows that the concept of "perfection" in Hebrews does not apply to historical development (contra Wikgren³¹). J. Smith has made this point forcefully:

. . . while this is indeed an important conception in Hebrews it never refers to a perfecting of the Old Testament in the New. It belongs indeed to the conception of Christ's priesthood and priestly work: he is made perfect through suffering (5:8-9); while the law can never, by the same sacrifices which are offered year after year, make perfect the participants (10:1), Christ, by a single offering, has perfected for all time those who are sanctified (10:14). But it is never stated that Christ perfects the Old Testament or its institutions.³²

M. Silva's enumeration of the uses of τελειοῦν and related words in Hebrews bears out Smith's assertion:

Old Testament saints are perfected only with us (11:40; cf. 12:23), for only the divine arrangement mediated by Christ, who is the perfecter of our faith (12:2), may be called perfect (7:11, 19; cf. 9:11), and consequently only his blood can perfect the conscience (9:9; 10:1; 1:14); further, the author calls Christians to perfection (5:14; 6:1), and even Jesus, we are told, experienced perfection through his sufferings (2:10; 5:9; 7:28).³³

In his study of "perfection" in the NT, P.J. Du Plessis concluded that, in Hebrews, the concept is used: to connote maturity (in 5:6-6:20, except in 6:1, where τελείως means "the subject of perfection"); to connote transcendency (i.e., the superiority of the heavenly sanctuary to the earthly one, as in 9:11); as a cultic-sacral term denoting the priestly qualifications of the Christ (e.g., 7:19; 9:9); as the object of Christ's redemptive work, and as referring to the personal develop-

ment of Jesus (e.g., 2:10; 5:9); as the goal of believers (e.g., 11:40; 12:2).³⁴ The concept of "perfection" in Hebrews, then, is mainly that of a quality to be developed in individuals; Christ has attained "perfection", and Christians must follow his example.³⁵

It is interesting to note that, in an excursus on "perfection" in Hebrews, G. Hughes approaches the understanding of τελειοῦν described above.³⁶ Wikgren also recognizes that, in Hebrews, "perfection" applies to Christ and to the Christian life.³⁷ These examples illustrate the ease with which the concept of "perfection", with its Christological and soteriological content, can be transferred to Hebrews' "philosophy of history." "Perfection" is certainly one attribute of the persons and institutions of the new covenant over against the "imperfection" of those of the old.³⁸ This does not mean, however, that the author of Hebrews regarded the old covenant as being "perfected" in the new.

The idea that the concept of τελείωσις in Hebrews includes the idea of the "perfecting" of the old covenant in the new, then, is simply not borne out to be the actual usage of "perfection" terminology in the Epistle. The explication of the relation of the two covenants in terms of "perfection" seems to have arisen out of an inappropriate transference of the notion of the "perfecting" of believers in faith to the idea of the "perfecting" of history. Any such "developmental" approach involving the idea of "perfection" must be ruled out as a possible explication of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews. This restriction does not, of course, apply to C.K. Barrett's opinion that OT persons, events, and institutions are recognized by Hebrews as pointers to Christ in the

light of Christ, as this kind of formulation does not depend on the misuse of "perfection" terminology.

The elimination of the idea that the old and new covenants are part of a developmental historical process of the "perfecting" of the old in the new leaves us with three basic positions which stress the "continuity" of the two covenants in Hebrews: the idea that the new covenant is a "renewal" of the old; the idea that the two covenants are related dialectically; and the idea that the old covenant "points to" or "foreshadows" the new covenant in some way. These positions remain to be either accepted or rejected on the basis of the exegesis in Chapter V. Before this, however, it will become clear that, in the light of modern scholarship, the idea that the old and the new in Hebrews are related dialectically is, in a limited sense, a valid presupposition for the interpretation of the Epistle. This point, of course, cannot be established apart from a description of the literature which takes the position that the discontinuity of the two covenants in Hebrews overshadows their continuity.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux 1 and 2 (1952-53).

²Ibid., 285-99. Cf. the exegesis of Heb 8:1-10:18 in the abridged and updated version of Spicq's commentary, L'Epître aux Hébreux (SB; Paris: Gabalda, 1977) 134-69.

³Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 177. In the 1977 edition of his commentary, Spicq reaffirms his position on the Philonism of Hebrews (L'Epître aux Hébreux [1977] 13-15).

⁴Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux 1, 72-76.

⁵Ibid., 85-86.

⁶Ibid., 91-138; 166-67; cf. Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux (1977) 17-21.

⁷Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux 1, 268-69, n. 6.

⁸See, for example, F.C. Fensham, "Hebrews and Qumran," Neot 5 (1971) 9-21; I.W. Batdorf, "Hebrews and Qumran: Old Methods and New Directions," Festschrift to Honor F. Wilbur Gingrich (ed. E.H. Barth and R.E. Cocroft; Leiden: Brill, 1972) 16-35.

⁹Batdorf, "Hebrews and Qumran," 16-20.

¹⁰H. Kosmala, Hebräer--Essener--Christen: Studien zur Vorgeschichte der frühchristlichen Verkündigung (SPB; Leiden: Brill, 1959).

¹¹Ibid., 106.

¹²Ibid., 126-28.

¹³See the references in Batdorf, "Hebrews and Qumran," 17-19.

¹⁴Y. Yadin, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Epistle to the Hebrews," Scripta Hierosolymitana 4 (1965) 36-55.

¹⁵Ibid., 55. See also Yadin, "A Note on Melchizedek and Qumran," IEJ 14-15 (1965-65) 153-54.

¹⁶C. Spicq, "L'Epître aux Hébreux, Apollos, Jean-Baptiste, les Hellénistes et Qumran," RevQ 1 (1958-59) 365-84. Yadin's essay in Scripta Hierosolymitana first appeared in 1958.

¹⁷Spicq, "Hébreux et Qumran," 365-71, 389-90. Cf. Spicq, L'Epître aux Hébreux 1, 197-252.

¹⁸Spicq, "Hébreux et Qumran," 379.

¹⁹To name a few: F.F. Bruce, Hebrews, xxviii-xxix; Buchanan, To the

Hebrews; J. Coppens, Les affinités qumrâniennes de l'Épître aux Hébreux (ALBO 4,1; Bruges/Paris: Desclée de Brouwer; Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1962); P.E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977) 15; M. de Jonge and A.S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament," NTS 12 (1965-66) 318, 322.

²⁰Fensham, "Hebrews and Qumran," 12. Fensham follows this accurate observation with the questionable assertion that "It is much better to accept that Hebrews was directed against people who were under the strong influence of the conceptions of Qumran" (ibid., 12). The acceptance of such a well-defined view certainly makes the interpretation of the Epistle easier, but surely the convenience of accepting this view does not make it appropriate! Fensham himself believes that the addressees of Hebrews were a group of Egyptian Christians under the influence of Qumran-like conceptions (ibid., 19; cf. J. Daniélou, The Dead Sea Scrolls and Primitive Christianity [Baltimore: Helicon, 1958] 111-14). Fensham thinks that Hebrews' argument concerning the old and new covenants is a rejection of a legalist interpretation of the new covenant, which "was used against all Judaists who over-emphasized the law over against the grace of Jesus, the Mediator" ("Hebrews and Qumran," 16). This means that Fensham regards the two covenants in Hebrews as fundamentally discontinuous: the old is a covenant of law, while the new is a covenant of grace.

²¹Grässer, Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963, 213.

²²Ibid., 213.

²³G.E. Tymeson, "The Material World in Gnosticism and the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pittsburgh, 1975) 73-80.

²⁴E.M. Yaumachi, Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Survey of the Proposed Evidences (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 51.

²⁵K.L. Maxwell, "Doctrine and Parenesis in the Epistle to the Hebrews, With Special Reference to Pre-Christian Gnosticism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1953) 21. Cf. Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 116.

²⁶Buchanan, "Scholarship on Hebrews," 305. Cf. Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 54, 58, 145, 61, 71-72, 114, 147, 84-87.

²⁷Maxwell, "Doctrine and Parenesis," 13.

²⁸See also: H. Zimmermann, Das Bekenntnis der Hoffnung: Tradition und Redaktion im Hebräerbrief (BBB 47; Cologne: Peter Hanstein, 1977) 41-42; 219-24.

²⁹Jocz, The Covenant, 291. Jocz finds views similar to this in Origen and Eusebius, and, in modern times, in the work of J.B. Lightfoot (ibid., 292). He recognizes the importance of the correct exegesis of Gal 3:24 for the theological assessment of this idea. In Chapter III of this thesis, the influence of Gal 3:24 on modern interpretations of Hebrews will be shown.

³⁰Fourteen times (Heb 2:10; 5:9, 14; 6:1; 7:11, 19, 28; 9:9, 11; 10:1,

14; 11:40; 12:2, 23).

³¹Wikgren asserts that the concept of "perfection" in Hebrews embodies "a kind of philosophy of history in which old and new, idealism and meliorism, being and becoming, are mutually related in what is for him [i.e., the author of Hebrews] a real continuity of meaning and emerge in a new structure of value, the New Covenant" ("Patterns of Perfection," 166).

³²J. Smith, A Priest For Ever, 21 (italics mine). Cf. A Hoekema, "The Perfection of Christ in Hebrews," CTJ 9 (1974) 31-37.

³³Silva, "Perfection and Eschatology," 60.

³⁴P.J. Du Plessis, ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ: The Idea of Perfection in the New Testament (Kampen: Kok, 1959) 206-33.

³⁵Cf. *ibid.*, 232-33; Dey, The Intermediary World, 227-33. Dey connects this understanding of "perfection" with the hellenistic Jewish (Philonian) belief that earthly existence is in the realm of imperfection; Jesus has entered the realm of imperfection and achieved perfection (i.e., the presence of God) through it, thus opening the way for others to follow his example (*ibid.*, 218-19). Cf. J. Kögel, "Der Begriff τελειῶν im Hebräerbrief," Theologische Studien: Martin Kähler zum 6. Januar 1906 dargebracht (F. Giesebrecht et al., eds.; Leipzig: A. Deichert [Georg Böhme], 1905) 35-68. Kögel's classic essay argues strongly for a cultic/religious interpretation of τελειῶν and its derivatives in Hebrews (see especially *ibid.*, 64-68).

³⁶G. Hughes, Hebrews and Hermeneutics, 32-34.

³⁷Wikgren, "Patterns of Perfection," 160.

³⁸Cf. Du Plessis, ΤΕΛΕΙΟΣ, 228-31.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS IN HEBREWS
AS DISCONTINUOUS IN SCHOLARSHIP 1938-1980

Scholarship that views the two covenants in Hebrews as essentially discontinuous shows more variety than the literature that takes the opposite position. Five main camps of opinion can be identified. First, there are some scholars who assert that the thought of Hebrews is fundamentally Platonic; the dichotomy between earthly shadows and heavenly realities is reconcilable only through Christ. A second view is that Hebrews regarded the Mosaic covenant merely as a temporary measure. On this interpretation, it is the Abrahamic covenant which is regarded as really continuous (and even identical) with the new covenant. Third, there is the view that the old covenant stands in a "negative relation" to the gospel; the OT cultus is seen as a "tutor unto Christ." Sometimes positions two and three merge; the understanding of the cultus as a temporary measure is combined with the idea of the continuity of the Abrahamic covenant with the new covenant. A fourth group of scholars (albeit a small one) interprets Hebrews as a document bitterly opposed to Judaism; the old and new covenants are presented as having nothing (or very little) in common. Finally, there is in some of the more recent literature on Hebrews a tendency to see the persons, events and institutions of the OT (including the old and new covenants) as a fund of purely literary motifs used by the author of the Epistle to bring out the significance of Christ. In addition to these five basic positions, there are numerous shades of opinion in between. The five basic posi-

tions, and the variations on them, will be described in this chapter.

1. Christus pontifex: Christ as the sole point of contact between the two covenants.

The idea that Christ is the only point where the old and new covenants meet in Hebrews is usually held by scholars who regard the thought of the Epistle as fundamentally Platonic. Recently, however, a similar understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews has been suggested by a scholar who interprets the Epistle solely in terms of Palestinian Jewish concepts. Both views will be described in this section.

1.1 Christ as the sole point of contact between the two covenants; world view of Hebrews fundamentally Platonic.

Cody, A. Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Achievement of Salvation in the Epistle's Perspectives.

St. Meinrad: Grail, 1960; id., "Hebrews." NCHS, 1220-39.

As the title of the monograph indicates, its main concern is with the central section of Hebrews (5:11-10:39), which describes the high priestly ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary (1960, 1). The entry in the New Catholic Commentary (1969) is a treatment of the entire Epistle. Cody's understanding of the Epistle is essentially the same in both works.

According to Cody, the most important "perspectives" of Hebrews are axiological and eschatological. Hebrews evaluates the institutions of the old and new covenants axiologically in terms of the Alexandrian-

Platonic categories of heavenly and earthly: "the earthly is not totally worthless, not totally evil, but it is of little worth, . . . The earthly does not contain the fulfillment of its heavenly counterpart" (1960, 81). Hebrews' eschatological expectation is that at the end of time the earth and the cosmological heaven will be shaken and will pass away, leaving only the "unshakeable, axiologically heavenly things" (1960, 85). On Cody's interpretation of Hebrews, the "old covenant" corresponds to the earthly institutions of the OT, and the "new covenant" corresponds to the heavenly "institutions" of the new order (1969, 1229-30). The word "institutions" in the last sentence is placed in quotation marks because according to Cody, Christ's work of sacrifice and intercession as the heavenly high priest are Hebrews' way of expressing the eternal (i.e., heavenly in the axiological sense) validity of the blood of Calvary (1960, 197-202).

On Cody's understanding of Hebrews, the eschatological is always subordinate to the axiological; earthly events are of real significance only if they can affect the heavenly order. Hebrews recognizes only one such historical event: the saving death of Christ (1960, 200). The fundamental "perspective" of Hebrews' thought is Alexandrian and Platonic; the institutions of the old covenant are thus inferior to those of the new covenant because they are derivative (1969, 1229); the old is a shadowy symbol and reflection of the new (1960, 148). "Old" and "new" are in fact adjectives which do not accurately describe the essential thought of Hebrews. As Cody interprets the Epistle, it is more correct to think in terms of "earthly/temporal" and "heavenly/eternal."

On Cody's interpretation of Hebrews, then, the two covenants are continuous in that the old acts as a symbolic "parable" of the new (1960, 148); the temporal to some degree points to the eternal reality which it reflects. But the decisive event of Christ's death on the cross, which makes the heavenly reality accessible to believers, cancels any validity which the old covenant had, and at the same time creates a point in time and eternity where the gap between the two levels of reality can be bridged. For Cody, then, there is no substantial continuity between the old (earthly) and new (heavenly) covenants: Christ alone is the pontifex (1960, 95), mediator between man and God, earthly and heavenly, old covenant and new covenant.

Cody has little explicit to say about the attitude to scripture of the author of Hebrews. From his assertion that there are "great similarities" between the thought of Hebrews and that of Philo of Alexandria (1969, 1221), it can be surmised that the author of the Epistle had an attitude to scripture similar to that of Philo, who thought that "the Jewish Bible revealed the path from matter to the immaterial, . . ."¹ According to Cody, however, Hebrews christianized Alexandrian ideas (1969, 1221). Thus, it would be more accurate to say of the author of the Epistle that he believed that the Jewish Bible, and the all-important revelation of salvation in Christ, revealed the path from matter to the immaterial. On Cody's interpretation of Hebrews, therefore, it would be more correct to say that Christ is a necessary background to the OT than vice versa; the old order is, after all, merely a shadowy reflection of the new, and the OT faithful are saved by virtue of Christ's "once

for all" sacrifice (1969, 1233-35). As Cody himself puts it, "Heb never really uses OT or Jewish texts and institutions to prove a priori the necessity of this or that element of the Christian mysteries. Rather he uses them to show the fittingness of the new dispositions" (1969, 1231).

Cody views the language of Hebrews as being highly metaphoric. The heavenly liturgy of Christ is not a literal ministry of sacrifice and intercession carried out in an actual sanctuary in heaven; rather it is

. . . the whole aggregate complexus of acts brought up as a unity against the divine power in time-transcending eternity at the moment of the Session, a moment which we must remember marks the terminal point of the historical unfolding of the liturgy, but which is also the unlimited "now" of presence before the face of God (1960, 196).

To put it more simply, for Cody, the heavenly liturgy of Christ in Hebrews is a symbol of the saving acts of Christ.

This assertion of the metaphoric nature of the language of Hebrews makes the connection between the earthly institutions of the old covenant and their heavenly counterparts very tenuous indeed. The typology is not one of strict correspondences between heavenly originals and earthly copies, as in Jewish apocalyptic (see 1969, 1229). Rather, clusters of images taken from the OT are used to suggest an incomparably greater reality, and the images must not be pressed further than the author of Hebrews intended, i.e., they must not be taken in a literal sense (1969, 1224, 1227, 1229, 1231-32).

Similarly

C. Brady, "The World to Come in the Epistle to the Hebrews,"
Worship 39 (1965) 329-39.

J. Coppens, Les affinités qumrâniennes de l'Épître aux Hébreux,
18, 44-46.

L.K.K. Dey, The Intermediary World and Patterns of Perfection in
Philo and Hebrews.

Compare

W. Barclay, The Letter to the Hebrews (Daily Study Bible Series;
rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976). This popular commentary is
interesting because it presents an explanation of the background of
Hebrews which accounts for the presence of two unrelated world views in
the Epistle. According to Barclay, Hebrews was directed to two sets of
readers, one Greek, one Jewish. The Platonic elements in the Epistle
were meant to answer the questions of Greek readers; the eschatological
elements were directed to the concerns of readers with a Jewish back-
ground. Christ is the answer to the questions posed by both groups (2-3).

1.2 Christ as the sole point of contact between the two covenants; world view of Hebrews fundamentally Jewish.

Buchanan, G.W. To the Hebrews: Translation, Comment and Conclusions.

AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1972.

Buchanan is one scholar who interprets Hebrews in the light of the
"cultural milieu" illuminated by the discovery of the DSS. Buchanan

interprets the Epistle solely in terms of ancient Near Eastern concepts. For Buchanan, the author and addressees of Hebrews were members of a Jewish Christian sect, in some ways resembling the Qumran covenanters (255-66). These sectaries had gathered at Jerusalem at some time before the destruction of the temple (A.D. 70), in order to await the imminent restoration of the promised land (256). The Epistle was written in order to reassure them that if they held fast to their faith, they would surely receive their inheritance (267). It would be difficult to find an interpretation of Hebrews further from Cody's perspective on the Epistle. Nonetheless, the two interpretations have important elements in common: both see the two covenants in Hebrews as essentially discontinuous, and both see Christ as the only means by which the gap between heavenly realities and earthly shadows can be bridged.

Buchanan, like Cody, asserts that the argument of Heb 8:1-10:18 is directed toward proving the superiority of the institutions of the new covenant to those of the old (167). Jesus' new high priestly sacrifice and ministry are superior because they are heavenly, while the institutions of the old covenant are merely earthly (137). The earthly institutions are inferior to the heavenly ones because they are shadows, in accordance with the ancient Semitic belief that earthly objects and institutions are patterned after originals in heaven (134). The proof that this is a Near Eastern idea, and not a Platonic one, is given by Hebrews' assertion that Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary, for "Plato's ideal world was not a place, like heaven, where anyone could enter--even Jesus" (134).

The most important aspect of the superiority of the heavenly high priest to his earthly counterparts, Buchanan asserts, is that his self-sacrifice is infinitely more efficacious. It can cleanse "the heavenly things" (153). Moreover, unlike the Levitical sacrifices, which cleanse only partially and temporarily, the availability of such perfect cleansing makes the Levitical offerings obsolete (167). This is in keeping with Buchanan's idea that the community of Hebrews was sectarian in outlook; after baptism into the community, i.e., appropriation of the effects of Christ's perfect sacrifice, there was no room for defilement (149, 256). It also explains Hebrews' implication that there is no possibility of a second repentance (Heb 12:17; cf. 220).

Buchanan's explication of the difference between the two covenants is thus clear and consistent: the new covenant offers complete and permanent cleansing, while the old covenant did not, because its priests could not enter into the sanctuary in heaven. Jesus, the high priest of the new covenant, could and did. The realization of the new covenant means that God's promise to Abraham, which the old covenant could not bring to fulfillment, will soon be kept: the sectaries expected to inherit the land of Israel (256) by virtue of the merits that accrued to them as a result of Jesus' sacrificial death (263). That is, Christ's sacrifice is the only means by which the restoration of the promised land can be effected (256). The two covenants are continuous to a degree in that their content is similar: both involve priesthood and sacrifice (132). But since the new covenant is in every way better than the old, it renders the old order obsolete (132). On Buchanan's interpretation, the

dominant message of Hebrews on the subject of the two covenants is that they are discontinuous.

Buchanan's understanding of the attitude to scripture of Hebrews is as distinctive as the rest of his exposition. According to Buchanan, Hebrews regarded the Prophets and Psalms more highly than the Pentateuch because they came later (xxix-xxx). Thus the law was considered by Hebrews to be of less value than the more recent parts of scripture:

The Pentateuch was classed with the old covenant, the law of Moses, the disobedient generation, the inferior priesthood, and the temple made with hands. The Psalms and at least some of the prophets were associated with the new covenant, the new law, the days of the Messiah, the temple not made with hands, and the perfect sacrifice (xxx; cf. 164, 166).

Part of the reason for the clarity of Buchanan's exposition of the relation of the two covenants is that, besides adhering to a clearly defined hypothesis about the conceptual provenance of Hebrews, he also takes an explicit and consistent stand on the nature of the language used by its author. For Buchanan, the language of Hebrews has literal, not metaphorical, referents. Heaven, for example, is regarded as a place with a geography: "The author of Hebrews thought of heaven in earthly, and especially temple, terms" (53). Jesus' priesthood, sacrifice, and entry into the heavenly sanctuary are real events, spatially and temporally conceived (162). Interpreted this way, Hebrews' distinctions between heavenly and earthly, perfect and imperfect, old and new, are sharpened by their concreteness.

Similarly

R.H. Fuller, et al., Hebrews - James 1 and 2 Peter - Jude -

Revelation (Proclamation Commentaries: Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977)
13-15; 25-26.

H.A. Kent, The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972). Although Kent does not regard Hebrews as a sectarian document, he is convinced of the Jewishness of the Epistle (22-25); the Jewish Christian readers may have felt tempted to return to Judaism (195). Much like Buchanan, Kent interprets Hebrews' language of "heavenly" and "earthly" spatially (150), and sees the primary reason for the superiority of the new covenant in its perfect and complete provision for the cleansing of sins in the sacrifice of Christ (190; 194-95).

Kent's commentary includes an interesting excursus on "The Church and the New Covenant" in theological interpretation (155-60). He identifies four ways in which modern interpreters have regarded the relation of the church to the new covenant of Jeremiah. First, there is the view that "The church has replaced Israel as the participant in the new covenant" (156). The second view is that "The new covenant is with the nation of Israel only" (157). Third, some interpreters think that "There are two new covenants, one with Israel and one with the New Testament Church" (157). Finally, there is the view that "There is one new covenant to be fulfilled eschatologically with Israel, but participated in soteriologically by the church" (158). Kent holds the last theory, and (presumably) attributes this understanding to the author of Hebrews (158-60).

Kent connects this theory of the relation of Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant to the Christian church with the covenant with Abraham:

. . . after the analogy of the Abrahamic covenant, in which present believers through their union with Christ (the "Seed" of Abraham, Gal 3:16) enjoy God's blessing as "Abraham's seed" (Gal 3:29) even though the Abrahamic covenant will not find its completion until the millenium, so Christian believers depend for their blessing upon the blood of Christ which instituted the new covenant (160).

This theological formulation of the relation of Israel and the church approaches Buchanan's more religionsgeschichtliche interpretation, according to which the faithful (i.e., the Jewish-Christian sectaries to whom Hebrews was addressed) are both the recipients of the promise to Abraham and the people of the new covenant.

See also: E.S. English, Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Travelers Rest, S.C.: Southern Bible House, 1955). English thinks that Hebrews is a letter of Paul to Jewish-Christians at Jerusalem (15-33). The purpose of the Epistle was to warn the recipients against clinging to Jewish practises, i.e., the provisions of the old covenant (33-34). An interesting feature of English's interpretation is that he regards the "new covenant" as a covenant with Jews (or Jewish-Christians) only (226-36), for "fundamentally the Gentiles are not a covenant-people, neither is the Church made up of a covenant-people" (226). Cf. W.R. Newell, Hebrews Verse by Verse (Chicago: Moody, 1947). Newell, like English, does not regard the Christian community as a covenant-people (261). On Newell's interpretation of Hebrews, the old covenant is between God and Israel, but the new covenant is between God and Christ (260-65). The new covenant will ultimately extend to the Jews (274). Both the old and new covenants are "based" on the covenant with Abraham (274). In the next section, the work of some scholars who regard the Abrahamic covenant as continuous with the "new covenant" of Hebrews

will be discussed.

2. The Abrahamic covenant regarded as continuous with the new covenant.

Lenski, R.C.H. The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James. Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1938.

Lenski, like several of the other scholars to be discussed in this chapter, sees the new covenant in Hebrews as identical with the covenant of Abraham (260-62); the "new" covenant is in fact the Abrahamic covenant renewed (305-306), and brought to completion in Christ (262). Thus the author of Hebrews contrasts the new covenant spoken of by Jeremiah with the Mosaic covenant (262). The institutions of the old (Mosaic) covenant were not devoid of value as pointers to Christ (267, 284-86, 290, 331, 339-40), but the old covenant was only a temporary measure, ordained as such by God (260, 262, 265, 269-71). With the coming of Christ to fulfill the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, the Mosaic covenant is shown to be "old" in the sense of "decrepit" (273-74).

According to Lenski, the main purpose of Hebrews' argument was to dissuade Jewish converts to Christianity from returning to Judaism (14). Thus the aim of the Epistle's argument that the old covenant and sacrifices have come to an end was to persuade the addressees that they had nothing to return to (273-74, 284-86, 341, 345-46). Despite this theory of the Epistle's origin, Lenski carefully avoids the implication that the author of Hebrews intended to disparage the institutions of the OT (267, 272-73). Lenski, writing from the perspective of a confessing Christian, holds the view that the OT faithful were saved by Christ just as much as NT believers (273, 296, 306-307, 315), and he attributes

this belief to the author of Hebrews (273). Although Lenski might be accused of eisegesis on this point, the idea that the OT faithful looked forward to the new dispensation is not foreign to Hebrews (see Heb 11, especially v. 40).

Lenski's treatment of the theme of covenant in Hebrews is unusual in that he seldom uses the word "covenant" to translate διαθήκη. Instead, he uses the word "testament" in the sense of "last will and testament." Lenski has two main reasons for rendering διαθήκη as "testament". First, the word "testament" emphasizes the one-sidedness of the various διαθηκαι between God and men; it is always God who initiates the διαθήκη and man who is expected to reciprocate by appropriate behaviour (235-37; 310). Second, Lenski holds that the argument of Hebrews would be weakened if the writer of the Epistle were relying on word-play at 9:16-17, where it is argued that where there is a διαθήκη, the testator must die for the διαθήκη to come into force (261, 308-10). Again this last reason for translating διαθήκη as "testament" might be accused of arising more out of Lenski's position on the inspiration of scripture than out of purely historical considerations: "Our inheritance does not rest on a play of words" (310). In a recent article, however, the argument that διαθήκη in both Testaments may have a meaning closer to "testament" than has previously been thought has been supported quite strongly.²

Although Lenski is quite adamant in his insistence that Hebrews does not disparage the institutions of the old dispensation, including the Mosaic "testament," his advocacy of the idea that the "new testament"

of Hebrews is the Abrahamic "testament" renewed and fulfilled implies that the author of the Epistle regarded the Mosaic "testament" and the "new testament" as more discontinuous than continuous. Nonetheless, Lenski holds that the author of Hebrews had a high regard for the institutions described in the OT (277), and for the scriptures themselves (332-33, 343).

Lenski's position on the nature of the language of Hebrews is more explicit, and more consistent, than many. He sees no evidence of Platonism in Hebrews (7-25, 255). Hebrews' argument that the institutions of the old dispensation are "figures and parables" of the new, Lenski argues, is connected with the reason for the writing of the Epistle: "Can the readers now think of turning back to what for its time was only a parable?" (285). Hebrews' talk of a heavenly holy of holies and a true tabernacle where Jesus ministers are not to be interpreted literally, but as figures of heaven and the presence of God (253-55, 258-59). Thus the institutions of the old order are pointers, ordained by God, to the reality of the fulfilled promises of the "new testament" (267-75), mediated by Christ, the heir of God, who bestows his "eternal inheritance" upon his people by his death (261-62, 267-75).

Similarly

H. Köster, "Die Auslegung der Abraham-Verheissung in Hebräer 6," Studien zur Theologie der alttestamentlichen Überlieferungen (ed. R. Rendtorff and K. Koch; Moers, 1961) 95-109. According to Köster, Hebrews combines the traditional interpretation of the figure of Abraham

as an example of faith (as in Philo and the Shepherd of Hermas; 98-102) with the idea that the promise to Abraham (Abraham-Verheissung) is fulfilled in Christ (cf. Gal 3) (107). The content of the "promise" is ultimately the "city of God" (103).

G.H. Lang, The Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Paternoster, 1951). Unlike Lenski, Lang sees the use of διαθήκη in Heb 9:16-17 as a play on words (149). Like Lenski, he regards the new covenant in Hebrews as continuous with the Abrahamic covenant, and discontinuous with the Mosaic covenant (128-39).

E. Reisner, Der Brief an die Hebräer: Betrachtungen (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1938) 8, 61, 153-216.

J. Swetnam, "A Suggested Interpretation of Hebrews 9, 15-17," CBQ 27 (1965) 373-90. Swetnam's argument for seeing διαθήκη in Hebrews as having a meaning similar to "testament" is more complex than Lenski's, although his conclusions are similar. According to Swetnam, the author of Hebrews viewed the first covenant from the perspective of the second; since the new διαθήκη functions like a testament, taking effect on the death of the testator (διαθέμενος), Jesus, the old διαθήκη must also have function in this way, but imperfectly, since the old only foreshadows the new "inchoatively" (378). This is implied by the way in which the author of Hebrews changed the wording of the account of the making of the Sinai pact: "Behold the blood of the διαθήκη which the Lord disposed (δέθετο) for you" (Exod 24:8, LXX) becomes "This is the blood of the διαθήκη which God prescribed (έντείλατο) for you" (= Heb 9:20; cf. the alteration of the wording of Jer 31:32 [LXX:38:32] in Heb 8:9, where Jeremiah's διεθέμην is rendered έποίησα by the author³) (376). Thus, according to Swetnam,

the author of Hebrews did not regard God as the "one disposing" the Sinai διαθήκη(376), nor did he regard the death of the sacrificial animals at the conclusion of the Sinai pact as adequately providing the "death" of "one disposing":

If "dispose" has for the author the connotation of one who dies when a διαθήκη(testament) is made (as per 9,17), this usage suggests that at Sinai the animals would have been the ones whose death put the διαθήκη into effect, had the Sinai διαθήκη been a διαθήκη (testament) in the full sense of the word (377).

Only the new διαθήκη has a διαθέμενος in the full sense (i.e., one who dies and thus brings the "testament" into effect), in the person of the Christ (377).

Since the Sinai covenant was only a "testament manqué," Swetnam argues, it was inferior to the new covenant/testament in two ways: unlike the new διαθήκη, the old could remove sins only in a "very limited way" (379), and the old διαθήκη could not bestow the heritage promised to Abraham, while the new one can (379-80). By taking the curse stipulations of the old covenant upon himself, Christ has effected a διαθήκη which makes provision only for blessings: "Which is precisely what a testament is: a legal disposition resulting on the death of someone by which the legatee receives only blessings" (381). Swetnam sees a parallel to this kind of argumentation in Gal 3:13-14 (384-86), and asserts that the law had the implication of "servitude" in the minds of NT Christians (387).

On Swetnam's interpretation, then, the old διαθήκη foreshadows the new "inchoatively" and "imperfectly", but this "foreshadowing" capacity of the old covenant only brings out the essential inefficacy of the old order. The old covenant is inferior to the new because it

is only like a testament; the new διαθήκη, in contrast, is a testament, and can therefore bestow the forgiveness of sins and the blessings which the old διαθήκη could not. Cf. M.M. Bourke, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," JBC, 381-403: "One of the differences between the old covenant and the new is that the latter has the aspect not only of a covenant but also of a testament, whereas the former has not" (398).

K.S. Wuest, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader (London: Pickering & Inglis, 1947). Wuest's explication of the relation of the old and new covenants in Hebrews is almost identical to Lenski's: the Epistle was written to exhort "unsaved" Jews (i.e., Jewish-Christians who had not fully accepted the all-sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice); the old covenant was merely a temporary "type" of the new; διαθήκη has the sense of both "covenant" and "testament" (Wuest uses these two terms almost synonymously) (14-17). Unlike Lenski, however, Wuest does not bring in the idea of the Abrahamic διαθήκη.

Compare

T.W. Manson, "The Problem of the Epistle to the Hebrews," Studies in the Gospels and Epistles (ed. M. Black; Manchester: University Press, 1962) 242-58. This article originally appeared in 1949 (242). Manson's thesis is that Hebrews is pre-Pauline, was written in order to counteract the Colossian heresy, and was known to Paul when he wrote the letter to the Colossians. The author of Hebrews was Apollos (257-58). Part of Apollos' argument is connected with the promise to Abraham, specifically, with the Melchizedek priesthood associated with the promise to Abraham

(in Galatians, Paul worked out the implications of the promise, as opposed to the priesthood, more fully; 249). The point of the total argument of Hebrews is that the new covenant is altogether superior to the old (250-51). The entire argument of Hebrews depends on the idea that "the levitical priesthood with all its ritual has now been superseded by the Melchizedekian High-priesthood of Christ" (251).

E.A.C. Praetorius, "ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ in the Epistle to the Hebrews," Neot 5 (1971) 37-50. Praetorius translates διαθήκη as "testament" only in Heb 9:16-17 (45), but, like Lenski, he regards the Abrahamic covenant as the element of continuity in salvation history:

. . . the relation of πρώτη-δεύτερα of the Sinai covenant and the New Covenant becomes clear: the former is the first (provisional), and the latter the second (final) fulfillment, etc. of the covenant with Abraham. This means that they cannot be valid simultaneously but also that they cannot be contrary to one another, because they are based on the same promise (to Abraham) (47).

Praetorius' interpretation, then, stresses the continuity between the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and new covenants, and thus approaches C. Spicq's suggestion that the new covenant is conceived by the author of Hebrews as the old covenant renewed:

The New Covenant is indeed also the continuation, new arrangement and fulfillment of the Sinaitic covenant, its Law, its sacerdotal and its sacrificial system (47).

3. Old and new covenants seen in a "negative relation."

There are two main variations on this kind of understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews. Some scholars hold that

the old covenant in Hebrews is regarded as a "tutor unto Christ;" others hold that the old covenant, as a representative of human religious institutions, bears a negative witness to the gospel.

Two scholars with slightly divergent views have been chosen to represent the first position. The second of these (U. Lutz) is especially interesting because he provides a painstaking comparison of the thought of Hebrews and Paul on the relation of the two covenants, and because he is concerned to refute Spicq's view that covenant is a category which unifies salvation history.

The main representative of the second position described above is a scholar (W. Loew) whose commentary appeared several years before the lower chronological limit of this study. I have chosen to include a description of his position because his commentary contains the best example available to me of this kind of explication of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews.

3.1 The cultus of the old covenant conceived as a "tutor unto Christ."

Montefiore, H. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews. HNTC;
New York/Evanston: Harper and Row, 1964.

Montefiore's work on Hebrews is interesting because he is one of a few scholars (see below for other examples) who find the Pauline (or perhaps, properly speaking, Lutheran⁴) notion of the law as a "tutor unto Christ" (cf. Gal 3:24) in the Epistle. That is, Montefiore thinks that the "Pauline" idea that the law was unable to remove guilt from the human conscience, and so pointed to the necessity of something better (i.e., Christ) is reflected in Hebrews, with the difference that, in

Hebrews, it is the cultic aspect of the law (i.e., of the Mosaic covenant, 156) which acts as a "tutor unto Christ."

Commenting on Heb 10:3, Montefiore explains that the Epistle's assertion that in the sacrifices of the old covenant there is a reminder of sins year after year

. . . is a generalization which applies to all who offer sacrifices under the old covenant. These sacrifices actually recall the sins which they are intended to cleanse but which they are powerless to remove. This . . . leads to a pitiable frustration. For this reminder of sins is not merely a mental recollection. The cultic rites actually bring past sins into the present . . . , not unlike the way in which Jesus' saving death at the Christian Eucharist is brought to remembrance (Luke xxii.19) (165; cf. 150-156).

This is the "useful function" which the Levitical priesthood served (135); this is the way in which the OT cultus functions as "a symbol, pointing to the present time" (Heb 9:9; see 149). Hebrews' statement that "the law contains but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities" (Heb 10:1) does not refer to the Christian dispensation (i.e., the new covenant), but to the consummation of the age:

The author means that the Law cannot give an accurate embodiment of these heavenly realities. It can only provide an insubstantial and distorted expression of the future promises (164).

The eschatological promises of the heavenly realities will be fulfilled when Christ appears "a second time" (9:28) to bring his people fully to salvation (162-63), which is only partially accessible in the present time (149).

On Montefiore's interpretation, then, there is no real continuity

between the two covenants; the old is related to the new only negatively, in that the inefficacy of the institutions of the old order implies the necessity of something better. Like Lenski, Montefiore sees the Abrahamic covenant as continuous with the new covenant (66-67).

Montefiore thinks that the author of Hebrews was a Hellenistic Jewish-Christian who regarded the scriptures as inspired (138); Hebrews' interpretation of scripture has much in common with that of Philo (137, 143, 147, 164). Thus, according to Montefiore, the dualistic language of Hebrews has a highly metaphorical sense. Hebrews does not make use of rigid typological correspondences between the institutions of the old and new covenants (164). The "heavenly realities" spoken of by the Epistle refer to the presence of God (132-33); as in Philo, heaven itself is the "heavenly sanctuary" (137). Hebrews' idea that the Levitical cultus is "a symbol, pointing to the present time" is near to the idea of Philo (and Josephus) that the temple (as opposed to the sanctuary) is a symbol of the universe (149). Only the second tent (i.e., the sanctuary) which Moses was instructed to build (Heb 8:5; cf. Exod 25:40) is the type of heavenly realities (137).

Similarly

J. Bonsirven, Saint Paul: L'Epître aux Hébreux: Introduction, Traduction et Commentaire (VS 12: Paris: Beauchesne, 1943) 17-66;
P.E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, 280-404.
Both Hughes and Bonsirven stress the continuity of the Abrahamic covenant with the new covenant more strongly than Montefiore:

. . . the Abrahamic covenant is continuous with the new covenant, as its root, and identical with it . . . The "new" covenant, therefore, not only superseded the "first" or Mosaic covenant but was also antecedent to it, . . . (Hughes, 365; cf. Bonsirven, 20-21).

E. Grässer, "Rechtfertigung im Hebräerbrief," Rechtfertigung:

Festschrift für Ernst Käsemann (ed. J. Friedrich, W. Pöhlmann, and P. Stuhlmacher; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976) 79-93.

T. Hewitt, The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary (Tyndale NT Commentaries; London: Tyndale, 1960). Hewitt does not bring out explicitly the comparison with Paul, but the idea that the OT ritual served as a "tutor unto Christ" is certainly present (133, 154-56).

W. Neil, The Epistle to the Hebrews: Introduction and Commentary (Torch Bible Commentaries; London: SCM, 1955). Neil sees an echo of Pauline thought in Heb 10:1-4 (cf. Rom 3:20) (101-103). Unlike Montefiore, Neil accepts W. Manson's hypothesis about the aim of Hebrews (18-21).

A.C. Purdy and J.H. Cotton, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," IB 11: 577-763. Purdy brings out the affinity with Paul even more strongly than Montefiore. According to Purdy, the cultus is to Hebrews what the law is to Paul, so that

. . . the sacrificial system is a negative preparation for the gospel, convincing man of his own guilt and helplessness and leaving him but one alternative, to throw himself in faith on the mercy of God and his gracious provision in Christ (701; italics mine).

R.V.G. Tasker, The Gospel in the Epistle to the Hebrews (London: Tyndale, 1950) 20-21.

- 3.11 Lutz, U. "Der alte und der neue Bund bei Paulus und im Hebräerbrief." EvT 27 (1967): 318-36.

Lutz's article is an excellent example of an interpretation of Hebrews which finds the old and new covenants described in Heb 8:1-10:18 to be essentially discontinuous. Lutz comes to this conclusion by comparing the attitude of Hebrews to the two covenants with that of Paul in Gal 4:21-31 and 2 Cor 3. His exegesis of Paul and Hebrews is penetrating, and he makes some helpful observations on the similarities between the outlooks of the two authors. Since Lutz's article is one of the few works directly concerned with the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, his argument will be described in some detail below.

Lutz begins the article with exegeses of two Pauline passages (Gal 4:21-31; 2 Cor 3). These two passages have two features in common: both texts are excursi; both texts contain traditional material recognizable by the addressees (319).

Lutz notes that in Gal 4:21-31 Paul's purpose is to show that there is no analogy between the old and new covenants. Paul achieves this purpose by drawing allegorical-typological contrasts between the slave, Hagar (old covenant) and Sarah, the freewoman (new covenant), and between the present (earthly) Jerusalem (old covenant) and the Jerusalem above (new covenant). The point of both contrasts is that to turn to the old is to betray the gospel (320-21).

Paul, however, is careful to preserve the idea of the validity of history in this passage. Lutz notes the surprising contrast which Paul makes between the visible ὄψε and the invisible ἐπαγγελία (instead of

the $\sigma\acute{o}\rho\epsilon\varsigma/\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ dichotomy which is so characteristic of Paul's thought). The $\epsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$ of this contrast is the promise to Abraham, which Paul interprets as a manifestation of the new covenant located in the past. Thus the relation between past and present is dialectical: the anti-thesis is the old covenant ($\sigma\acute{o}\rho\epsilon\varsigma$) and the thesis is the $\epsilon\pi\alpha\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\alpha$ to Abraham (321-22).

Unlike many scholars, Lutz does not see an argument against a rival group which claimed the authority of Moses, or which taught a tradition exalting Moses, in 2 Cor 3 (324). Rather than postulating such a situation, Lutz insists that Paul's reason for the argument concerning the two covenants can be found in the letter itself: the "stone tables" of the old dispensation correspond to the "letters of recommendation" of Paul's rivals, while the "letter" written on the "hearts" of the readers corresponds to Paul's own teaching (323).

Lutz notes that in this text, the main contrast is between the $\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\alpha$ ("written code") of the old covenant and the $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$, the "life-giving spirit," of the new. Paul regards the old covenant from the perspective of the new: the old covenant ($\gamma\rho\acute{\alpha}\mu\mu\alpha$) had glory, but the new covenant ($\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$) eclipses it. The quality of the salvation under the new covenant makes the salvation under the old covenant appear as death by comparison (326). Lutz notes that Paul bases his argument in this passage on the OT, with the belief that the OT, read in the light of the gospel, attests to the glory of the new covenant (327). As in Gal 4:21-31, the relation between past and present is dialectical; the anti-thesis is the superiority of the salvation under the new covenant to that

of the old covenant; the thesis is the message of the OT illumined by the spirit (328).

Lutz concentrates on Heb 8:1-10:18 for his discussion of the relation of the two covenants in the Epistle (328). According to Lutz, the contrast between the old and new covenants in Hebrews is even more developed and intense than in Paul. Hebrews radicalizes the prophecy of Jer 31:31-34: in Jeremiah, the new covenant is conceived as the law of God powerfully renewed, and the stress is on the people's disobedience; in Hebrews, the law is regarded as antiquated and useless, and cannot bring about salvation even with obedience (329). The crucial weakness of the old covenant is that its institutions cannot take away sins or obtain God's forgiveness (10:4; 8:7).

Lutz finds two kinds of typology in Hebrews: antithetical typology, based on the early Christian eschatological idea of two aeons, and "ontological" typology, based on the Hellenistic Platonic idea of heavenly originals and earthly copies (331). The latter conception is used by Hebrews to bring out the essential difference between the two covenants: the old is an earthly "copy" (Abbild), while the new is the heavenly "original" (Urbild) (330). On this interpretation, the old covenant is devalued ontologically; the heavenly institutions of the new covenant are more real than the earthly institutions of the old (322), and so can provide real salvation. The only connection between the two covenants must be expressed negatively: the old covenant, by its inability to provide salvation, indirectly attests to the new. Lutz insists, however, that there is no real continuity between the two cov-

enants in Hebrews; "covenant" is not a common structural link between the past and the present in the thought of the Epistle (332).

Although Lutz finds no continuity between the old and new covenants in Hebrews, he does find three ways in which old and new, past and present, are connected by the author. First, Melchizedek is regarded by Hebrews as a part of the heavenly world which appeared in history, and whose characteristics are shared by Jesus (333). Second, the OT is interpreted in Hebrews as the direct word of God or the Spirit, whose fullest meaning is brought out in the light of the new covenant (333-34). Third, like Paul, Hebrews regards the promises made by God to the patriarchs as promises of heavenly blessings, not of concrete benefits. The patriarchs believed God's promises, but their attainment is for the believers under the new covenant (334).

Lutz concludes by listing three similarities between the thought of Paul and Hebrews. Neither author regards "covenant" as a category which encompasses salvation history (contra Spicq, 335, n. 2). The typology of old and new covenants is antithetical, i.e., the two covenants are contrasted rather than compared. Both authors see the past and present as related dialectically. On the one hand, the new covenant brings about the termination of the old; on the other hand, the word of God spans both past and present. Finally, neither Paul nor Hebrews has a unified view of the past; the old exists for the sake of the new, and the past is used to explicate the present (336).

Lutz's position on the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, then, is that they are fundamentally discontinuous. The conception of

covenant is not a unifying factor in the Epistle's view of salvation history. Rather, covenant is the category which the author of Hebrews uses to bring out the decisive difference between the past and the present; the old covenant could not bring about real salvation, while the new covenant can.

Lutz affirms Hebrews' high regard for the OT scriptures. He observes, however, that for Hebrews the OT is not primarily history but the living word of God which speaks today (4:12 f.; 4:7). That is, Hebrews dehistoricizes scripture so that it encompasses past and present, and can only be understood fully in the light of Christ (333-34). Thus scripture, the living word of God, is, on Lutz's interpretation, the unifying factor in salvation history.

For Lutz, the language of Hebrews is redolent of a Hellenistic Jewish Platonism (Urbild-Abbild-Denken) reminiscent of Philo of Alexandria (330-31). The Epistle's use of such language suggests that the author's world view was fundamentally ontological, as opposed to eschatological; for the author of Hebrews, the significant events of the OT are contained in incidents which can be interpreted as manifestations of the heavenly and timeless in the earthly and temporal: the Melchizedek epiphany, the promises of heavenly blessings to the patriarchs (333-34). The contrast between the salvific efficacy of the heavenly ministry of Christ and the inefficacy of the earthly OT cultus is the decisive point in Hebrews' argument against the continuity of the old and new covenants.

Similarly

J. De Vuyst, "Oud en nieuw verbond" in de brief aan de Hebreëën

(Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1964). This published doctoral dissertation (presented to the theological university of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands) is by far the most thorough treatment of the theme of the old and new covenants in Hebrews to have appeared within the chronological limits of this study. Unfortunately, the book is in Dutch, and so it is outside the linguistic limits of this thesis. The reviews of the book indicate that, like Lutz, de Vuyst does not regard "covenant" as a common denominator in salvation history for the author of Hebrews. Again like Lutz, De Vuyst sees elements of both continuity and discontinuity between the past and the present in Hebrews. See: A.J. Bandstra, "Heilsgeschiede and Melchizedek in Hebrews," CTJ 3 (1968) 37; F.S. Striuk, review of "Oud en nieuw verbond" in de brief aan de Hebreëën J. De Vuyst, RB 72 (1965) 621-22.

Compare

A.T. Hanson, "Christ in the Old Testament According to Hebrews," SE 2 (1964) 393-407. Hanson sees no real continuity between the institutions of the old and new covenants in Hebrews. The "old dispensation" of Sinai was ordained as temporary, while the "eternal dispensation" (new covenant) has now been revealed through Christ (405). According to Hanson, none of the NT authors had an idea "of a developing revelation in the Old Testament" (406). Thus Hebrews' talk of copy and original, shadow and form, heavenly and earthly, has nothing to do with the idea of the appurtenances of the old covenant "pointing toward" or "fore-shadowing" the new covenant; the old and new covenants represent two distinct epochs (407).

Hanson, however, does not describe Hebrews as having borne no witness to Christ. Rather, Hanson argues, the author of Hebrews, quite literally, recognized Christ in the OT: the "house" in which Moses was faithful (Heb 3:1-6) was Christ's house, the "one house of the old and new Israel" (395); Melchizedek (Heb 7) was Christ pre-incarnate (398-402); the one who speaks from heaven in the quotation from Haggai (Hag 2:6; cf. Heb 3:12, 22-27) is Christ (401-405).

Hanson believes, then, that Hebrews, like the rest of the NT, held a "doctrine of Christ's activity in the Old Testament" (406). The only thing that is decisively new about the "new dispensation" is that it is the epoch of Christ incarnate (406-407). On this interpretation, the ἐνανθρώπησις τοῦ Λόγου τοῦ Θεοῦ takes on the implication of a renewal, in the power of the incarnation, of the salvific work of Christ, which the author of Hebrews recognized on every page of the OT.

G. Harder, "Die Septuagintzitate des Hebräerbriefes. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Auslegung des Alten Testaments," Theologische Viatorum (Munich, 1939) 33-52. Harder takes the Lutheran view that the OT witnesses to Christ, with the added assertion that it is the LXX, which is not only a translation but also a Christological and eschatological interpretation of the OT, in which the NT people of God could see Christ (52).

3.2 The cultus of the old covenant as an example of the inadequacy of human religious institutions

Loew, W. Der Glaubensweg des Neuen Bundes: Eine Einführung in den Brief an die Hebräer. Berlin: Furche, 1931.

This brief commentary is interesting because, although its author recognizes the importance of the idea of the new covenant in Hebrews, and views it as a renewal in power of the old covenant (61), he does not regard the relation of the two covenants as one of continuity. Loew asserts that the main concern of the Epistle is not an argument (Ausein-
andersetzung) with the OT. Rather, "the theme of the high priesthood of Jesus Christ, the message of the exalted Lord who stands before God for his community" was the idea which interested the author of Hebrews (5).

According to Loew, the cultic institutions of the old covenant were regarded by Hebrews as an example of the inadequacy of human attempts to approach God (60-61, 70, 77). In the light of Christ, such human activities are seen for what they are: provisional substitutes for the way of Christ (74-76), and in a limited sense, "shadow-pictures of a wholly other redemption" (72). Religious activity is a constant reminder of man's separation from God (74-75); human religion is in this sense a "tutor unto Christ." The "way of God," i.e., of Christ, is the end of the "way of man" (60,77): "Sacrifice, like the other religious activities of man, has thus found its end in Jesus Christ. The end is there, because the fulfillment is there" (70).

On Loew's interpretation, then, the message of Hebrews is a universal one: human religion, seen in the light of Christ, is a negative preparation for the gospel. The institutions of the OT are regarded as a convenient example of human religious endeavour. Hebrews' choice of the OT as the source of examples of human religion was particularly apposite, because the NT community, like the people of the old covenant,

are pilgrims (5-6). The people of the new covenant, however, unlike the OT figures, have Christ as the guarantee that visible fulfillment of the promises of the new covenant will come (64).

The position that the religion of the old covenant was used by Hebrews as a convenient example of the inadequacy of human religion seems to have enjoyed some currency in the interpretation of Hebrews in the 'thirties . As noted in Chapter II of this study, Käsemann took exception to H. Strathmann's implication that in Hebrews "Judaism functions only as the example lying nearest at hand of the sacral institutions of this world."⁶ Grässer's article cites the opinion of H.-D. Wendland that

As Hebrews establishes the termination and fulfillment of the OT cultus through Christ, it thereby indirectly at the same time effected a decisive argument with the pre-Christian history of religions in general, with the attempt of any cultus to sanctify men or to appease divine powers.⁷

Similarly

W.D. Kallenbach, The Message and Authorship of the Epistle "To the Hebrews" (St. Paul; Minn.: Bruce, 1938). Kallenbach thinks that the purpose of Hebrews was to dissuade Hebrew Christians from returning to Judaism (24). The main theme of the Epistle is the superiority of Christianity to Judaism (23-24). Kallenbach asserts that the argument of Hebrews gives a NT basis for the superiority of Christianity to all other religions: "Substitute Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism for Judaism in the Epistle and it is immediately apparent that the equation is identical - identical to the extent that it is

instantly cognizant that Christianity is far superior" (14).

J. Schneider, Der Hebräerbrief (Bibelhilfe für die Gemeinde, nt. Reihe 16; Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1953) 95.

4. The old covenant denigrated; Hebrews as "anti-Judaic".

Héring, J. The Epistle to the Hebrews. London: Epworth, 1970.

Héring's commentary first appeared in 1954, in French.⁸ His interpretation strongly emphasizes the discontinuity of the old and new covenants in Hebrews. Héring sees the author of the Epistle as an anti-ritualist (87) who denigrated the cultic aspect of the old covenant.

Héring accepts the idea that the Hebrews made use of typological exegesis (xi), and that the Epistle shows a platonizing tendency (xii). In Hebrews, the judgement that the Levitical cult is "earthly," while the ministry of Christ is "heavenly" is "firmly held" (66). The language of earthly "shadows" and heavenly "realities" does not bring out their continuity; rather, the dominant idea is "that of the abyss which separates them" (85). The Christian religion is in every way superior to the Jewish (75); Judaism is abolished so that Christianity may be established (88). Not only is Jewish religion criticized, but the behaviour of the Jewish people is also censured (66, 68).

According to Héring, Hebrews accepted the idea that the Mosaic law ("old covenant," 68) was derived from angels, and so "could in no way claim to have absolute divine authority" (87).⁹ The decisive way in which Christ's sacrifice differs from the atonement ritual of the old covenant is that only the former perfects, i.e., "[relieves] of the

defilement of sin and of bad conscience" (89). For Hering, the meaning of "cleansing of conscience" includes the notion of "the sense of guilt which crushes the conscience of the sinner" (78). Hering notes that although the Jews certainly believed that the Levitical sacrifices brought about the forgiveness of sins (and thus alleviation of guilt), Hebrews regarded the old ritual as cleansing only bodily defilement (78).

On Hering's interpretation, then, the author of Hebrews is represented as utterly antithetical to the old covenant: its institutions are inherently inferior; it is not a direct manifestation of God's will; its people are unbelieving and disobedient. Hering depicts the author of Hebrews as one of the most "anti-Semitic" of the NT writers.

Similarly

Id., "Eschatologie biblique et Idéalisme platonicien," The Background of the NT and its Eschatology, 450-54. Here, Hering argues strongly for the "Platonism" of Hebrews.

B.P.W.S. Hunt, "The 'Epistle to the Hebrews': An anti-judaic treatise?" SE 2 (1964) 408-10. This brief article asserts that the main purpose of Hebrews was to prove the divinity of Christ (409). Hunt's observation that in Hebrews the sacrifices of the Jewish temple "were intended as a shadow of the sacrifice of Christ himself" (409; italics mine) suggests that he detects an idea of the "foreshadowing" of the new in the old which Hering explicitly rejects (cf. Hering's commentary, 85).

P. Ketter, Hebräerbrief, Jakobusbrief, Petrusbriefe, Judasbrief (Herders Bibelkommentar 16, 1; Friburg: Herder, 1950) 59-79.

R.P. Médebielle, "Epître aux Hébreux," La Sainte Bible 12 (ed. L. Pirot; Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1938) 326-45.

H. Strathmann, L'Epître aux Hébreux (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1971) 73-97. This is a translation of Strathmann's commentary in NTD (1963). Käsemann, as we noted earlier, objected to the implication of an earlier edition of Strathmann's commentary that in Hebrews the OT cultus functions merely as a convenient example of the inadequacy of human religious institutions. This criticism seems to be based on Käsemann's own extrapolation from Strathmann's work; Strathmann, like Hering, writes only of the Epistle's critique of Judaism (cf., especially, Hering, Hebrews, 85 and Strathmann, L'Epître aux Hébreux, 92, on the "dualism" of Hebrews).

T.G. Stylianopoulos, "Shadow and Reality: Reflections on Hebrews 10:1-18," GOTR 17 (1972) 215-30. Stylianopoulos strongly rejects the notion that the term οὐα in Hebrews has the connotation of "foreshadowing" (à la Barrett, Bruce, Davies, et al.):

He shows little interest in establishing unity and continuity between the Old and New Covenants. . . . The "shadow" which the Law possesses denotes . . . the inferiority of the Law rather than the significance of the Law as a predictive symbol of the true salvation in Christ" (218).

J.W. Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," JBL 98 (1979) 567-78.

A. Vanhoye, "Le Dieu de la nouvelle alliance dans l'épître aux Hébreux," La Notion Biblique de Dieu: Le Dieu de la Bible et le Dieu des philosophes (ed. J. Coppens; BETL 41; Gembloux: J. Duculot; Leuven: University, 1976) 315-30. According to Vanhoye, Hebrews gives a thoroughgoing critique of the law and cultus of the old covenant (323).

He notes especially that "God" (ὁ Θεός) is never mentioned in Hebrews in the context of discussions of the old covenant and its institutions (e.g., Heb 9:1-5; 12:18-21) (320-25). This omission, is significant in a document as theocentric as Hebrews (315-18). Vanhoye asserts that

The only value he [i.e., the author of Hebrews] recognizes in the Old Testament is that of prophecy, a prophecy focused on the announcement of the new covenant. For the author of Hebrews, God is the God of the new covenant (325).

In Hebrews, says Vanhoye, Jesus is the son of God, the mediator between God and man, "who opens to believers the possibility of knowing God as Jeremiah promised" (326).

N. Weeks, "Admonition and Error in Hebrews," WTJ 39 (1976) 72-80.

Weeks thinks that the reference in Heb 6:1-2 to "elementary doctrines of Christ" is to OT, not Christian, practises. The error of the readers is that they do not recognize these practises for what they are:

The power of God was manifested in the wilderness, but it was a power that did not properly belong to that time. It was an intrusion, a foreshadowing The old era was not complete or significant in itself. What light and significance it had derived from the projection into it of the powers of the age of revelation (78).

5. The old covenant as a literary motif.

Smith, J. A Priest for Ever: A Study of Typology and Eschatology in Hebrews. London/Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1969.

Smith's book is concerned with the question of the relation of the priesthood of Christ to the priesthood of Catholic priests (2). He uses the description of Christ's high priesthood in Hebrews as the

basis of his discussion. His concern leads him to examine the question of whether the priesthood of Christ is continuous with the OT priesthood, and whether the institutions of the old covenant are continuous with those of the new (172).

Smith's argument is largely concerned with the nature of the language used by the author of Hebrews, i.e., is the idea of Christ's priesthood developed literally or literarily (figuratively)? Smith is convinced that the latter is the case. Hebrews' assertion that Christ is "a priest for ever" is not a description of a literal high priestly ministry of Christ in a heavenly sanctuary, but rather an "extended metaphor" (136) developed by means of "allegorical typology" (5,30) based on the event of the cross.

Smith also emphasizes the eschatological character of the argument of Hebrews, focussing on the time and eternity words in the Epistle: ὅτις and ἐφ' ὅτις, αἰών and αἰώνιος. These seemingly opposed word groups, Smith argues, are not really opposites, but describe two complementary aspects of the event of the cross: its "once for all" nature (ὅτις, ἐφ' ὅτις), and its eternal validity (αἰών, αἰώνιος) (160-72). Thus, on Smith's interpretation, Christ's death on the cross is the only real "sacrifice" referred to by Hebrews, and it is discontinuous both with the high priestly sacrifices under the old covenant (195), and the priesthood of Catholic priests (173-75).¹⁰

Smith recognizes both continuity and discontinuity between the old and new covenants in Hebrews. Hebrews shows a degree of continuity with the old order, in that it uses OT motifs as an aid to interpreting the

Christ-event (194). But, says Smith,

. . . . there is a saying of Jesus about the impossibility of putting new wine into old leathers that ever forbids us to forget the even more radical discontinuity between the institutions of the Old Testament, . . . and the gospel event itself, . . . (194).

Thus the continuity of the two covenants as described by Smith is very limited in scope. The salient feature of the attitude of Hebrews to the old covenant is "the fundamental discontinuity that underlies the very real continuity . . ." (194). The "once for all" nature of Christ's death on the cross, and its absolute salvific efficacy, in contrast to the essential efficacy of the sacrifices of the old order (195), combine to imply that the author of Hebrews valued the old covenant infinitely less than the new. Smith concludes that

Hebrews teaches us unmistakably that any statement of the relationship between Old Testament and New that fails to bring out the discontinuity underlying the continuity is unfaithful to the new creation in Christ (195).

Similarly

F.V. Filson, "Yesterday", 58-59, 82-84.

E. Fiorenza, "Der Anführer und Vollender unseres Glaubens. Zum theologischen Verständnis des Hebräerbriefes." Gestalt und Anspruch des Neuen Testament (ed. J. Schreiner; Würzburg: Echter, 1969) 262-81.

Minear, "An Early Christian Theopoetic?"

L.L. Thompson, Introducing Biblical Literature: A More Fantastic Country (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1978) 291-93.

Compare

D. Peterson, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant in the Argument of Hebrews," Reformed Theological Review 38 (1979) 74-81. This brief article is noteworthy principally because it is one of the few works available which focuses directly on the theme of the new covenant in Hebrews. According to Peterson, the decisive difference between the old covenant and the new is that the new covenant can provide unhindered access to God, whereas the old could not (76). Since the author of Hebrews assessed the value of a covenant "largely in terms of its provisions for worship" (75), he regarded the new covenant, which definitively cleanses the conscience of believers, as infinitely preferable to the old covenant, with its inefficaciousness and earthly cultus (76).

Although Peterson does not explicitly identify his conception of the nature of the language of Hebrews, his explication of the prophecy of the new covenant makes it quite clear that he regards the contrast Hebrews makes between old and new covenants as an "extended metaphor" which the author of the Epistle used to bring out the difference between the quality of the relationship between God and man experienced before and after Christ. The "heavenly things" are eschatological realities (76); the new "cult" is "characterized" by the blood of Christ (77-78). The metaphor culminates at 12:18-24, where the covenant conclusion at Sinai is contrasted with the conclusion of the new covenant, which guarantees believers the "inheritance" of entering into the presence of God in "the city which is to come" (13:14) (79-80). As on Smith's interpretation, there is no substantial continuity between the two

covenants; the OT institutions and prophecies are viewed as a foil for the superiority of Christ.

It is interesting to note that Peterson's article makes no mention of the crux interpretum of Heb 9:15-18 (i.e., the controversial "covenant/testament" passage). The exegetical chapter of this thesis will show that any discussion of the concept of covenant in Hebrews which fails to take this passage into account is seriously flawed.

6. Summary

The literature examined in this chapter shows several interesting characteristics. First, a comparison of the various interpretations described in this chapter and in Chapter II shows how similar data can be used to support widely divergent conclusions. Related to this is the phenomenon of scholars using different data to reach remarkably similar conclusions. Another aspect of the literature examined in this chapter in particular is that scholars who regard the two covenants in Hebrews as fundamentally discontinuous tend to use parallels from other parts of the NT to illumine the Epistle's argument more often than their colleagues in the opposite camp.

The obvious example of the first of these phenomena (i.e., scholars using similar data to support different conclusions) is given in the different scholarly treatments of the "Platonism" of Hebrews. C.K. Barrett (Chapter II), A. Cody, and J. Héring (Chapter III) all see "Platonic" elements in Hebrews. Barrett regards the "Platonism" of Hebrews as evidence for the continuity of the two covenants in the

Epistle. The institutions of the old covenant are more than mere "reflections" of the new order; they are "parables" which "point forward" to the new age.¹¹ In contrast, Cody and Héring regard Hebrews' contrast between earthly copies (old covenant) and heavenly originals (new covenant) as evidence for the discontinuity of the two covenants; the emphasis here is on the gulf that separates the new from the old. The factor that seems to determine whether the old is interpreted as "foreshadowing" the new (Barrett), or merely as a "shadow" of the new (Cody, Héring), is the answer to the question of the importance of eschatology in Hebrews. This question will be given more attention in the next two chapters.

The use by scholars of different data to reach similar conclusions is also reflected in the issue of the conceptual background of Hebrews. As we have seen, three main religio-historical phenomena have been used to clarify the argument of the Epistle: pre-Christian Gnosticism, Platonism/Philonism, and the DSS (or, more broadly, "apocalyptic Judaism"). Surprisingly, three scholars who disagree strongly on the conceptual background of Hebrews (Käseman, Cody, Buchanan), agree that the two covenants in the Epistle are discontinuous because the old covenant is an earthly reflection while the new covenant belongs within the realm of heavenly originals.¹² This kind of agreement can exist despite vastly different hypotheses about the conceptual provenance of Hebrews because Gnosticism, Platonism, and apocalyptic Judaism all have a world view in which what is heavenly is stable and original, and what is earthly is transitory and derivative. When this dichotomy (which certainly belongs in some degree to the thought of Hebrews) is taken

as the decisive difference between the two covenants, as in the interpretations of Käsemann, Cody, Buchanan, et al., the conclusion naturally follows that Hebrews regards the old and new covenants as fundamentally discontinuous (or at least as discontinuous in important ways, see n. 12). Again, the question of whether eschatology or the "heavenly/earthly" dichotomy conditions Hebrews' essential thought about the relation of the two covenants applies; Käsemann, Cody, and Buchanan all agree that, where the two covenants are concerned, the "heavenly/earthly" dichotomy is Hebrews' fundamental perspective.

Finally, several of the scholars discussed in this chapter have found the thought of Paul to be similar to that of Hebrews. Two main "parallels" have been adduced as proof of similar thinking on the part of the two NT writers: the idea that the cultus of the old covenant in Hebrews (Heb 10:3) functions like the law in Paul (Gal 3:24) as a "tutor unto Christ" (Montefiore, Hewitt, Purdy-Cotton, et al.); and the notion that the Abrahamic covenant is the covenant which is continuous with the new covenant in Hebrews. On the latter interpretation, the Mosaic covenant is regarded merely as a temporary measure (Lenski, Swetnam, Praetorius). Some scholars (e.g., Bonsirven, P.E. Hughes) combine the two ideas, so that the thought of Hebrews on covenantal history can be diagrammed as follows:

Abrahamic covenant	Mosaic ("old") covenant	New covenant
Abrahamic and New covenants continuous; Mosaic covenant discontinuous with both.		

The result is that the author of Hebrews is portrayed as thinking in terms of a strict dispensationalism, perhaps due to the influence of Pauline thought.

It is interesting to note that both these Pauline "parallels" are linked with Paul's argumentation in Gal 3:6-29. The idea that the cultus in Hebrews functions as a "tutor unto Christ" rests on the equation of the argument of Heb 10:3 with that of Gal 3:24. As we have seen, this is a questionable comparison; it is quite possible that, in Gal 3:24, the word that is often rendered "tutor" or "schoolmaster" (παιδαγωγός) should be taken to mean "guardian" or "custodian" (see n.4). Thus, if the idea that the institutions of the old covenant act as a "tutor unto Christ" because of their inadequacy is present in Hebrews, this may be the only NT occurrence of such an idea.

Again, the idea that the Abrahamic covenant is regarded by Hebrews as continuous with the new covenant (Lenski, Swetnam, et al.) is reminiscent of Paul's argumentation in Gal 3:17-18. The relation of this Pauline idea to the argument of Hebrews is questionable at best. Abraham is mentioned four times in Hebrews: as the father of the "seed" (2:16; cf. Isa 41:8-9); as an example of patience (6:13-15), as presenting tithes to Melchizedek (7:4-10), and as an example of faith (11:8-10, 17-19). God's promises to Abraham are mentioned at 6:13-15 and 11:17, but nowhere in Hebrews is God's covenant with Abraham specifically mentioned, much less identified with the new covenant of Jeremiah. Furthermore, at Heb 7:9-10, Abraham is pointedly identified as the progenitor of Levi, and so, indirectly, as connected with the priestly line

of the Mosaic covenant. Thus, the actual use of the figure of Abraham in Hebrews militates against any interpretation which finds the Pauline understanding of the Abrahamic covenant at work in the Epistle. The question of whether the covenant of Abraham is indirectly alluded to in Hebrews will, however, be addressed in Chapter V. The related question of whether a covenant in the history of Israel other than the Mosaic covenant serves as the "type" of the new covenant in Hebrews will form the basis of the discussion in Chapter V.

A third Pauline "parallel" to a passage in Hebrews which has received less attention from scholars (J. Hughes and J. Swetnam are among the few who have discussed it) occurs in Gal 3:15-18, where Paul seems to use the two meanings of διαθήκη in much the same way as the author of Hebrews in the famous "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18). The significance of this "parallel" will be discussed further in the next chapter, and the problem of the meaning of διαθήκη in these verses will be one of the issues dealt with in the exegesis of Hebrews in Chapter V.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹E.R. Goodenough, "Philo Judeus, " IDB 3, 798; cf. H.A. Wolfson, "Philo Judaeus," The Encyclopedia of Philosophy 6 (ed. P. Edwards; New York: Macmillan and The Free Press, 1967) 151.

²See K.M. Campbell, "Covenant or Testament? Hebr. IX, 16-17 Reconsidered," EvQ 44 (1972) 107-11. Campbell argues that both the Hebrew conception of berit and the Greek idea of διαθήκη connoted "The sovereign initiative of the testator freely bestowing his grace upon the object of his favour, and at the same time the inherent demand of responsible, consecrated behavior in response to the benefactor" (ibid., 110). The reasoning behind both Lenski's and Campbell's advocacy of rendering διαθήκη as "Testament" is similar; the new data brought in by Campbell add some force to Lenski's argument. Cf. J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews ix 15 ff. and Galatians iii 15 ff.; a Study in Covenant Practise and Procedure," NovT 21 (1979) 27-97. Hughes argues that διαθήκη must be rendered as covenant throughout Hebrews, and that, in Hebrews, Jesus' sacrificial death both ratifies the new covenant and consummates the old "in its final, ultimate, eschatological renewal" (ibid., 38; italics mine; see also Stibbs, So Great Salvation, 60-61).

³H.J.B. Combrink (following K.J. Thomas) gives an alternate explanation of the change of the LXX wording of Jer 31:31-32 (LXX:38:31-32) (= Heb 8:8-9; LXX has διαθήσομαι, διεδέμην; Hebrews has συντελέσω, εποίησα). This kind of alteration of the language associated with covenant-making occurs elsewhere in the LXX only in Jer 41:8, 15, 18 (MT: 34:8, 15, 18), and Isa 28:15. In these instances, συντελέσω is used where the covenant is kept (Jer 41:8,15), and ποίηω is used where the covenant is broken (Jer 41:18; Isa 28:15). Thus: "In Heb. 8 the use of these words can . . . indicate that the New Covenant will be kept, whereas the Old Covenant was broken" (Combrink, "OT Citations in Hebrews," 30-31; cf. K.J. Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews," NTS 11 [1964-65] 310). This interpretation seems less forced than Swetnam's.

⁴In a well-known essay, K. Stendahl argues that παιδαγωγὸς . . . εἰς χριστόν in Gal 3:34 should not be rendered "tutor" (or schoolmaster) unto Christ" (as in Luther), but rather "custodian until Christ came." Thus the point of the verse is not that the law, by showing up human inadequacy, teaches the need for Christ, but rather that the law was God's holy and good provision for the Jews until the coming of Christ. See K. Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," The Writings of St. Paul (ed. W.A. Meeks; New York: W.W. Norton, 1972) 422-34; note especially pp. 427-32. This essay first appeared in English in HTR 56 (1963) 199-215.

⁵The edition of Loew's commentary used here is outside the chronological limits of this study, but Grässer lists an edition which appeared in 1941 ("Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 138). It is doubtful that Loew's interpretation of the Epistle changed substantially between editions.

⁶Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 34. The reference is to the 1935 edition of Strathmann's commentary (see ibid., 8, n. 5).

⁷Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 212. The reference is to H.-D. Wendland, Geschichtsanschauung und Geschichtsbewusstsein im Neuen Testament (Göttingen, 1938) 45 (cf. Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 144).

⁸See Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 138.

⁹Héring opines that the belief that the law was mediated by angels in Hebrews is similar to the statements made about the law and angels in the speech of Stephen (Acts 7:53) and Gal 3:19-20. Héring fails to observe that in neither "parallel" passage is the law denigrated because it was mediated by angels: in Acts, the reference to angelic mediation underlines the dignity of the law; in Galatians, the law is represented as a temporary measure, but not as something evil or misguided.

¹⁰For a more traditional Roman Catholic view of the relation of the OT priesthood to the priesthood of Christ, and to the priesthood of Catholic priests (i.e., that all three are continuous), see: J. Guillet, "Le sacerdoce de la nouvelle alliance," Christus: Cahiers Spirituelles 3,5 (1955) 10-28; Langevin, "Le sacerdoce du Christ;" E. Lussier, Christ's Priesthood according to the Epistle to the Hebrews (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975).

¹¹Barrett, "Eschatology of Hebrews," 392.

¹²Käsemann, unlike Cody and Buchanan, belongs with the scholars who regard the two covenants as essentially continuous, because he sees the old and new covenants existing in a dialectical relation. For Käsemann, the aspect of the old covenant that constitutes the point of continuity between the past (old covenant) and the present (new covenant) is the OT. According to Käsemann, the "old people of God" were mistaken in their interpretation of scripture; they regarded the OT as pointing to earthly blessings, instead of to heavenly salvation (id., Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 37).

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF SCHOLARLY VIEWS;
EXEGETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapters II and III have clearly shown that the last word on the question of the relation of the old and new covenants in Hebrews has not yet been spoken. The exegesis in Chapter V will outline a new approach to this question. In Chapter VI, the conclusions of the exegesis will be compared with the various explications of the relation of the two covenants described in the first half of the thesis.

The function of the present chapter is to make the transition from the description of the opinions in recent scholarship on Hebrews to the exegesis in the next chapter. The discussion in this transitional section will be guided by three main concerns:

1. On the basis of the description of the literature in Chapters II and III, to determine what can be validly presupposed about the background and function of the Epistle.
2. To determine which of the positions on the relation of the two covenants found in modern scholarship on Hebrews can be rejected without recourse to a detailed exegesis.
3. In the light of Chapters II and III, to identify some of the exegetical questions to be asked of the text of Hebrews in Chapter V.

Two issues vital to the understanding of any aspect of the argument of Hebrews are the questions of the theme and purpose of the Epistle. The fact that these are two separate, though related, issues has at times been overlooked by scholars. Thus, for example, Stine makes the questionable assertion that the theme of the finality of the Christian

faith is the purpose of Hebrews.¹ Surely what Stine means is that the theme of Hebrews is the finality of the Christian faith, and that the purpose of the Epistle, i.e., the reason for which it was written, was to counteract a tendency in the readers to be unfaithful, even to the point of being influenced by false doctrine.²

In the literature on Hebrews examined in the last two chapters, there is virtual unanimity on the main theme of the Epistle, which can be neatly summed up by the phrase "the supremacy of Christ." The issue on which scholars differ is the question of how Hebrews develops this theme: does the Epistle exalt Christ by devaluing OT religion (e.g., Montefiore, Loew, Héring), or is Christ glorified precisely because Hebrews sees a relation between Christ and the history of Israel (e.g., Spicq, Michel, Barrett)? That the theme of Hebrews is "the supremacy of Christ," then, will be one of the presuppositions upon which the exegesis in Chapter V will be based.

In contrast, the reason for the writing of Hebrews has by no means been agreed upon by scholars. Two main historical situations have been suggested: that the Epistle was addressed to a group of Christians in danger of turning to Judaism or some Judaizing heresy (e.g., Yadin, Davies, Montefiore); and that the Epistle was written in order to exhort and encourage a Christian community that was losing its fervor for the Gospel (e.g., Käsemann, Michel, G. Hughes). The second hypothesis has gained some ground in recent years.

As the list of examples of scholars who take each position shows, neither view on the aim of the Epistle has a consistent effect on individual descriptions of the relation of the two covenants, although there is, to be sure, a tendency among scholars who see a polemical

purpose in Hebrews to stress the discontinuity of the old and new covenants (e.g., Montefiore, Hunt). This is, however, not always the case (e.g., Yadin, Davies).

A Snell has observed that

The author of Hebrews in 13:22 calls his whole Epistle an "address of παρόλησις". . . . This word includes the ideas of exhortation and of encouragement.³

Since the primary purpose of this thesis is not to determine the precise historical situation to which Hebrews was addressed, Hebrews' own term, παρόλησις, will be used to describe the exhortatory or polemical material in the Epistle.

A third position on the reason for the writing of Hebrews can be described as ahistorical. Scholars who take this kind of position see the παρόλησις in the Epistle as secondary to the theology (e.g., Cody, Dey, J. Smith). In this kind of interpretation, Hebrews is regarded primarily as a theological treatise, concerned to give a fresh interpretation of the Christ-event. It is interesting to note that scholars who take this position tend to regard the two covenants in Hebrews as fundamentally discontinuous. This would suggest that in what are generally recognized as the theological parts of the Epistle (including Heb 8:1-10:18), the idea of the discontinuity of past and present, old and new, is most likely to be found.⁴

As Johnsson has noted, no hypothesis about Hebrews' aim that emphasizes one aspect of the Epistle's argument over another is satisfactory:

. . . the attempt to lay stress on one part of the document to the exclusion of the other(s) is not helpful. Theology and parenesis are so intertwined that the neglect of any part of the document can only result in distortion. It is largely because each interpreter chooses to argue out of certain areas of the work that such contradictory "explanations" have arisen.⁵

Whatever the precise relation of doctrine and *παράλληλος* in Hebrews is, it is surely safe to say that the two kinds of writing in the Epistle complement, and do not contradict, one another.

In order to give a balanced description of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews, the exegesis in Chapter V of this study will examine both the "doctrinal" material on the old and new covenants in Heb 8:1-10:18, and the application of the *παράλληλος* in Hebrews to the question of the relation of the two covenants. Although the exegesis will not depend upon any preconceived hypothesis about the aim of Hebrews, any insights into the Sitz im Leben of the Epistle which the examination of its content suggests will, of course, be brought out.

One point upon which virtually all the scholars mentioned in the last two chapters agree is that the author of Hebrews regarded the OT scriptures very highly. It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise, since "it is the Epistle to the Hebrews which surpasses all the books of the NT canon in its direct and indirect use of the OT."⁶

The observation that Hebrews used the OT scriptures is an important one. The author of Hebrews not only cites parts of the OT; he also interprets them. The main question on which scholars differ is that of how Hebrews interpreted the scriptures. Hebrews' hermeneutic method has been variously identified as midrash pesher (Kistemaker), Christological parabolism (Spicq), allegorical typology (J. Smith), sensus plenior (Spicq, Amsler, van der Ploeg), or some combination of these and other methods of interpretation. F. Schröger, for example, sees at work in Hebrews rabbinic exegesis, midrash pesher, typology (worked out according to a scheme of prophecy and fulfillment), allegory, and purely literal interpretation.⁷ The method of interpretation most often used

by scholars to characterize the use of the OT in Hebrews is, as we noted in Chapter I, typology.⁸ To complicate the issue, Hebrews' use of scripture has been examined for affinities with pre-Christian Gnosticism (Käsemann), Platonism (Cody, Stylianopoulis, et al.), Philonism (Spicq, Sowers, Dey, Williamson), and the DSS (Spicq, Yadin, Kosmala, Coppens).

These various ways of describing Hebrews' use of scripture have at least one element in common: all see the OT in Hebrews as interpreted scripture, which, when properly read (whether charismatically, according to the author's conviction that there is a "fuller sense" hidden in the words of the OT, or merely as a fund of literary motifs), illumines the Christ-event, and the meaning of the lives of Christians. Virtually all modern scholarship on Hebrews, then, at least implicitly, agrees that the author of Hebrews viewed the OT as the living word of God, which constitutes at least one point of continuity with the history of Israel. In general, an observation made by J. Barr describes the attitude of Hebrews to scripture as reflected in the scholarly literature:

In the ancient situation, . . . there is no doubt about the Old Testament; what is uncertain is the lineaments of the Christ. . . . to identify the Christ, to form reciprocal relations between Jesus and that which is the Messianic vocation, . . . and to clarify and illustrate what it means in the eyes of Christians to be the Christ promised by God, and to follow after him.⁹

The observation that Hebrews interpreted the Christ against the background of the OT applies even to scholarship that finds "Christ in the OT" in Hebrews (e.g., Hanson); the sayings and deeds attributed to the pre-incarnate Christ help to define his nature.

There is only one scholarly position on the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews that might not be expected to agree that the author of Hebrews esteemed the OT so highly. This is the notion that the OT

is regarded in the Epistle merely as a record of the inadequacy of human religious institutions, a "convenient example" of the inability of man to approach God (e.g., Loew, Wendland, Schneider). The problem with this kind of interpretation is that it relies more on the ingenuity of the scholars involved than on the actual contents of the Epistle. The interpretation depends solely on the inference that if the author of Hebrews regarded the OT cultus as a "tutor unto Christ" (Heb 10:1-3, 11-12), then he must have regarded all human religions in the same way, and so he must have regarded the religion of Israel only as "one among many." The facts that the only pre-Christian religion discussed by the author of Hebrews is that of Israel,¹⁰ and that he often identifies the source of OT citations as God (Heb 1; 4:3; 7:21; 8:5, 8; 10:30, *passim*), the Holy Spirit (Heb 3:7; 9:8; 10:15), or even the Christ (Heb 2:12; 5:5-6; 10:5),¹¹ makes the idea that the author regarded the OT and its institutions merely as a "near at hand" example highly questionable at best. In Chapter V, then, it will be presupposed that the author of Hebrews had a special esteem for the OT scriptures.

E. Grässer's opinion that all descriptions of the relation between the two covenants that see this relation as a dialectical one are essentially correct¹² seems, in the light of Chapters II and III, to be on the right track, although not fully adequate. As noted above, modern scholarship on Hebrews almost universally recognizes, at least implicitly, that there is one link with the history of Israel that the Epistle accepts unreservedly: the OT scriptures. The one exception to this rule, discussed above, is based on what amounts to a guess about the attitude of the author to the history of religions in general. In some explications, there are more elements in common between past and present than just the word of scripture (e.g., Spicq, Michel, G. Hughes); in others, scripture

is virtually the only point of continuity (e.g., Käsemann, Cody, Héring, J. Smith). All modern scholarship on Hebrews, then (apart from the exceptions noted above), can be said to regard the relation between past and present as a "dialectical" one; (interpreted) scripture provides at least one link with the Jewish past for Hebrews, no matter how discontinuous past and present may seem in other respects.

If it is generally agreed that Hebrews recognized the OT as "Christian" scripture, a link between Christianity and the history of Israel, where can the discontinuity between past and present lie? At this point it is helpful to note the distinction made by R.E. Brown between the words of scripture and the things (i.e., persons, institutions, and events) of scripture.¹³ While most scholars regard Hebrews as having accepted the validity of the words of the OT, they also recognize that the author of the Epistle felt free to criticize (or to approve of) the "things" described in the scriptures. Thus, for example, Käsemann notes Hebrews' disapproval of the behavior of the wilderness generation (Heb 3:7-4:13), Zimmermann distinguishes two typologies in Hebrews, one complementary, and one antithetical, and Héring asserts that Hebrews devalued the law of Moses because it was mediated by angels. In modern scholarship on Hebrews, then, the "discontinuity" side of the dialectic of past and present lies in the Epistle's critique of the persons, institutions, and events of the OT.

As Chapters II and III show, scholars have different views on just how thoroughgoing Hebrews' critique of the "things" of the OT really is. The disagreement is especially strong in the various treatments of the main "theological" part of the letter, Heb 7:1-10:18. For example, some scholars see in Hebrews' typological distinction between the

"shadowy copies" of the past and the "originals" of the present the idea that the institutions of the new order are "foreshadowed" by those of the old (e.g., Barrett, Sandmel, Bruce); others see the same distinction as representing only the gulf that separates the old from the new (e.g., Lutz, Cody, Buchanan, Héring).

It is important to note that the various hypotheses of scholars about the conceptual background of Hebrews influence, but do not determine, their conclusions on whether the "things" of the past can be said to "foreshadow" those of the present. The question of whether the typology in the central section of Hebrews is related to Platonism, pre-Christian Gnosticism, or apocalyptic Judaism is answered differently by scholars who regard the "heavenly/earthly" dichotomy as the fundamental reason for the discontinuity of past and present in the Epistle (cf. Käsemann, Cody, Buchanan). Likewise, scholars who see fundamentally different conceptual backgrounds at work in Hebrews can agree that there is much continuity between old and new in the Epistle (cf. Kosmala, Barrett).

One factor which often seems to determine the various scholars' opinions on whether the old "foreshadows" the new, or whether the old is merely a "shadow" of the new, with little intrinsic worth, is eschatology. In general, where scholars see eschatology as more important to Hebrews than the "dualistic" typology (e.g., Michel, Barrett, G. Hughes), the old can be said to "foreshadow" the new; on interpretations where the "heavenly/earthly" dualism overshadows the eschatological elements in Hebrews, more discontinuity is apparent (e.g., Cody, Buchanan, Héring).

The important question to be asked of the text of Hebrews in any attempt to determine the Epistle's valuation of the past, then, is not

that of the conceptual background of the Epistle, although this is an interesting question, to which a full-length study could be devoted.

As J.W. Thompson has perceptively written:

To say that the author's cosmology has affinities with Platonism and with Gnosticism is not to say that he was either an orthodox Platonist or that he was a Gnostic. Hebrews is certainly not as world-denying as is Gnosticism, and is thus to be distinguished from that movement. At the same time his expectation of the world conflagration distinguishes him from the Platonism of Philo and Plutarch.¹⁴

The exegesis in Chapter V will show that a correct understanding of the typology of the old and new covenants in Hebrews can help to illumine the eschatology of the Epistle.

It has perhaps been noticeable that, up to this point in the discussion, little mention has been made of the terms "old covenant" and "new covenant." These terms have been avoided deliberately. As Lutz has demonstrated, it is by no means certain that "old covenant" in Hebrews is an idea which can simply be equated with "the past," or that the "new covenant" can be uncritically identified with "the present." The fact that the old and new covenants may be two of the OT institutions upon which Hebrews makes judgements, and which may not simply be synonyms for "the past" and "the present," is one that scholars, by and large, have overlooked. In fact, in the period from 1938-1980, Lutz and De Vuyst are the only scholars who have suggested this view.

In Chapter V, it will be shown that the author of Hebrews did not regard the "old covenant" as synonymous with "the past," and the "new covenant" as synonymous with "the present." In addition, it will be asserted that the old (Mosaic) covenant is not the only "type" of the new covenant in Hebrews, and that the author of Hebrews regarded the "new covenant" prophesied by Jeremiah and fulfilled in Christ as continuous

with another covenant in the sacred history. Evidence for this assertion will be adduced from elements in the context of the Jeremiah oracle (Jer 30-31; LXX:37-38), which, as we shall demonstrate, formed the basis of Hebrews' Christology and ecclesiology, and of its conception of the relation of the "new covenant" to the covenantal history of Israel. It will also be shown how the author used other parts of the OT scriptures (especially the Nathan oracle and the Psalms) to flesh out his interpretation of the Jeremiah oracle. Finally, it will be shown that the "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18) provides the answer to the question of why the author of Hebrews regarded the death of Jesus as necessary to the fulfillment of the new covenant. The discussion of the "covenant/testament" passage will also bring out the differences between Heb 9:15-18 and a Pauline "covenant/testament" passage (Gal 3:15-18), thus shedding some light on the question of whether the argument of Hebrews has affinities with Pauline thought (à la Montefiore, Purdy, P.E. Hughes et al.).

Related to the question of the background of the concept of "covenant" in Hebrews is the larger issue of what Johnsson calls the "valence" ("value"),¹⁵ and I have called the "nature," of the cultic language of Hebrews. As Johnsson has observed, this issue has received little attention from scholars.¹⁶ Where the question is addressed, Moffatt's observation that "theological interpreters have often engaged in turning the figurative expressions of the Epistle into what was literal"¹⁷ does not usually apply. That is, most of the modern scholars who recognize the issue have concluded that Hebrews' language of priesthood, cultus, and covenant is to be read metaphorically. Thus J. Smith describes the argument of Hebrews as an "extended metaphor," and Cody regards the description

of Christ's heavenly ministry in Hebrews as symbolic of the saving acts of Jesus (cf. Bruce, Davies, P.E. Hughes, et al.). Two exceptions to this rule are Buchanan, who argues that Hebrews conceives of heaven in terms of the Jewish temple, and, to a degree, Käsemann, who regards Christ as the Urmensch who leads souls from the material world to the heavenly city of light.

The question of how literally the cultic language of Hebrews is to be taken is of some importance to the interpretation of the concept of covenant in Hebrews. The answer to this question is of special significance to two related questions brought out earlier: the question of whether "old covenant" and "new covenant" are regarded in the Epistle as categories which overarch the past and the present, and the question of the OT background of the conception of "covenant" in Hebrews. If the cultic language of the Epistle is in fact "symbolic," then it is possible that Hebrews gives a meaning to "covenant" far removed from the OT background, with a range of applications either much broader or much narrower than a strict adherence to the meanings of the OT terms would allow. If, on the other hand, the priesthood, cultus, and sacrifice of the new covenant are regarded by Hebrews as corresponding strictly to the cultic appurtenances of the old order, or as the fulfillment of another covenant in the history of Israel, then it is likely that the meaning of "covenant," and the range of applications of the term, would correspond closely to the OT usage. Since the issue of the nature of the language is so important to the understanding of what "covenant" means in Hebrews, it will be given some attention in the next chapter, and in Chapter VI.

Summary

The presuppositions upon which the exegesis of Hebrews in the next chapter will be based are:

1. That the main theme of the Epistle is "the supremacy of Christ."
2. That the two "kinds" of material in Hebrews, doctrine and παραύλησις, must both be examined in order to give a balanced view of the Epistle's attitude to the past. Thus Hebrews' understanding of the relation of the two covenants in Heb 8:1-10:18 must be read against the background of the rest of the Epistle.
3. That, whatever Hebrews' precise understanding of the relation of the two covenants may be, the OT scriptures are regarded positively by the author of the Epistle. For Hebrews, the OT constitutes an indissoluble link with the past.
4. That the question of the conceptual background of Hebrews (Gnosticism, Platonism/Philonism, apocalyptic Judaism) is not of particular importance to the understanding of the relation of the two covenants, since the exact connection between Hebrews and these movements has by no means yet been determined.
5. That the position exemplified by such scholars as Loew, Wendland, and Schneider, i.e., that the OT cultus is regarded in Hebrews as an example of the inadequacy of pre-Christian religions, is too divorced from the actual content of the Epistle to be taken seriously as an explication of the relation of the two covenants.

Some exegetical questions which seem important to the question of the relation of the two covenants in Hebrews in the light of recent scholarship are:

1. The question of the exact content of the terms "old covenant" and

"new covenant" in Hebrews.

2. The question of the nature of the typology of Hebrews.
3. The question of the relation of the concept of the "new covenant" in Hebrews to the OT conception of the Mosaic covenant, and to the other covenants in the history of Israel, as illumined by the author's use of the OT.
4. Finally, the question of the nature of the language of Hebrews must be at least touched upon. If the comparison of the two covenants and their appurtenances in Heb 8:1-10:18 can be demonstrated to lie within the realm of metaphor, then it can be argued that the elements of continuity and discontinuity of the two covenants developed in Hebrews must not be pressed too far. If, on the other hand, Hebrews viewed the new covenant as a literal pact, with a corresponding priesthood, cultus, and sacrifice, the fulfillment of a covenant in the sacred history, then the conclusion must be that Hebrews' statement of the new covenant's relation to the old covenant is more than mere picture-language, and may be pressed much further. Surely the statement that the new covenant is a pact with God with real effects in heaven is stronger than the statement that the "new" covenant of Jeremiah provides an apt metaphor for the relationship of believers to God in Christ. On the literal interpretation, the points at which the two covenants display continuity or discontinuity can be precisely identified, and taken almost in the sense of dogma. On the metaphoric interpretation, Hebrews' statements about the relation of the two covenants become much less dogmatic, to the point that the "new covenant" can be regarded as little more than one perspective among many on the meaning of the Christian life. Thus, the exegesis in the next chapter will be sensitive to the question of the

nature of the cultic language of the Epistle, and to the implications of this for the interpretation of the relation of the old and new covenants, and of the past and the present, in the Epistle.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹Stine, "The Finality of the Christian Faith," 222.

²See *ibid.*, 124.

³Snell, New and Living Way, 28.

⁴Cf. G. Hughes, Hebrews and Hermeneutics, 66-70.

⁵Johnsson, "Issues in Hebrews," 185-86.

⁶Kistemaker, Psalm Citations, 13.

⁷Schröger, Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes, 312.

⁸J. Smith, A Priest For Ever, 10.

⁹J. Barr, Old and New in Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments (Currie Lectures, 1964; London: SCM, 1966) 139.

¹⁰See Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 34-39; G. Hughes, Hebrews and Hermeneutics, 70; Zimmermann, Hohepriester-Christologie, 24.

¹¹Cf. Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 206-207.

¹²*Ibid.*, 213.

¹³R.E. Brown, "Hermeneutics," JBC, 615-19.

¹⁴Thompson, "'That Which Abides,'" 260.

¹⁵Johnsson, "Issues in Hebrews," 178-79.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 184-85.

¹⁷Moffatt, Hebrews, xxxi.

CHAPTER V

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS IN HEBREWS

1. Introduction

The concept of covenant has been identified by some scholars as the motif that dominates the argument of Hebrews.¹ D.M. Smith has observed that:

There are several important typologies in Hebrews: the Moses-Christ typology (3:2 ff.); the Israel-Church typology (3:7-4:11); the Melchizedek-Christ typology (chap. 7). They all, however, seem to revolve about the basic typology of the Old and New Covenants. This typology is not only implicit in the entire argument of Hebrews, but becomes quite explicit in 8:8-13, for there the author quotes the new covenant passage of Jer. 31:31-34 in its entirety.²

This chapter will bring out the pervasiveness of the theme of covenant in Hebrews, and the complexity of the relation of the old and new covenants in the Epistle.

As stated earlier, the discussion of Hebrews in this chapter will outline a new approach to the question of the relation of the two covenants. The novelty of the approach lies in the concern to discover the OT background of the new covenant in Hebrews. Evidence from various parts of the Epistle will be adduced to show that the author associated the "new covenant" of Jeremiah with another covenant in the sacred record.

Limitations of time and space do not allow an examination of all the material in Hebrews relevant to the theme of covenant. The study will concentrate mainly on the elements in the argument of Hebrews that relate directly to the question of the OT background of the new covenant. Thus, little emphasis will be placed on Hebrews' conception of covenant mediation, and the implications of the theme of covenant for the structure of the Epistle will be discussed only briefly.

The discussion below will be concerned with some of the exegetical questions raised in Chapter IV: the question of the application of the terms "old covenant" and "new covenant;" the question of the nature of the typology; and the question of the relation of the "new covenant" of Hebrews to the other covenants in the history of Israel, as illumined by the author's use of the OT. The answers to these questions will combine to show that the "new covenant" of Hebrews constitutes a very real link with the covenantal history of Israel, although the "new covenant" can be described, with some qualifications, as existing in a "negative relation" to the Mosaic covenant. Our conclusions will also shed some light on the question of the nature of the language of Hebrews.

At some points in the following discussion, observations will be made concerning the differences between the thought of the author of Hebrews and that of Paul on the relation of the old and new covenants. These brief digressions are necessary, since some of the scholars discussed earlier have seen resemblances between the two authors' treatments of this subject (e.g., Montefiore, Purdy, P.E. Hughes). Another such "digression" will involve a comparison of the eschatology of Stephen with that of Hebrews (à la W. Manson). This comparison will lead us to a suggestion about the Sitz im Leben of Hebrews. The discussion of these NT "parallels" to the thought of Hebrews on the relation of the two covenants will facilitate the comparison in Chapter VI of the findings of this study with those of other modern interpreters.

2. The application of the terms "old covenant" and "new covenant" in Hebrews; Hebrews' attitude to "the past."

Most of the references to the two covenants in Hebrews occur between the two citations of Jer 31:31-34 at Heb 8:8-12 and 10:16 (= Jer 31:33). The

word "covenant" (διαθήκη) is first used in Heb 7:22, where it is asserted that Jesus has become "guarantor of a better covenant."³ The citation from Jeremiah in Heb 8 makes it clear that the "old covenant" is the Mosaic covenant, "the covenant which I made with their fathers on the day of my taking their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" (Heb 8:8 = Jer 31:32).

It is interesting to note that the author of Hebrews calls the Mosaic covenant "old" only once (Heb 8:13). His favourite adjective for the Sinai pact is "the first" (ἡ πρώτη) (Heb 8:7, 13; 9:1, 15). Heb 8:13, however, asserts that in speaking of a "new" covenant, God "has made-antiquated [πεπαλαίωκεν] the first. What [is] becoming antiquated [παλαιούμενον] and old [γεράσιον] [is] near disappearance [ἐγγὺς ἀφαινισμοῦ]."

Hebrews' choice of adjectives for the new covenant reinforces the impression of the obsolescence of the Mosaic covenant given by Heb 8:13. The new covenant is called "a second" (δευτέρον), in contrast to the first covenant, which was not "blameless" (ἄμειπτος) (Heb 8:7). The adjective "new" (καινή) (Heb 8:8, 13) is from Jer 31:31 (LXX:38:31). In the passage from Jeremiah, and in Hebrews (cf. Heb 8:13; 9:15), the adjective καινή implies a value judgement, "in the sense that what is old has become obsolete, and should be replaced by what is new."⁴ Later in the Epistle (Heb 12:24), another adjective connoting "youth" and "freshness" (νέας)⁵ is used to describe the covenant mediated by Jesus. Twice the new covenant is described as "better" (κρείττονός; 7:22; 8:6). Finally, in 13:20, the new covenant is called an "eternal covenant" (διαθήκης αἰωνίου), recalling the earlier assertion that the first covenant is "becoming antiquated and old" and is "near disappearance" (Heb 8:13).

For Hebrews, the notion of covenant is closely associated with "the law"

(10:1, 8) and priesthood (7:12). In Heb 7, "law" (νόμος) and "covenant" are virtually synonymous (see vv. 12, 20-22, 28). The law has changed because the priesthood has changed (7:12); Jesus is guarantor of a better covenant (7:22) because of an oath-taking after (μετὰ) the law (7:28).⁶ In chapter 10, the law is associated with the cultic activity of the old covenant (Heb 10:1, 8), which the Lord did not take pleasure in (Heb 10:8). Like the early Israelites, then, the author of Hebrews seems to have regarded covenant, cultus and law as intimately related.⁷

As many commentators have observed, Hebrews is concerned mainly with the cultic aspect of covenant law.⁸ Both old and new covenants have a priesthood, a sanctuary, and sacrifice (Heb 9). The complex typology which the author used to compare and contrast the cultic institutions of the two covenants will be discussed later. For now it is sufficient to take note of the ways in which the institutions of the two covenants differ. The priesthood of the old covenant is "according to the order of Aaron;" Christ's priesthood, the priesthood of the new covenant, is "according to the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 7:11). The sanctuary of the old covenant is "made by hands;" the sanctuary which Christ entered is "heaven itself" (Heb 9:24). The sacrifices of the old covenant are only a "shadow" (σκιάν) of the "once-for-all" sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:1-18). The old sacrificial order, with its repeated sacrifices, brings "remembrance of sins each year" (Heb 10:3); Christ's "one offering," in contrast, has "given perfection" (τετελείωκεν) "in perpetuity" (ἐς τὸ διηνεκές) (Heb 10:14).

It should be noted briefly at this point that the contrast between the repeated sacrifices of the old covenant which bring "remembrance" of sins and the one sacrifice of the new which atones for sins "once-for-all" (Heb 10:1-3, 11-14) resembles Paul's understanding of the relation of the two

covenants only superficially. Both authors, to be sure, identify the "law" (ὁ νόμος) with the old (Mosaic) covenant (Heb 9:22; 10:1; 2 Cor 3:4-18), and both authors associate the old covenant/law with sin (Heb 10:3, 11, passim; Rom 7:5, 7-12). The two authors' understandings of the relation of the law and sin, however, are quite different.

In the Pauline writings, "sin" (ἁμαρτία) has two meanings: it is both a power which enslaves men (ἁμαρτία, as in Rom 6-7), and a mode of behavior, i.e., transgressing the law (ἁμαρτία, as in Rom 2:12, 17-24).

W. Grundmann notes that

For Paul sin does not consist only in the individual act. Sin is for him a state which embraces all humanity. The individual is always in this all-embracing state of sin, . . .⁹

Man becomes a slave of sin by sinning (Rom 5:12).¹⁰

According to Paul, the law was added "because of transgressions" (Gal 3:19); the law both makes men conscious of sin (Rom 7:7-20), and acts as a "restraint until faith should be revealed" (Gal 3:23), a "custodian until Christ came" (Gal 3:24). Thus, for Paul, in addition to having the "negative" function of awakening the consciousness of sin (Rom 7:7-13), the law has a positive role

. . . as Custodian for the Jews. Once the Messiah had come, and once the faith in Him . . . was available as the decisive ground of salvation, the Law had done its duty as a custodian for the Jews [cf. Gal 3:22-25], . . .¹¹

Although "the law is holy, and the commandment is just and good" (Rom 7:12), those under the law remain under the dominion of sin (Rom 7:13-25); only Christ can deliver men from bondage to sin (Rom 7:24-25; Gal 3:10-14). Thus, for Paul, salvation is primarily deliverance from the power of sin, not deliverance from the law: "The dominant conception is the change of lordships."¹²

The author of Hebrews has a less complicated view of sin and "the law."

As W. Gutbrod has observed,

In Hb. the Law is viewed from a standpoint essentially different from that of, e.g., either Jesus or Paul. For them the Law is the will of God which requires and regulates human action In Hb., however, the Law is seen from the standpoint that it gives the OT priesthood its basis, dignity and force.¹³

As we noted earlier, the author saw the function of the repeated sacrifices required by the law in "negative" terms: they bring "remembrance of sins each year" (Heb 10:3).

The author of Hebrews, unlike Paul, regards "sin" (ἁμαρτία) mainly in terms of transgressions against the law. He characteristically writes of "sins" in the plural:¹⁴ Christ "effected purification from sins [ἁμαρτιῶν]" (Heb 1:3); the high priests of the old covenant offered up sacrifices for their own sins (ἁμαρτιῶν) (Heb 7:27); the sacrifices of the old covenant bring about remembrance of sins (ἁμαρτιῶν) (Heb 10:3). The singular occurs twice in citations from Ps 40:6 (LXX:39:6) (Heb 10:6, 8). In two places, the singular is used when Christ is described as being "without sin" (χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας) (Heb 4:15; 9:28). Hebrews also uses the singular when referring to the "unforgivable sin" of wilful apostasy from the faith (Heb 3:13; 12:1, 4; cf. 10:26).¹⁵ Christ's self-offering is described by the author as removing "sin" in the singular only twice (Heb 9:26; 10:18). Hebrews, then, does not contain the highly developed hamartology characteristic of Paul; in Hebrews, Christ effects atonement for sins, whereas in Paul, faith in Christ delivers men from bondage to sin.

On the basis of the observations, we can agree with such scholars as, for example, Montefiore, Purdy, and P.E. Hughes, that the author of Hebrews regarded the old covenant/law as a "tutor unto Christ" in the sense that the OT ritual, regulated by covenant law, brought about "remembrance of sins" (Heb 10:3), and so pointed to the need of something better. That this

understanding of the relation among the old covenant, the law, and sin is similar to that of Paul,¹⁶ however, is questionable.¹⁷ As we noted in Chapter III, the meaning of the Pauline "tutor unto Christ" passage (Gal 3:24) may or may not contain this idea; K. Stendahl, for one, has persuasively argued that it does not.¹⁸ Overall, Paul's understanding of the relation of the covenant, the law, and sin is more complex than that of Hebrews.

Up to this point, we have observed that the author of Hebrews regarded the new covenant and its appurtenances as different from and better than the old (Mosaic) covenant. This observation is in agreement with the conclusion reached by D.M. Stine in his study of Heb 1-7, that the Epistle presents the finality of the Christian faith over against the "period of preparation" of the old covenant.¹⁹ God removes "the first" in order to establish "the second."²⁰

At this point, it would seem possible to agree with J. Héring that, according to Hebrews,

. . . no compromise is possible between the Jewish cult and that of the new High Priest. The Jewish religion is abolished in order that Christianity may be established.²¹

But the assertion that the Jewish religion is "abolished" because the age of the OT cultus is over is too strong. Hebrews certainly argues that the institutions of the new covenant are "better" than those of the old. It must not be forgotten, however, that the attitude to the past of the author of the Epistle is not wholly negative. As we have already noted, the author had an extremely high regard for the OT scriptures. His attitude to the persons, institutions, and events of the OT varied. For example, Christ is not a priest according to the order of Aaron, but he is a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb 7:11). The wilderness generation is characterized by unbelief (Heb 3:7-4:13), but the OT heroes listed in Heb 11 are

examples of faith (v. 13), who are "brought to perfection" (τελειωθῶσιν)
 "not without us" (μὴ χωρὶς ἡμῶν) (v. 40).²²

In the next section, it will be argued that the author of Hebrews had a similarly varied attitude to the different covenants in the history of Israel. Hebrews' argument that the old covenant is "near disappearance" does not necessarily imply that the author saw the advent of the new covenant as a complete break with the past. For, as Chapter I has shown, the Mosaic covenant is not the only covenant mentioned in the sacred record. It is doubtful that the author of Hebrews, reflecting on Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant and its fulfillment in the Christ, would have disregarded the covenant in Israel's history that formed the basis of messianic expectations, a covenant both different from and "better" than the Mosaic covenant. More will be said about this later. Before this, something must be said about the nature of the typology of the Epistle.

3. Typology: Hebrews' use of the OT.

In other parts of this thesis, it has been noted that typology, a method of comparing or contrasting the persons, institutions, and events of the past with those of the present, is used extensively by the author of Hebrews. Thus Hebrews compares (or contrasts) the Aaronic priesthood (and the Melchizedekian priesthood) with the priesthood of Christ, the earthly sanctuary with the heavenly sanctuary, and the old covenant with the new covenant. As Cody has pointed out, these comparisons and contrasts have both an eschatological ("horizontal") and an "axiological" ("vertical") dimension.²³ That is, in Hebrews, the "things" of the present are superior to those of the past not only because they are "new," but also because they are "heavenly." The kind of typology found in Hebrews, then, is different from that used by other NT writers, whose focus is solely eschatological.²⁴

In addition to having two "dimensions," the typology of Hebrews works in two different ways. A. Nairne has pointed out that there are two typologies of priesthood in Hebrews:

The institutional priesthood, . . . is named after a person in the sacred record of Israel's history. The high priest of this artificial order is Aaron. The High Priest of the other, real and living order is Jesus Christ. But cannot a name be found in the same sacred story which may stand as a type of Him, . . . ("made like unto the Son of God," vii. 3)? Will not "Melchizedek" serve this purpose?²⁵

What Nairne is describing here is a "double typology." On the one hand, there is an antithetical typology; the priesthood of Christ is contrasted with the Aaronic priesthood, the priesthood of the old covenant. On the other hand, there is a complementary typology: Melchizedek is "likened to the Son of God."²⁶ There is similar "double typology" in Hebrews' description of the relation between the heavenly sanctuary and earthly provisions for worship: the holy of holies of the wilderness shrine is described as "patterned after" the "type" shown to Moses on the mountain (Heb 8:5; cf. 9:24) (complementary typology), while the holy place is depicted merely as a "parable" of the present time (Heb 9:8-9) (antithetical typology). Thus there are two kinds of typology operating in Hebrews: antithetical typology, in which an earthly phenomenon is contrasted with its heavenly/eschatological counterpart, and complementary typology, in which earthly phenomena are depicted as having some degree of continuity with those of the heavenly/eschatological realm.²⁷

The realization that these two opposite kinds of typology are present in Hebrews' description of the priesthood of Christ and the two sanctuaries suggests the question of whether a similar "double typology" is operative in the Epistle's treatment of the old and new covenants. The remainder of this section will argue that this is, indeed, the case: Hebrews does

contain an antithetical typology of old and new covenants, and a complementary typology which connects the new ("eternal"²⁸) covenant with an earthly counterpart in the sacred history. The proof of this assertion will involve an examination of the context of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34), some observations about Hebrews' use of the Nathan oracle and the Psalms (especially Ps 110:4 [LXX:109:4]), and some comments on the controversial "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18) and the discussion immediately following it concerning the necessity of bloodshed (Heb 9:19-23).

3.1 Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) in context.

The question of whether the NT authors were aware of the contexts of the scriptural passages which they cited has been a controversial one in modern NT scholarship. Early in this century, R. Harris suggested that the NT writers used a "Testimony Book" as a source of OT citations. The "testimonies" were conceived by Harris as a written collection (or collections) of OT citations, divorced from their original contexts, used by early Christians in anti-Judaic apologetic.²⁹ This hypothesis has generally been discarded by more recent scholarship.³⁰ Nonetheless, one scholar mentioned earlier in this thesis (F.C. Synge) maintains that the author of Hebrews depended on a "Testimony Book" for his OT citations, and that "the context of his citations is of no importance."³¹

Synge's conclusions run counter to recent trends in NT scholarship in general,³² and the study of Hebrews in particular.³³ In a foundational work on the use of the OT by the NT writers, C.H. Dodd concluded that

. . . The method [of early Christian biblical scholars] included, first, the selection of certain large sections of the Old Testament scriptures, especially from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and certain minor prophets, and from the Psalms. These sections were understood as wholes and particular verses or sentences were quoted from them rather as pointers to the whole context than as constituting testimonies in and for themselves. . . . in the funda-

mental passages it is the total context that is in view, and is the basis of the argument.³⁴

Dodd's theory has gained wide acceptance among scholars, and has been applied to the study of the NT by such scholars as K. Stendahl, E.E. Ellis, and B. Lindars.³⁵ Lindars's study of NT apologetic presupposes that "Generally quotations in the New Testament have not been selected with complete disregard of the original context."³⁶

As we have already noted, some scholars regard Hebrews' use of Jeremiah's oracle of the new covenant as central to the argument of the Epistle. This would seem to be a valid supposition, since of all the NT writings, only Hebrews cites Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) in full.³⁷ In According to the Scriptures, Dodd, "with some reserve," associates the oracle of the new covenant with the larger context of Jer 31:10-34.³⁸ Thus it is possible that, when the author of Hebrews cited Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) at 8:8-12, he also had in mind the oracles immediately preceding the prophecy of the new covenant. It is the contention of this thesis that the author of Hebrews had an even broader context in mind when he cited the oracle of the new covenant, i.e., the entirety of Jer 30-31 (LXX:37-38).³⁹

Before considering Hebrews' use of Jeremiah, it must be noted that the question of the biblical text used by the author of Hebrews is a complex one. Although in the past it was a scholarly commonplace that the author of Hebrews used the LXX, study of the DSS has shown that the Greek text used in Hebrews is often closer to the wording of a Hebrew version antedating the Masoretic Text (MT),⁴⁰ or even to the MT itself.⁴¹ Hebrews' citations of Jeremiah are unlike either the Hebrew texts or the LXX, although they are closer to the LXX.⁴² Since the author of Hebrews cites only the oracle of the new covenant, it is impossible to tell how much his text of Jeremiah was influenced by either the LXX or a Hebrew text.

Jer 30-31 (LXX:37-38) is generally recognized by scholars as an independent compilation, a collection of oracles on the theme of the restoration of Israel.⁴³ Although the main interest of the original oracles was in the restoration of the northern kingdom, Judah is also mentioned,⁴⁴ so that, in its canonical form, the "Little Book of Comfort," as Jer 30-31 is sometimes called,⁴⁵ is a general prophecy of the restoration of the people of God to their own country.⁴⁶ The general content of the "Book of Comfort" is nicely summarized by J. Paterson, following P. Volz:

Volz likens this little "book" to a medieval triptych. In the left panel we see the tumult of peoples that normally found place upon dynastic changes and we see the penitent Jacob beneath the strokes of ill fortune. Here also appears the Comforter bringing to Jacob the message of approaching release. In the centre is the main picture in two parts, Yāhweh's meeting with Israel in the wilderness and greeting the Prodigal with boundless mercy: close by is the crowd of returning exiles straining eagerly toward the homeland. The right panel combines both past and future, Rachel weeping for her children and Ephraim crushed and broken, with the New Covenant made between Yāhweh and his banished ones brought home.⁴⁷

The "Book of Comfort" contains two related motifs, both culminating in the contrast between the old and new covenants, which seem to be echoed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. These are: a typological contrast of the returning exiles and the wilderness generation (31:2-14 [LXX:38:2-14]); and a hope for a Davidic ruler (30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]).

The motif of the "new exodus" in Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14) helps to illumine the meaning of Hebrews' citation of Jer 31:32 (LXX:38:32) (Heb 8:9), where it is asserted that the new covenant will not be like the covenant made with the wilderness generation. The LXX reads, in part:

²Thus saith the Lord,
I found him warm in the wilderness
with them that were slain with the sword:
go ye and destroy not Israel.

³The Lord appeared to him from afar,
saying, I have loved thee with
and everlasting love: therefore have

I drawn thee in compassion.

⁴For I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin Israel: thou shalt yet take thy timbrel, and go forth with the party of them that make merry. . . .

⁶For it is a day when those that plead on the mountains of Ephraim shall call, saying, Arise ye, and go up to Sion to the Lord your God. . . .

^{12a}And they shall come, and shall rejoice in the mount of Sion, . . . ⁴⁸

G.P. Couturier has pointed out that, in these verses, the return of the exiles is "described as a new exodus, but in a much more glorious form: they are related as type and antitype."⁴⁹ The typological relation of the two exodi in Jer 31 (LXX:38) can be better described as an antithetical typology: the antitype (the new exodus) is superior to the antithesis (the first exodus) in that the new exodus is marked by facility and joyousness, in contrast to the hardship and suffering of the first.⁵⁰ The goal of the new exodus is specified as Mount Zion (vv. 6, 12). It is interesting to note that the return of the exiles in Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14) resembles the triumphal procession accompanying the transfer of the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem under the leadership of David (2 Sam 6:1-15; 1 Chr 15-16) more than the wanderings of the wilderness generation. In 1 Chr 15-16 (cf. 2 Sam 6:1-15) the ark of the covenant is described as being borne triumphantly to the city of David (Zion) (1 Chr 15:29; 2 Sam 6:15; cf. Jer 31:6, 12 [LXX:38:6, 12]) with music and rejoicing (1 Chr 15:25-28; 16:7-42; 2 Sam 6:5, 15; cf. Jer 31:4, 12-13 [LXX: 38:4, 12-13]).

Jeremiah's imagery of the two exodi recalls Hebrews' contrast between the old and new people of God, so well-described by Käsemann.⁵¹ In Hebrews, the contrast between the people of the exodus (Heb 3:7-4:13) and the new people of God reaches its climax at Heb 12:18-24:

18 For you have not approached
 a fire that is touched and burns,
 and darkness and gloom and storm,
 19 and a sound of trumpet and the
 voice of utterances,
 which those having heard begged
 that a word more not be
 addressed to them.
 20 For they did not bear the thing bidden:
 If even a beast touch the mountain,
 it shall be stoned!
 21 And, so terrible was the thing-made-visible,
 Moses said:
 I am terrorized and trembling.

22 But you have approached
 Mount Sion and [the] city of [the]
 living God, heavenly Jerusalem,
 and myriads of angels in festive-meeting,
 23 and an assembly of [the] first-born
 enrolled in the heavens,
 and God, a judge of all,
 24 and spirits of just-ones brought-to-perfection,
 and a mediator of a new covenant, Jesus,
 and blood of a sprinkling speaking better than Abel.

W.J. Dumbrell has perceptively observed that the typology of these verses is that of the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai and "eschatological acceptance into final covenant conclusion, . . ."⁵² Dumbrell, however, fails to notice that the covenant conclusion of Heb 12:22-24 is contrasted, not compared, with the conclusion of the Sinai covenant in vv. 18-21.⁵³ J. Casey recognizes this contrast when she observes that "The description of Sion [in Heb 12:22-24] culminates with that which is neither from the OT [i.e., the Sinai event] nor apocalyptic tradition."⁵⁴ The typology is one of anti-thesis, not of correspondence: the eschatological covenant is concluded at Zion, not Sinai, and the atmosphere surrounding the second covenant conclusion is one of festivity, not of numinous dread. The second covenant is, as the author of Hebrews says, not like the covenant that was made with the fathers (Heb 8:9a = Jer 31:32a [LXX: 38:32a]), and the people of the second exodus are not like those of the first:

. . . on the day of my taking their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Because they did not abide in my covenant I also did not take care of them, says the Lord (Heb 8:9b).

The people of the new covenant are like the returning exiles of Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14); they are joyous, approaching Mount Zion, and party to the conclusion of a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34 [LXX:38:31-34]). The new exodus of Jer 31 (LXX:38) is the complementary type of the new people of God of Hebrews. Thus Hebrews' imagery of the old and new people of God and the old and new covenants seems to be the result of the author's reflection on and reinterpretation of Jer 31 (LXX:38). Various elements of the Jeremiah oracles--the joyousness and ease of the second return in contrast to the hardship of the first, the march toward Zion, and the oracle of the new covenant--are brought together by the author and taken to their logical outcome: the conclusion of the new covenant by the new people of God at Mount Zion.

If the links between the motif of the new exodus of Jer 31 (LXX:38) and the new people of God in Hebrews are as outlined above, we are left with a question about the nature of the new covenant. As we have seen, for Hebrews, the relation between the Sinai covenant and the new covenant is not one of typological correspondence, but of antithesis. The old covenant is not like the new covenant in that same way that Melchizedek is "likened to the Son of God;" the old covenant is not the complementary type of the new covenant, but rather its antithesis. What, then, is the complementary type of the new covenant?

Some clues to the answer to the question of the nature of the complementary type of the new covenant in Hebrews, if such a type exists, can be found in the text of the "Book of Comfort." First, if, as we have been

arguing, the author of Hebrews made use of the oracles surrounding Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34), then the promise of an "eternal covenant" (Jer 32:40 [LXX:39:40]) cannot have been far from his mind (cf. Heb 13:20). Second, it is not unlikely that the author of Hebrews was aware of the similarities between Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14) and the account of the joyous transfer of the ark to Zion under David (2 Sam 6, 1 Chr 15-16). As we shall see later, the author used a contiguous passage to develop the contrast between Jesus and Moses in ch. 3:1-6 (cf. 1 Chr 17:14). If, as Dodd has asserted, the NT authors were aware of the contexts of their OT citations, then the author of Hebrews would have been familiar with the prelude to 1 Chr 17 (the Nathan oracle), i.e., the ark transfer passage (1 Chr 15-16). Third, the "Book of Comfort" contains an element which could have been construed by the author of Hebrews, together with the motifs of the new exodus and the new covenant, to suggest a covenant in the history of Israel other than the Sinai covenant. This element, mentioned at the beginning of this section, is the hope for a Davidic ruler.

Two references to a future ruler appear in Jer 30 (LXX:37), at vv. 9 and 21. Neither oracle is thought to be directly attributable to the prophet, and it is probable that the Davidic king of v. 9 and the ruler of v. 21 were conceived as different figures in the original oracles.⁵⁵ In the "Book of Comfort," however, both references to an ideal ruler seem to apply to a single figure, recalling "the glories of the Davidic age."⁵⁶ V. 9 reads:

And their mighty ones shall be over them
and their prince shall proceed from themselves;
and I will gather them, and they shall return to me;
for who is this that has set his heart to return to me?

The MT is clearer:

And their prince shall be one of themselves,
and their ruler shall proceed from the midst of them;
And I will cause him to draw near,

and he shall approach unto Me;
 For who is he that hath pledged his heart
 To approach unto me? saith the Lord.⁵⁸

The LXX is more concerned with the return of the people of Israel to God, and less with the appearance of the ideal ruler, than the Hebrew text. Nonetheless, the LXX preserves the idea that a native ruler "who set his heart to return" to God will appear, and that this ruler will be responsible for the return of the people to God. Furthermore, as we noted earlier, it is quite possible that the author of Hebrews used a Greek text of Jeremiah much closer to the MT than the LXX is. According to various commentators, the predicted ruler of Jer 30:21 (LXX:37:21) has some interesting qualities: he will discharge "a sacral or priestly function, rather than one which is specifically political;"⁵⁹ he "will be the perfect intermediary between Yahweh and his people;"⁶⁰ and "'God Himself, Who has taken the ruler into closest relations, is the guarantor of this ruler's character and excellence.'"⁶¹ It is easy to see how the author of Hebrews could have seen Christ prophesied in the figure of the Davidic messiah whom God will "raise up" (ἀναστήσω, v. 9), the sacral ruler of the new people of God (v. 21).

It seems proper at this point to inquire whether, since the ecclesiology and Christology of Hebrews seem to be the result of the author's application of Jeremiah's oracles concerning the "new exodus" and the Davidic/sacral messiah to the "new people of God" and Christ respectively, the complementary type of the new covenant in Hebrews is the Davidic covenant. The author of a late addition to Jer 33 (not found in the LXX⁶²) appears to have linked the "new covenant" with the Davidic covenant. The passage reads, in part:

²⁰Thus saith the Lord:
 If ye can break My covenant with the day,
 And My covenant with the night,
 So that there should not be day and night in their season;

²¹Then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant,
That he should not have a son to reign upon his throne;
And with the Levites the priests, my ministers.⁶³

The oracles concerning the Davidic covenant in the Hebrew text of Jer 33 are consistent with the notion of the eternity of the new covenant (Jer 32:40 [LXX:39:40]);⁶⁴ the permanence of the covenant with David is stressed in the biblical record.⁶⁵ Thus the "second part" of the Hebrew "Book of Comfort" (see n. 62) seems to associate the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) with a renewal of the Davidic covenant. Could the author of Hebrews have taken the reference to the "eternal covenant" (Jer 32:40 [LXX:39:40]) and combined it with the hope for a messianic priest-king (Jer 30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]), to construe the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) as the Davidic covenant renewed?

An affirmative answer to the question posed above would require answers to questions about the Christology of Hebrews, and the function of the Christology. First, the notion that Jesus was regarded by the author of Hebrews as the Davidic messiah has been flatly denied by some scholars. For example, in an unpublished doctoral dissertation, R. Reid asserts that in Hebrews "Christ does not bring back a new and better reign of David but initiates a new period of wandering in the wilderness, . . ."⁶⁶ As we have seen, however, Hebrews regards the exodus generation as the antithesis, not the complement, of the new people of God; Jesus is not portrayed as the "new Moses," as Reid suggests. Is there any evidence in Hebrews that the hope for a Davidic messiah of Jer 30 (LXX:37) is seen as fulfilled in Jesus by the author of the Epistle? It will be argued presently that the answer to this question is yes, but that Hebrews does not regard David as the preeminent type of Jesus. A second question concerns the specific reason for Hebrews' selection of the motif of the royal-sacral messiah (Jer 30:21 [LXX:37:21]) to portray the role of Jesus. One of Reid's reasons for finding a positive

typological correspondence between the wilderness generation and the community of Hebrews is that he sees the Epistle's main concern as the problem of parousia-delay; the addressees of Hebrews are like the exodus generation because they have not yet entered the Promised Land.⁶⁷ There are, however, other hypotheses about the provenance of Hebrews, one of which provides a background against which a Christology of sacral kingship can be understood. Some evidence that Hebrews contains a royal-sacral Christology connected with the idea of the Davidic covenant will be examined below, and will be placed within the context of a plausible Sitz im Leben.

3.2 The Nathan oracle in Hebrews.

In a recently published doctoral dissertation, M.R. D'Angelo argues that the Nathan oracle (1 Chr 17; cf. 2 Sam 7) is the basis of Heb 3:1-6, a discussion of Jesus and Moses. According to D'Angelo, 1 Chr 17:14 is alluded to at Heb 3:2:

Heb 3:2 He was faithful to him who appointed him,
just as Moses also was faithful in (all) God's house.

1 Chr 17:14 LXX And I will make him firm/faithful in my house
and in his kingdom.⁶⁸

The reference to Moses in Heb 3:2, D'Angelo argues, is a parenthetical allusion to Num 12:7--"my servant Moses is . . . faithful in all my house"--, which is cited explicitly at Heb 3:5.⁶⁹ According to D'Angelo, the point of the argument of Heb 3:1-6 is that Jesus, the Davidic messiah (i.e., "son of God;" see 2 Sam 7:14, 1 Chr 17:13) is superior "to the earlier messenger, Moses, who (like the angels) mediated at the giving of the law . . ."⁷⁰ The argument of Heb 3:1-6 shows that while Moses was only faithful as a servant in the "house of God," Jesus, the Davidic messiah, is appointed "over" God's "house."⁷¹ The "house" that Moses was faithful "in," and which Jesus is faithful "over" has four connotations: it is the heavenly familia (the

angels), the created universe, the tabernacle where God dwells, and the people of God.⁷² D'Angelo asserts that Hebrews contains this argument because the author held a high "Mosesology," in which Moses was considered superior even to the angels (cf. Heb 1:5-14, where it is argued that the son is superior to the angels).⁷³

The Nathan oracle (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17) is "a theme running throughout the account of the family of David."⁷⁴ In 2 Sam 7 and 1 Chr 17, David expresses a wish to build a "house" (temple) for the ark of the covenant of the Lord (2 Sam 7:2; 1 Chr 17:1), and God, through the prophet Nathan, responds by promising David a "house" (dynasty) forever (2 Sam 7:8-16; 1 Chr 17:3-14).⁷⁵ The word "covenant" (berit; δαθήκη) is not used in the oracle, but an equivalent term "grace" (or "mercy;" LXX: ἐλεός) is present in 2 Sam 7:15 and 1 Chr 17:13.⁷⁶ In other parts of the OT, God's oath to David is described as a berit (LXX: δαθήκη), or with equivalent terminology.⁷⁷ The idea of the eternity of the Davidic covenant became the basis of the expectation of a Davidic messiah.⁷⁸

D'Angelo has shown that, in the Targums and the LXX, the Nathan oracle was accommodated to the oracle to Eli: "and I will raise up for myself a faithful priest . . . and I will build for him a faithful house" (1 Sam 2:35).⁷⁹ D'Angelo identifies two ways in which the association of the Nathan oracle and the oracle to Eli could function in later traditions: as a testimony to two messiahs, one kingly, and one priestly (as in the Qumran literature); and as applying to a single kingly-priestly messiah (as in Zech 6:11 and Hebrews).⁸⁰

Heb 3:1-6, then, contains a citation of a messianic oracle (1 Chr 17:14) which the author of the Epistle seems to have associated with an oracle concerning a messianic priest (1 Sam 2:35) to suggest a royal-sacral Christ. D'Angelo observes that, once the sources of the allusions in Heb 3:1-6 are

identified,

. . .the structural unity of Hebrews is vindicated. For the author does not hold the theme of Jesus' priesthood in abeyance for chapters 3 and 4, but broaches it immediately following its introduction in 2.17-18.⁸¹

D'Angelo's observation about the structure of the Epistle can be extended to the theme of covenant in Hebrews. As we have already noted, the idea of a change in the nature of the covenant is not brought out explicitly by the author of Hebrews until chapter 7:

¹²For, the priesthood changed,
of necessity also takes place a change of law; . . .

²²just so far has Jesus become guarantor of a new covenant.

The presence in chapter 3 of an allusion to the Nathan oracle, an OT passage deeply involved with the theme of the Davidic covenant, provides another clue to the structure of the Epistle's argument. Chapters 1 and 2, concerned with the superiority of the son to angels, establish the superiority of the Davidic messiah (Heb 1:5)⁸² to beings involved in the transmission of the Mosaic covenant (see n. 70). Chapter 3:1-6 is concerned with the superiority of Jesus, the royal priest (1 Chr 17:14; 1 Sam 2:35), to Moses (Num 12:7); again there is a contrast between covenant mediators, and an implicit allusion to the Davidic covenant. Heb 3:7-4:13 sets up the antithetical typology of "old people of God" (old covenant) versus "new people of God" (new covenant). In Heb 4:14, the theme of the priesthood of Jesus is resumed (cf. Heb 2:17-18), paving the way for the great Melchizedek-Christ typology, introduced at Heb 5:6, and culminating at the beginning of chapter 8:

¹Now [the] chief point of the things-being-said:
we have such a high priest
who sat at the right hand of the throne
of the Majesty in the heavens,
²cult-minister of the sanctuary

and of the true tent,
which the Lord set up, not man.

The "chief point" (κεφάλαιον) of these verses, i.e., that Jesus is the royal high priest, recalls Heb 7:12, 22 (concerning the change in priesthood and covenant), and forms the basis of the great contrast between the two covenants in Heb 8:6-10:18. The groundwork for the crucial argument concerning the change in priesthood and covenant (Heb 7) begins to be laid as early in the Epistle as chapters 1-3, where Jesus is identified as the son, i.e., the Davidic messiah (Heb 1:5), and the royal priest (Heb 3:1-6). Implicit in the identification of Jesus with the Davidic messiah, the royal priest, is the notion that Jesus is associated with a covenant other than the Mosaic covenant.

The suggestion made in the last section, i.e., that the Christology of Hebrews is based on the figure of the Davidic messiah (Jer 30:9 [LXX: 37:9]), the sacral ruler (Jer 30:21 [LXX:37:21]), is supported by the allusion to the Nathan oracle (and its association with the idea of a messianic priest) in Heb 3:1-6 (and perhaps even earlier at Heb 1:5). Furthermore, the association of the Nathan oracle with the Davidic covenant substantiates the suggestion that the author of Hebrews associated the new covenant of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) (=Heb 8:8-12) with a renewal or fulfillment of the covenant with David.

If the notion that Jesus is the Davidic messiah is as important to the argument of Hebrews as D'Angelo suggests, how can the opinion that David is not a "type" of Christ in Hebrews (Reid, Buchanan) be accounted for? The use of the Nathan oracle in the Epistle complicates this question, since, as A. Carlson has noted,

In vv. 10 f. [of 2 Sam 7; cf. 1 Chr 7:9-10] David appears in the role of a second Joshua who will finally defeat Israel's enemies and give the people rest in the promised land. . . . by a reference to the victory chronicle in 2 S. 8 [cf. 1 Chr 18].⁸³

The Nathan oracle, then, would appear to contain adequate material for a portrait of Jesus, the Davidic messiah, as the antitype of David, the second Joshua (LXX: Ἰησοῦς), who obtains "rest" for his people. Such a comparison is not, however, found in Hebrews; rather, the author insists that none of the OT heroes (including Joshua, Heb 4:8, and David, Heb 11:32) was able to attain rest (κατάπαυσις;⁸⁴ see Heb 3:7-4:11), or to obtain rest for the people of God. The goal of the faithful is not the promised land at all, but rather the promised "rest" of Ps 95 (Heb 3:7-4:11), the heavenly Jerusalem (see n. 84). Hebrews regards Jesus, the Davidic messiah, as the only one who can obtain this rest for the people of God (Heb 12:22-24).

Hebrews, then, does not regard David as the preeminent type of Jesus, even though the author regards Jesus as the Davidic messiah spoken of in the Nathan oracle and Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21). As we have already noted, it is Melchizedek, not David or some other OT figure, who is the OT type of Christ in Hebrews. The significance of Hebrews' choice of Melchizedek as the type of Christ, the Davidic messiah, will be discussed in the next section.

3.3 Hebrews and the Psalms

The subject of the use of the Psalter in Hebrews is a large one, which has received extensive treatment elsewhere.⁸⁵ Of the thirty or so explicit OT citations in Hebrews, a little more than a third are from the Psalms.⁸⁶ S. Kistemaker has suggested that four Psalm citations form the foundation of the Epistle: Ps 8:4-6 (Heb 2:6-8), concerning Christ's humanity and unity with his brethren; Ps 95:7-11 (Heb 3:7-11), concerning faith and faithfulness; Ps 110:4 (Heb 5:6) on the priesthood of Christ; and Ps 40:6-8 (Heb 10:5-7) on Christ's priestly task.⁸⁷ Only one of

these important Psalm citations (Ps 110:4) will be discussed at length below, although some general comments about Hebrews' use of the Psalter will be made first.

L. Venard has shown that, with few exceptions, the author of Hebrews interpreted the Psalms messianically.⁸⁸ Venard also notes that the Pentateuch, which is quoted about as many times as the Psalter, is generally used by Hebrews in the context of "a comparison of the priesthood and particularly of the sacrifice of the Christ with the levitical priesthood and the ceremonies of the Mosaic cult . . ."⁸⁹ Thus, in Hebrews, the Law is generally used as the basis for what we have called antithetical typology, while the Psalms are usually "considered as prophetic."⁹⁰

Venard notes that not all the Psalms that Hebrews interprets messianically were applicable, in Jewish traditions, "directly and immediately to a future Messiah."⁹¹ Most of the Psalms in Hebrews (Ps 40:7-9 = Heb 10:5-10; Ps 22:23 = Heb 2:12; Ps 95:7-11 = Heb 3:7-11, 4:3, 7; Ps 8:5-7 = Heb 2:6-8; Ps 102:26-28 = Heb 1:10-12) are "messianic only in a figurative sense."⁹² Three of the Psalm citations (Ps 2:7 = Heb 1:5, 5:5; Ps 110:1 = Heb 1:13; Ps 110:4 = Heb 5:6, 7:17, 21) are especially amenable to messianic interpretation, since both Pss 2 and 110 are royal Psalms.⁹³ The royal Psalms "are the root of the later 'messianic' expectations, the desire for him 'that cometh,' the great king at the end days, the 'eschatological' king."⁹⁴ J.A. Fitzmyer has pointed out that both Psalms echo "the dynastic covenant established in the oracle of Nathan (2 Sm 7:8-16) [cf. 1 Chr 17:3-15]."⁹⁵

According to Venard, Ps 110 is "the royal and sacerdotal Psalm par excellence."⁹⁶ The citation of v. 4 of the Psalm at Heb 5:6, as we have already noted, paves the way for the great Melchizedek-Christ typology of

chapter 7. Venard observes that

This text may have been applied to David originally, before being applied to the priestly role of the Messiah; for David would exercise priestly functions and, as priest, would have been considered as successor to the king-priest Melchizedek, who was held to have been king of Jerusalem.⁹⁷

Some scholars think that Ps 110:4 reflects a time when the Davidic dynasty wished to claim a sacral kingship: "Melchizedek provides the prototype, and it is after his 'order' . . . that David and Solomon are to be thought of as priests."⁹⁸ The author of Hebrews takes this verse--"Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (RSV)--to apply to the glorified Christ, the son of God (Heb 5:5-6), who, as the preceding verses have shown, shares the human qualities of the levitical high priests (Heb 4:15-5:4). The levitical priesthood, Hebrews explains later, did not bring about perfection (Heb 7:11), and so God instituted another messianic priesthood, according to the order of Melchizedek (Heb 7:11). Jesus, the Davidic messiah, from the tribe of Judah, not of Levi (Heb 7:14), is the one to whom Melchizedek is likened (Heb 7:3).

It is important to remember at this point that the author of Hebrews interpreted Ps 110 (LXX: Ps 109) as referring to Jesus, the Davidic messiah, who, as we have already shown, the author regarded as a priest-king. The Psalm citation, like the Nathan oracle, supports and elaborates this Christology, but is not the source of the Christology, which, as we have suggested, can be traced back to Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21) (contra Buchanan⁹⁹). Only in the "Book of Comfort" do we find together the three motifs that supply the ecclesiology, the Christology, and the soteriology of Hebrews, i.e., the "new people of God (Jer 31:2-14 [LXX: 38:2-14]), the Davidic priest-king (Jer 30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]), and the "new covenant" (Jer 31:31-34 [LXX:38:31-34]). When the author of Hebrews

quotes Ps 110 (LXX:109), he makes it clear that it is God who is addressing his son (i.e., the messiah; see Heb 5:5-6) through the Psalmist, whom the author regards as David (Heb 4:7). For the author of Hebrews, then, it is not David who is, preeminently, "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek," but rather the Davidic messiah, Jesus Christ; it is Jesus who fulfills the promises associated with the Davidic/messianic covenant. Melchizedek is a type of the Christ because, like the royal and sacerdotal messiah of Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21), he is a priest-king (Gen 14:7-30 = Heb 7:1-2) whose reign is "perpetual" (εἰς τὸ διηνεκές; see Heb 7:3). Thus it is Jesus Christ, the son of God, the messiah, testified to by God through David, who is the complementary antitype, not of David, but of Melchizedek. The royal-sacral Christology of Hebrews, then, is based on the Davidic priest-king of Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21), and is elaborated by means of the Nathan oracle/oracle to Eli (1 Chr 17:14; 2 Sam 2:35), and the Melchizedekian priest-king of Ps 110:4 (LXX:109:4).

It has been shown thus far how the author of Hebrews came to regard Melchizedek, and not David, as the complementary type of Jesus, the messianic priest-king. In Hebrews, David does not figure prominently as a "type" of the Christ because the author saw David as merely the historical anchor and recipient of the covenantal promises realized in Jesus the messiah, including the promise of a messianic priest-king "after the order of Melchizedek." It is worth noting that all the key passages used in building up the royal-sacerdotal Christology,¹⁰⁰ saving Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX: 37:9, 21), occur in contexts where the notion of the Davidic covenant is in the background. Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21), occurring in the context of the "Book of Comfort," which promises both a Davidic priest-king and a "new covenant," may also have suggested the covenant with David to the

author of Hebrews. This seems especially likely when we recall the resemblance between Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14) and 1 Chr 15-16 (cf. 2 Sam 6).

Presently, more will be said about the nature of the Davidic covenant, and its special place in the argument of Hebrews. Before this, something must be said about Heb 9:15-18, the "covenant/testament" passage, and the verses immediately following it (Heb 9:19-23).

3.4 The "covenant/testament" passage and the "law of blood."

The "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18) occurs within the context of an argument which both compares and contrasts the institutions of the old covenant and the new (Heb 9). As in other parts of the Epistle, the discussion focuses on the situation of the wilderness generation (Heb 9:1-10), as opposed to those awaiting the return of the Christ (Heb 9:28). The holy of holies of the wilderness tabernacle (the "second tent") is a complementary type of the true sanctuary, heaven itself (Heb 9:24); the second tent, where the high priest goes only once a year "not without blood" to offer for his own sins and the sins of the people (Heb 9:7), is "likened to" the true sanctuary, "heaven itself" (Heb 9:24), where Christ "through his own blood, entered once-for-all . . . , having found an eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). The holy place (the "first tent"), however, is only a parable (παραβολή) of the present time (Heb 9:9), because in it "at all [times] enter the priests accomplishing the worship" (Heb 9:7). In the complementary typology of the earthly holy of holies and the heavenly sanctuary, the likeness between the two seems to be based on the notion that Moses built the (second) tent according to the pattern (τύπον) revealed to him on Mount Sinai (cf. Heb 8:5 = Exod 25:40). As we have already noted, there are certain similarities between the atoning activities that go on in the two sanctuaries, but

there are also important differences: the levitical high priest enters once a year, with the blood of animals, to purify the flesh (Heb 9:7, 9); Jesus entered once-for-all, with his own blood, purifying our conscience (Heb 9:12-14). The heavenly sanctuary and what goes on there (the atoning work of Christ) are in every way superior to the second tent and the work of the high priests. As in the case of the Melchizedek-Christ typology, the discussion of the earthly item is dropped once the superiority of the heavenly one has been established (cf. Heb 8:1-2; 10:19 ff.).

The antithetical typology of levitical priesthood versus messianic priesthood is preserved in the midst of the complex imagery of chapter 9. The comparison is between the earthly holy of holies, and the atoning activity that goes on in the two; the title "Christ" or "the Christ" (Heb 9:11, 13, 24, 28) reminds us that it is the royal-sacral messiah, and not a priest of levitical descent, who enters the heavenly sanctuary.

The "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18), and, immediately following, what Zimmermann calls a discussion of the "law of blood" (Heb 9:19-23),¹⁰¹ are bracketed by an assertion of the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ (9:14), and of the heavenly sanctuary into which Christ entered (9:24). The reason for the difficulty of vv. 15-18 is that the word διαθήκη seems to be used in two senses: in v. 15 (and v. 18, where ἡ πρώτη refers to the first διαθήκη), the word is apparently used to mean "covenant" in the OT sense; in vv. 16-17, διαθήκη seems to mean "last will and testament:"

¹⁵ And because of this [i.e., Christ's self-offering, v. 14], of a new covenant [διαθήκης] is he mediator, so that, death occurring for the deliverance from the transgressions in the first covenant [διαθήκη], the called might receive the promise of the eternal heritage.

¹⁶ For wherever [there is] a covenant [διαθήκη] there [is] a necessity that death be-brought

of the one-disposing [του διαθεμένου],
 17for a covenant [διαθήκη] is confirmed in-the-case-of
 [the] dead,
 since it is never valid when the one-disposing [ὁ διαθέμενος]
 is alive.
 18Whence neither the first was inaugurated without blood;

Three main solutions to the exegetical problems posed by this passage are found in the scholarly literature on Hebrews. The majority of scholars hold that διαθήκη means "covenant" in vv. 15, 18, and "will" or "testament" in vv. 16-17, and that the argument hinges on a pun using both the religious and secular meanings of the term.¹⁰² In Chapter III of this thesis, a second interpretation of the passage was described in some detail. According to such scholars as Lenski, Wuest, Swetnam, and Campbell, the usage of διαθήκη in Heb 9:16-17 is a clue to the meaning of the term in the rest of the Epistle, which is closer to "testament" or "disposition" than to "covenant."¹⁰³ A third interpretation, also noted in Chapter III,¹⁰⁴ has been suggested by J.J. Hughes. Hughes is important because he finds the religious sense of διαθήκη in Heb 9:16-17, and because he focuses on a similar Pauline crux interpretum (Gal 3:15-18). Hughes's argument, and its importance in the context of this study, will be described briefly below.

Hughes begins his study by pointing out that the theme of covenant pervades Hebrews, and that διαθήκη is consistently used in the LXX to mean "covenant."¹⁰⁵ Hughes recalls that, in the OT, covenant-making involved the symbolic death of the διαθέμενος, the "ratifier" of the covenant:

. . . those who ratified or renewed a covenant often did so by means of a self-maledictory oath ritual which involved the bloody [sic] dismemberment of representative animals. This act signified the pledge unto death of the ratifying party (or parties) should he (they) prove unfaithful to his (their) oaths. In the case of a suzerainty, [sic] treaty, the vassal who ratified the covenant by means of such a self-maledictory ritual placed himself under the king's jurisdiction and under the threat of divine vengeance

(mediated by the king) should he prove false to his oath. Such a person is said to have cut . . . a covenant "with" or "to" someone else. He was thus "the cutter" or ὁ διασέμενος.¹⁰⁷

With these data in mind, Hughes shows that the covenant-making ritual described above is in the background of Heb 9:16-17:

Assertion (v. 16): Where there is a covenant, it is necessary to represent (introduce) the death of the ratifier.
Reason (v. 17): (These are legal reasons having to do with covenant procedure).
Assertion: For a covenant is made legally secure on the basis of (over) the dead (animals).
Reason: Since it is never valid while the ratifier lives.¹⁰⁸

Hughes interprets Gal 3:15-18 in a similar way, with the fact in mind that Hellenistic, Roman, and Egyptian wills could be changed.¹⁰⁹ The RSV reflects the usual interpretation of the passage:

¹⁵To give a human example, brethren, no one annuls even a man's will [διαθήκην], or adds to it, once it has been ratified.
¹⁶Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "and to offsprings," referring to many; but, referring to one, "and to your offspring," which is Christ.
¹⁷This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant [διαθήκην] previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸For if the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by a promise.

Hughes explains the background of the Pauline "covenant/testament" passage this way:

The Abrahamic covenant with its principle of inheritance-through-faith not only is inviolable but always has been inviolable. Not only did Abraham live ἐκ πίστεως (cf. iii 6-9) by relying on God's promise, but this was also the principle by which men under the Mosaic covenant received blessing and life: ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται (Hab ii 4). Therefore, the Mosaic covenant neither abrogated (καταργῆσαι, v. 17) nor invalidated (ἀκυροῦν, v. 18) the Abrahamic covenant and its principle of inheritance-through-faith, through reliance on God's promise. . . . The Mosaic covenant, characterized by its leading feature ὁ νόμος (v. 18, passim), has fulfilled its tutorial function [see v. 24]: the age of the new covenant, characterized by its leading feature ὁ πῶς τις (v. 25)--a faith that actually receives the blessing promised to Abraham--has come.¹¹⁰

Hughes's exegesis of Heb 9:16-17 is more persuasive than his interpretation

of the Pauline "covenant/testament" passage. It is difficult to see how Paul's "human example" (κατὰ ἄνθρωπον, Gal 3:15) of a διαθήκη that cannot be annulled can be anything but a secular "will" or "testament." Surely Paul's point is that no one but the one making the διαθήκη ("testament") can change it after it has been ratified. The suggestion that the allusion in Heb 9:16-17 is to the OT ritual of "cutting a covenant" (see Gen 15:7-18) has much more to commend it. It is not unlikely that the author of Hebrews, a student of scripture with an interest in the subject of "covenant," was familiar with the way in which OT covenants were ratified.

A comparison of the two "covenant/testament" passages (Heb 9:15-18; Gal 3:15-18) brings out the differences between Paul and the author of Hebrews. While Paul thinks of Christ as the σπέρμα of Abraham who fulfills the covenantal promise, the author of Hebrews regards Jesus as the Davidic messiah, who leads the faithful to their promised inheritance, the heavenly city (see n. 84). For Paul, the promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus, the "seed" (Gal 3:16); in Hebrews, the "promise" is that of "the city having the foundations" (Heb 11:10; cf. vv. 13-18).¹¹¹ Paul thinks of the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant as fundamentally continuous (Gal 3:29); the author of Hebrews integrates the idea of Abraham awaiting the promise into a different covenantal framework. More will be said about this later.

Hughes's interpretation of Heb 9:15-18 provides a background against which the "law of blood" passage (Heb 9:19-23) can be clearly understood. After having alluded to the rites involved in covenant-making in vv. 15-17, and having made the point that the first covenant was inaugurated with blood (v. 18), the author of Hebrews goes on to describe the inauguration of the Sinai covenant in more detail (vv. 19-22; cf. Exod 24:1-8).¹¹² D'Angelo has suggested that the author of Hebrews altered the details of the ceremonies described in Exod 24:1-8 to include an allusion to the consecration

of the tent (Num 7:1), so that "the blood of the covenant" becomes cleansing blood:

The people, the book and the tent and the vessels of the service are all cleansed by it in order that the covenant may be enacted and its services, those sacrifices able only to cleanse the flesh, might begin.¹¹³

The suggestion that the making of the covenant and the inauguration of the tent are viewed as one event in vv. 18-22 makes sense of v. 23:

[There was] a necessity therefore,
as the models of the things in the heavens are purified by
these rites,
that so the heavenly things [be] by better sacrifices than these.

As we have already noted, Hebrews regards the earthly holy of holies as corresponding to heaven itself, where Christ appeared before the face of God "once-for-all." Christ's death is represented in Hebrews both as the ratification of a covenant (Heb 9:16-17), and as the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary (Heb 9:23-24); the "blood of the covenant" thus becomes also the blood which cleanses and atones (see Heb 9:24-28).

So far, it has been asserted that, for Hebrews, Jesus is the scion of David, the royal and priestly messiah, who, by his death, ratifies the new covenant, and opens the way to the heavenly sanctuary and atonement for sins. In the next section, an attempt will be made to integrate this Christology and soteriology into a framework informed by a specific episode in the covenantal history of Israel, i.e., the covenant with David. Before this can be done, however, it is important to note that the author of Hebrews regards the blood of Jesus as functioning in several ways--as "blood of the covenant," as blood of purification, and as blood of atonement--all analogous to the functions of the blood of animals under the Mosaic covenant. Zimmermann has perceptively observed that one link which the author of Hebrews sees between the old covenant and the new is the "law of blood" (Gesetz

des Blutes):

As "the first covenant was not consecrated without blood" (9, 18), so Christ became "mediator of a new covenant" through his death (9, 15). Both orders stand under the law: "without bloodshed there is no forgiveness" (9, 22).¹¹⁴

The recognition that the blood of the Christ plays such an important role in the thought of the Epistle provides a clue to the relation of the death of the messiah to the covenantal history of Israel.

3.5 The OT background of the new covenant in Hebrews.

The observation that the blood of Jesus, functioning in ways analogous to the functions of animal blood under the Mosaic covenant, has an important place in the thought of the author of Hebrews seems to have led us far from our suggestion that, in the Epistle, the new covenant of Jeremiah is conceived as the Davidic covenant renewed or fulfilled. The discussion of Heb 9:15-23 that brought us to the conclusion that the "law of blood" is perceived in Hebrews as overarching the old and new covenants has, however, brought out an interesting aspect of the way in which the author interpreted the scriptures pertaining to the theme of covenant.

Heb 9:15-23 contains at least three allusions to the OT. Two of these have already been discussed in some detail: Exod 24:1-8, on the making of the Sinai covenant, and Num 7:1, on the inauguration of the tent, are both in the background of Heb 9:19-23. The covenant ratification ritual described in Heb 9:15-18 alludes to yet another OT "covenant" passage: the description of the covenant being ratified "over" (or "on the basis of") the dead (Heb 9:16-17) recalls the account of the making of the Abrahamic covenant in Gen 15:9-10.¹¹⁵ In Heb 9:15-23, then, the author has blended three separate OT accounts (Gen 15:7-19; Exod 24:1-8; Num 7:1) to form a background for his theory of the blood of Jesus as the "blood of the covenant" (Gen 15:7-18;

Exod 24:1-8) which cleanses the "heavenly things" (Num 7:1). The author of Hebrews regarded elements from all three OT accounts--the ratification of the covenant on the basis of the dead (Gen 15:17-21), the sprinkling of the "blood of the covenant" (Exod 24:8), and the inauguration of the tent (Exod 24:6; Num 7:1)--as essential to covenant-making. All three elements are fulfilled by the death of Jesus.

The author of Hebrews, then, did not make the kinds of distinctions between the various covenants in the history of Israel that we discussed in Chapter I; he regarded the accounts of the making of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants as similar enough to be integrated into a single account of "what covenant-making involves." For Hebrews, there are only two kinds of covenants described in the OT: the "old" covenant, involving the blood of animals, and the "new" covenant, involving the death of the Christ. The new covenant, under the same "law of blood" as the old, must be initiated by means of blood, the blood of Jesus. It will presently be shown that the necessity of blood, so often noted by commentators on Hebrews,¹¹⁶ is the key to the OT background of the new covenant of Hebrews.

Much of this chapter has been concerned to establish links between the new covenant of Hebrews and the Davidic covenant. First, the assertion was made that Hebrews' ecclesiology and Christology arose out of the author's reflection on and interpretation of the context of the oracle of the new covenant in Jeremiah (Jer 30-31 [LXX:37-38]). The Christology of Jesus as the royal and priestly Davidic messiah (Jer 30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]), and the ecclesiology of the "new people of God" marching toward the conclusion of the (new) covenant at Mount Zion (Jer 31:2-14 [LXX:38:2-14]; cf. Heb 12:18-24) combined to suggest that the OT "type" of the new covenant might, indeed, be the Davidic covenant. This suggestion was substantiated,

to a degree, by the presence of three important texts in the argument of the Epistle (1 Chr 7:14; 1 Sam 2:35 = Heb 3:1-6; Ps 110:4 = Heb 5:6; 7:17, 21). The author of Hebrews, we suggested, used these three "messianic" texts to elaborate the royal-sacral Christology inspired by Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21). It was noted that all three texts have associations with the theme of the covenant with David.

Some features of the Davidic covenant recall aspects of the argument of Hebrews. Of all the covenants in the OT history, the covenant with David is the one which formed the basis of Jewish messianic hopes, for the promise of the continuance of the Davidic line was conceived as eternal (cf. Heb 13:20).¹¹⁷ In Hebrews, Jesus has the characteristics of the promised scion of David (1 Chr 17:11-14): he has an appropriate ancestry (Heb 7:14); he is described as the "son" of God (Heb 1:2, 5, 8, *passim*) whose throne is eternal (Heb 1:8; cf. 1 Chr 17:12); he is faithful "over his house" as a son (Heb 3:6; cf. 1 Chr 17:13-14).¹¹⁸ Like the Davidic covenant, the covenant that Jesus mediates has associations with the cult (see 1 Chr 17:1-4), and with Zion (see 1 Chr 15-16). Jesus is the one who fulfills the promise of a royal-sacral messiah (1 Chr 17:14; 1 Sam 2:35); he is the messianic priest "after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps 110:4 [LXX:109:4]), the priestly mediator of the new covenant.¹¹⁹

How does the death of Jesus, the theme underlying Heb 9:15-23, fit into this Christology of Jesus, the Davidic messiah, the royal son and priest? The point has already been made that, for the author of Hebrews, bloodshed was necessary to covenant-making. Under the old covenant, covenant ratification, purification, and atonement were all effected by means of the blood of animals; in the new covenant, the blood of Jesus performs these functions (Heb 9:15-23). In the OT sources that allude to the covenant

with David, however, the covenant rituals described in Heb 9:15-23 are conspicuously absent.¹²⁰ 1 Chr 16 (cf. 2 Sam 6), the prelude to the Nathan oracle,¹²¹ and, as we have noticed, a passage resembling Jer 31:2-14 (LXX:38:2-14), does include references to the offering of various sacrifices and the blessing of the people at the installation of the ark (vv. 1-2), and to continual levitical sacrifices after the installation, "according to all things written in the law of the Lord, which he commanded the children of Israel by Moses the servant of God" (v. 40). 1 Chr 16 also contains a song of praise to the Lord, in which the "everlasting" covenant with Abraham, a "type" of the Davidic covenant,¹²² is alluded to (vv. 15-22). But there is no real indication in any of the OT texts associated with the Davidic covenant of the precise nature of the rites appertaining to the ratification and renewal of the covenant, if such there were. As Hillers has commented, the Davidic covenant "remains a theory by comparison with the Sinai covenant."¹²³

The silence of the scriptures on the ritual means by which the Davidic covenant was established must have struck the author of Hebrews as significant, in much the same way as he regarded Melchizedek's lack of a genealogy as significant (Heb 7:3).¹²⁴ The covenant in the OT record that formed the basis of Jewish messianic expectations¹²⁵ lacked the bloody ceremonies that the author of the Epistle regarded as necessary to covenant-making. The inference does not seem to unlikely that the author of Hebrews, reflecting on the historical fact of the death of the Christ, and on the scriptures, came to the conclusion that the blood of Jesus was, in fact, the atoning and purifying "blood of the covenant" that the Davidic covenant, the covenant of kingship and priesthood, the covenant of the messiah, lacked. The covenant mediated by Jesus, then, is both linked to

the history of Israel, and, in a very real sense, "new." For the Christ, the royal-sacral messiah of Jer 30:9-21 (LXX:37:9-21), has, by his death, at last supplied the "blood of the covenant" which cleanses the "heavenly things" and atones for sins "once-for all." The messianic covenant is no longer a theory, but a reality.

The new covenant of Hebrews, then, is the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, the messianic covenant that promised a priestly king "forever," but which, until the death of Jesus, lacked the necessary "blood of the covenant" to bring it to fulfillment. In the next section, this conception of the messiah and the covenant will be related to a plausible Sitz im Leben.

4. Eschatology and the situation of Hebrews.

M.R. D'Angelo has called the author of Hebrews a "dispensationalist," i.e., one who saw the people of the old covenant as living under conditions decisively different from those of the new.¹²⁶ This view of Hebrews' eschatology agrees with the conclusions reached in this study. The people of the "old dispensation" had to rely on "blood of the covenant" infinitely less efficacious than the blood of the Christ. With the death of the messiah, the requirements of the "law of blood" have at last been fully satisfied. For God, speaking through the Psalmist, showed that he did not take pleasure in the sacrifices of the old covenant (Heb 10:5-8 = Ps 40:6-8); thus he prepared a body for the son (Heb 10:5). The old sacrificial order has been replaced by the "once-for-all" sacrifice of the Christ; the only offering required of the "new people of God" is a "sacrifice of praise" (Heb 13:15).

As we observed in Chapter IV of this study, the Epistle to the Hebrews contains two kinds of material, doctrine and *παράλληλος*, which are, as Johnsson has put it, "intertwined." This chapter has been concerned mainly

with the reasoning behing the "doctrine" that the blood of the Christ is the atoning blood of the new, messianic covenant. But, as Filson, for one, has pointed out, Hebrews also contains

. . . extensive sections given over to exhortation of the recipients to be faithful and loyal to their confession (2.1-4; 3.7-4.13; 4.14-16; 5.11-6.12; 10.19-39; 12.1-29). The biblical exposition gives the background and basis for such repeated exhortations, but such exposition is not the author's basic interest and purpose.¹²⁷

What "basic interest and purpose" gave rise to the Epistle to the Hebrews, concerned as it is to buttress the faith of its readers not only by exhortation and encouragement, but also by a highly developed doctrine of the person and work of Christ?

The "dispensationalist" eschatology of the Epistle suggests an answer to this question, albeit a very tentative one, for, as Filson has judiciously observed, no hypothesis about the situation of a document as mysterious as Hebrews can really be proven.¹²⁸ For any hypothesis about the purpose of Hebrews must ultimately be based on circular reasoning: the argument of Hebrews is thus, therefore the purpose of the Epistle must have been so. With this consideration in mind, it can safely be noted that of all the scholarly conjectures about the situation of Hebrews, the hypothesis of W. Manson is the most persuasive in the light of the conclusions reached in this study. To a group of Hellenistic Jewish Christians unwilling to relinquish their ties to the law and cultus of Israel and to embrace the "world mission" of Christianity,¹²⁹ Hebrews' assertion that the blood of Christ is the blood of the new, messianic covenant which has atoned for the sins of the "new people of God" "once-for-all" might have proven salutary. The author leaves his readers with no excuse to cling to the past: the old covenant has had its day; the mediator of the eternal covenant

has at last appeared. Thus, even though the precise details of Stephen's attitude to the history of Israel are not shared by the author of Hebrews,¹³⁰ his message is similar: the old dispensation has come to a close; the new dispensation, with new requirements of believers, has come. The doctrine that Jesus is the messianic priest-king who fulfills God's covenant with David functions as a reassuring rationale for the exhortation to break with the past. For although "the Hebrews" are exhorted to leave the law behind, the messianic covenant, the fulfillment of the covenant with David, provides an indissoluble link with the history of Israel.

5. Summary

In Hebrews, Jesus is depicted as the royal-sacral messiah, the scion of David, who leads his people to the promised "rest," the heavenly Jerusalem. The Christology and ecclesiology of Hebrews are the result of the author's reflection on and interpretation of Jer 30-31 (LXX:37-38). The author found support for his interpretation of the "Book of Comfort" in other parts of the OT, notably in 1 Chr 15-16 (cf. Jer 31:2-14 [LXX:38:2-14]), in the Nathan oracle and the oracle to Eli (1 Chr 17:14; 1 Sam 2:35; cf. Jer 30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]), and in the Psalms (especially Ps 110:4 [LXX:109:4]; cf. Jer 30:9, 12 [LXX:37:9, 21]).

The notion of the Davidic/messianic covenant is in the background of all the scriptural passages which the author used to buttress his interpretation of Jer 30-31 (LXX:37-38). The Davidic covenant is a covenant different from and "better" than the old (Mosaic) covenant; the covenant with David is the covenant of the messiah, the "eternal" covenant. The necessary "blood of the covenant" which the Davidic covenant lacked is supplied by the blood of the Christ, infinitely superior to the blood of animals.

The blood which ratifies the messianic covenant is also the blood which purifies the heavenly sanctuary and atones for sins "once-for-all." Thus the cultic activity of the law is no longer necessary, and there is no excuse for clinging to the Jewish cult.

There is little continuity between the old covenant and the new in the thought of the author of Hebrews. The earthly sanctuary is, indeed, patterned on "heaven itself," but the main function of the repeated sacrifices of the old covenant was to symbolize their own inadequacy (Heb 10:1-3). No doubt the author of Hebrews regarded this "negative function" of the cultus as originating ultimately from God, and so, as necessary and good. Nonetheless, the typology of old and new covenants is essentially antithetical. The implication that the complementary type of the new covenant mediated by the Christ is the Davidic covenant, however, provides an indissoluble link with the history of Israel.

In this chapter, it has been demonstrated that the thought of Hebrews on the relation of the old and new covenants differs considerably from that of Paul. Hebrews' understanding of the relation among covenant, law, and sin is less complex than Paul's. Paul regards the Abrahamic covenant as continuous with the new covenant; Hebrews regards the new covenant as the fulfillment of the covenant with David.

Although this chapter has not directly broached the topic of the nature of the language of Hebrews, the discussion of the Epistle's typology sheds some light on the issue. In some respects, the language of Hebrews is redolent of metaphor: the "heavenly sanctuary" is identified with "heaven itself" (Heb 9:24); the blood of Jesus is portrayed as three things at once: "blood of the covenant" (Heb 9:15-22), blood which purifies "the heavenly things" (Heb 9:23), and blood which atones for sins (Heb 9:24-26).

But the complementary typology of Hebrews requires that something "earthly" be "likened" to something "heavenly;" thus Melchizedek is likened to the son of God, the earthly holy of holies, where God is specially present, is likened to "heaven itself," where God dwells, and the new covenant is the "eternal" covenant fulfilled. It would perhaps be appropriate to say that the language of Hebrews often approaches metaphor. The antitype is always superior to the type; there are important differences underlying the similarities. Nonetheless, neither the differences nor the similarities between type and antitype are coincidental: God is ultimately responsible for the correspondences between the two. Without real, historical persons, institutions, and events attested to by the scriptures, there would be no way to contrast the old covenant to the new, no messianic covenant for Christ to fulfill. It is doubtful that any pure metaphor, however vivid, could have persuaded "the Hebrews" to give up the time-honoured sacrifices of the law for a "sacrifice of praise" as effectively as the assertion that the blood of the Christ has at last ratified the new covenant and atoned for sins "once-for-all." More will be said about the nature of the language of Hebrews in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹E.g., Dumbrell, "Spirits of Just Men," 159; Peterson, "The Prophecy of the New Covenant," 74; D.M. Smith, "The Use of the OT," 60.

²D.M. Smith, "The Use of the OT," 60.

³Unless otherwise indicated, the translation of Hebrews used in this chapter will follow Vanhoye's Structured Translation (tr. J. Swetnam). My quotations from Vanhoye will differ from the original in several ways: (1) the peculiarities of Vanhoye's typographical presentation will be dispensed with, except for the use of hyphens to render, e.g., participles (see *ibid.*, 4-6); (2) the word "covenant" will be used to render διαθήκη throughout the Epistle (Vanhoye often has "disposition"); (3) the verb τελειοῦν and related words will be rendered as "to perfect," not "to fulfill;" (4) "Melchizedek" will be spelled with a "k" instead of a "c."

⁴BAG, 394. Cf. W. Klassen, "To the Hebrews or Against the Hebrews? Anti-Judaism and the Epistle to the Hebrews," paper presented to the Anti-Judaism seminar at the meeting of the Canadian Society for Biblical Studies in Halifax, May 1981: "The author of Hebrews does not confine himself to lauding the new. He moves beyond that to say depreciatory and direct negative things about the old. Even the use of new and old, derived as it is from the book of Jeremiah, cannot be seen as being totally non-judgemental. . . . A totally neutral way of describing the two covenants would have been to talk about the first covenant and the second one" (*ibid.*, 11-12).

⁵See BAG, 535-36.

⁶Hebrews' assertion that Jesus' priesthood was established by an oath-taking after the law (μετὰ τὸν νόμον) seems to support Buchanan's opinion that the author of the Epistle regarded the Psalms and Prophets more highly than the Law because the former came later (see To the Hebrews, xxx). Cf. BAG, 510.

⁷Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 44.

⁸E.g., Montefiore, Hebrews, 143; Buchanan, To the Hebrews, 136-37; J. Smith, A Priest For Ever, 9.

⁹W. Grundmann, "ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμάρτημα, ἁμαρτία," TDNT 1, 309-10.

¹⁰See Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 498-99, on the relation of "sin" as a power and "sin" as transgression.

¹¹Stendahl, "Paul and the Conscience," 427.

¹²Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 498.

¹³W. Gutbrod, "νόμος," TDNT 4, 1079-80.

¹⁴Fifteen times: Heb 1:3; 2:17; 5:1-3; 7:27; 8:12 (= Jer 31:34 [LXX:38:34]); 9:7, 21; 10:2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 17, 26.

¹⁵Cf. Grundmann, "ἁποστάσω," 314.

¹⁶See, e.g., Montefiore, Hebrews, 126; Purdy, "Hebrews," 701; Neil, Hebrews, 101-103.

¹⁷Gutbrod notes the difficulty of detecting a Pauline "influence" in Hebrews' attitude to the law: "In comparison [with Paul] it should at least be noted that in Hb. there is no question or, better, there is no longer any question of trying to find in the Law good acts which will justify man. This fact links the situation in Hb. regarding the question of the law rather more strongly with Jn. and Jm. than with Paul" ("νόμος," 1080).

¹⁸Stendahl, "Paul and the Conscience," 427-28.

¹⁹Stine, "The Finality of the Christian Faith," 124, 129, 222.

²⁰In Heb 10:9, the reference is to the removal of the sacrificial order of the law (τὸ πρῶτον) "in order that the second might be established" (ἵνα τὸ δεύτερον στήσῃ). The adjectives in 10:9b are both neuter (τὸ πρῶτον, τὸ δεύτερον; literally, "the first thing" and "the second thing"). The "first thing" is the sacrificial order of the old covenant; the "second thing" is the end of the old sacrificial order by the "once-for-all" sacrifice of Christ in accordance with God's will (cf. Heb 10:10). Cf. Spicq, L'Épître aux Hébreux (1977) 167; Michel, Der Brief an die Hebräer, 337-39; Héring, Hebrews, 88; Montefiore, Hebrews, 168.

²¹Héring, Hebrews, 88.

²²Cf. Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 37-39.

²³Cody, Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy, 78-86.

²⁴Cf. Woollcombe "Biblical Origins of Typology," 68.

²⁵Nairne, Hebrews, lxviii.

²⁶Cf. Zimmermann, Hohepriester-Christologie, 24-25.

²⁷In a recent study of the figure of Melchizedek in Hebrews, F.L. Horton suggested that the author of the Epistle thought of the pre-existent Christ as the "type" of Melchizedek; this explains Hebrews' assertion that Melchizedek was "likened to the Son of God" (Heb 7:3). See Horton, The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews (SNTSMS 30; Cambridge: University Press, 1976) 161.

²⁸The new covenant is never explicitly called the "heavenly" covenant in Hebrews. I would assert that the author thought of the new covenant as "heavenly" because: (1) the new covenant is associated with the heavenly

sanctuary and the heavenly high priest (see Heb 8:1-6; 9:11-28; 10:11-18); (2) the new covenant is regarded as an "eternal" covenant (Heb 13:20), and is thereby associated with what Cody calls the "axiologically heavenly things" (Cody, Heavenly Sanctuary and Liturgy, 85; cf. Heb 12:27).

²⁹B. Lindars, New Testament Apologetic: The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations (London: SCM, 1961) 13-14.

³⁰Ibid., 13.

³¹Synge, Hebrews and the Scriptures, 54.

³²Lindars, NT Apologetic, 13-17.

³³Grässer, "Der Hebräerbrief 1938-1963," 209.

³⁴C.H. Dodd, According to the Scriptures: The Sub-structure of New Testament Theology (London: James Nisbet, 1952) 126.

³⁵Lindars, NT Apologetic, 15-17.

³⁶Ibid., 17.

³⁷Dodd, According to the Scriptures, 46.

³⁸Ibid., 86-86.

³⁹The LXX differs from the MT mainly in that Jer 30:10-11, 15, 22- Jer 31:1 (LXX:37:10-11, 15, 22-31:1) are missing from the LXX. See J. Ziegler, ed., Ieremias - Baruch - Threni - Epistulae Ieremiae (Vetus Testamentum Graecum 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957) 350-65; G.P. Couturier, "Jeremiah," JBC, 325; J. Paterson, "Jeremiah," PCB, 555.

⁴⁰G. Howard, "Hebrews and the Old Testament Quotations," NovT 10 (1968) 208.

⁴¹Combrink, "OT Citations in Hebrews," 23-25.

⁴²Howard, "Hebrews and the OT," 210.

⁴³J. Muilenberg, "Jeremiah the Prophet," IDB 2, 834.

⁴⁴Paterson, "Jeremiah," 555.

⁴⁵Muilenberg, "Jeremiah the prophet," 834.

⁴⁶B.S. Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 351.

⁴⁷Paterson, "Jeremiah," 555.

⁴⁸The quotations from Jeremiah in this chapter follow the translation given in The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament with an English

Translation (London: S. Bagster; New York: James Pott, 1896), unless otherwise indicated.

⁴⁹Couturier, "Jeremiah," 326.

⁵⁰Ibid., 326.

⁵¹Käsemann, Das wandernde Gottesvolk, 32-37.

⁵²Dumbrell, "Spirits of Just Men," 158. Cf. V.D. Verbrugge's assertion that Hebrews is addressed to a covenant community, in "Towards a New Interpretation of Hebrews 6:4-6," CTJ 15 (1980) 61-73. See also: J. Casey, "Eschatology in Heb 12:14-29," 499-504.

⁵³According to Dumbrell, "the difficulties of this passage may be overcome by reminding ourselves that it is covenant conclusion, modelled on the Sinai definitive pattern, to which we are being directed. There are involved angels, assembled participants, a presiding Deity, a scrutiny and a mediator." Dumbrell goes on to say that the conclusion of the eschatological covenant is "vividly presented in this context in striking analogies drawn from the conclusion of the old covenant" (ibid., 158).

⁵⁴Casey, "Eschatology in Heb 12:14-29," 501.

⁵⁵See E.W. Nicholson, The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah Chapters 26-52 (Cambridge Bible Commentary; Cambridge: University Press, 1975) 53, 57-58.

⁵⁶Bright, Jeremiah, 280.

⁵⁷Ibid., 279; cf. H. Freedman, Jeremiah: Hebrew Text & English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary (Soncino Books of the Bible; London & Bournemouth: Soncino, 1949) 198.

⁵⁸Freedman, Jeremiah, 201.

⁵⁹Bright, Jeremiah, 280; cf. Nicholson, Jeremiah, 57-58; Freedman, Jeremiah, 201-202.

⁶⁰Couturier, "Jeremiah," 325.

⁶¹Freedman, Jeremiah, 202 (quoting B.M. Pickering).

⁶²Jer 33:14-26 is absent in the LXX (Jer 40). Some scholars regard the "Book of Comfort" as extending through ch. 33 (LXX: 40). See Muilenberg, "Jeremiah the prophet," 834; Bright, Jeremiah, 297.

⁶³Freedman, Jeremiah, 228-29.

⁶⁴See Bright, Jeremiah, 295, Nicholson, Jeremiah, 89.

⁶⁵McCarthy, OT Covenant, 51; Hillers, Covenant, 112; Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 46.

⁶⁶R. Reid, "The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Th.D. dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, 1964) 160. Cf. Buchanan, To the Hebrews, 254.

⁶⁷Reid, "Use of the OT," 166; cf. Buchanan, To the Hebrews, 266-67.

⁶⁸M.R. D'Angelo, Moses in the Letter to the Hebrews (SBLDS 42; Missoula: Scholars, 1979) 72. Dodd identifies 2 Sam 7:13-14, part of an older version of the Nathan oracle, as a "subordinate or supplementary" source of OT testimonies to Jesus (According to the Scriptures, 180). The Chronicler's version of the Nathan oracle (1 Chr 17) has a messianic tendency (see A. Carlson and H. Ringgren, "dāvidh; dāvīdh," TDOT 3, 168-69).

⁶⁹D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 73-74.

⁷⁰Ibid., 67.

⁷¹Ibid., 91-92.

⁷²Ibid., 142-46.

⁷³Ibid., 123-27. Hebrews' high estimation of Moses is a telling argument against a connection between the speech of Stephen and the Epistle. Luke-Acts contains a low "Mosesology" (see ibid., 112 on Acts 7:35).

⁷⁴Ibid., 76.

⁷⁵See Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 188.

⁷⁶Ibid., 189.

⁷⁷E.g., 2 Sam 23:5; Ps 89:3, 19-37; Ps 132; 2 Chr 7:18; 21:7. See Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 189.

⁷⁸Ibid., 191-92.

⁷⁹Following S. Aalen, D'Angelo shows that the wording of Tg. 1 Chr 17:14 was influenced by that of Tg. 1 Sam 2:33. In the MT, 1 Chr 17:14 reads "I will confirm him," while the Targum renders the phrase "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest." In the LXX, the wording of the Nathan oracle in 2 Sam 7:12, 16 shows affinities with 1 Sam 2:35. D'Angelo suggests that the author of Hebrews was aware of both LXX accounts of the Nathan oracle (2 Sam 7; 1 Chr 17), and thus saw the affinities between 2 Sam 7/1 Chr 17 and 1 Sam 2:35. See D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 78-80; cf. S. Aalen, "'Reign' and 'House' in the Kingdom of God. Supplement: 'Kingdom' and 'House' in Pre-Christian Judaism," NTS 8 (1961) 215-40.

⁸⁰D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 81-83. Zech 6:11 "speaks of a 'great priest' whose name is Jesus [Joshua], to whom are given the promises made to the scion of David in the Nathan oracle" (ibid., 82). D'Angelo doubts that Zech 6:11 is the source of the Christology of Hebrews, but considers it to be an example of "the ease with which the Nathan oracle is accommodated

to a testimony to the royal priest" (ibid., 83). Others have argued that Zech 6:11 forms the basis of the Christology of Hebrews (e.g., Synge, Hebrews and the Scriptures, 19-21; Kistemaker, Psalm Citations, 142).

I must agree with D'Angelo that the figure of Jesus, son of Josedek (Zech 6:11) does not directly inform the Christology of Hebrews. As we shall see, the figure of Melchizedek functions in the same way as the figure of Jesus (Joshua; Zech 6:11) would be expected to, if the allusion to the first royal-sacral Jesus were central to the argument of Hebrews, as Synge and Kistemaker hold.

⁸¹D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 84.

⁸²Heb 1:5 applies two OT citations to Christ, one from a royal/messianic Psalm (Ps 2:7), and the other, interestingly, from the Nathan oracle (2 Sam 7:14; cf. 1 Chr 17:13), both containing the father-son imagery of the traditions about the Davidic covenant. See J. Hempel, "Psalms, Book of," IDB 3, 497; Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 190.

⁸³Carlson and Ringgren, "dāvidh; dāvīdh," 161.

⁸⁴The κατάπαυσις of Heb 3:7-4:11 is synonymous with the other terms used in the Epistle to denote the goal of the faithful: ἡ πόλις (11:10); ἡ ἐπουρανίος πατρίς (11:16); ἡ πόλις θεοῦ ζώντος, Ἱερουσαλὴμ ἐπουρανίος (12:22); βασιλεία ἀσάλευτος (12:28); ἡ μένουσα καὶ μέλλουσα πόλις (13:14). These terms all refer to the "inheritance" (κληρονομία; 9:15) of the faithful. See L.F. Mercado, "The Language of Sojourning in the Abraham Midrash in Hebrews 11:8-19: Its Old Testament Basis, Exegetical Traditions and Function in the Epistle to the Hebrews" (Th.D. dissertation, Harvard, 1966) 94-95.

⁸⁵See, especially, Kistemaker, Psalm Citations.

⁸⁶L. Venard, "L'Utilization des Psaumes dans l'Épître aux Hébreux," Mélanges E. Podechard (Lyon: Facultés Catholiques, 1945) 253. According to Venard, there are eleven Psalm citations in Hebrews (see ibid., 525-53 for Venard's list).

⁸⁷Kistemaker, Psalm Citations, 130-31. I would agree with Kistemaker that these four citations are important to the argument of the Epistle, but would add that the citation of Jer 31:31-34 (LXX:38:31-34) at Heb 8:8-12, and the context which this citation evokes (i.e., Jer 30-31 [LXX:37-38]), determine Hebrews' selection of the Psalms. Thus Ps 8:5-7 (= Heb 2:6-7) shows the solidarity of the messiah with his brethren (see Venard, "L'Utilization des Psaumes," 253); Ps 95:7-11 (= Heb 3:7-11) fits into the antithetical typology of old and new people of God (cf. Jer 31:2-14 [LXX:38:2-14]); Ps 110:4 (LXX:109:4) (= Heb 5:6) reinforces the idea of the messianic priest-king; and Ps 40:6-8 (= Heb 10:5-7) reveals the nature of the sacrifice of the new covenant.

⁸⁸Venard, "L'Utilization des Psaumes," 259-64. The exceptions are: Ps 95:7-11 (= Heb 3:7-11), Ps 104:4 (= Heb 1:7), and Ps 98:6 (= Heb 13:6) (ibid., 259-60).

⁸⁹Ibid., 253.

⁹⁰Ibid., 260.

⁹¹Ibid., 260.

⁹²Ibid., 262.

⁹³Ibid., 260-61.

⁹⁴Hempel, "Psalms, Book of," 947; cf. C. Westermann, "Psalms, Book of," IDBSup, 708.

⁹⁵J.A. Fitzmyer, "'Now This Melchizedek . . .'" (Heb 7:1)," Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971) 224.

⁹⁶Venard, "L'Utilization des Psaumes," 261.

⁹⁷Ibid., 261.

⁹⁸C.E. Armerding, "Were David's Sons Really Priests?" Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation (ed. G.F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 84; cf. Horton, Melchizedek Tradition, 34-35, 51.

⁹⁹Buchanan holds that Ps 110 forms the basis of the Christology of Hebrews (see To the Hebrews, xxvii). Cf. Zimmermann, Das Bekenntnis der Hoffnung, 219.

¹⁰⁰1 Chr 17:14; 1 Sam 2:35; Ps 110:4 (LXX:109:4).

¹⁰¹Zimmermann, Hohepriester-Christologie, 25.

¹⁰²E.g., Michel, Der Brief an die Hebräer, 316; Héring, Hebrews, 79-80; Montefiore, Hebrews, 156-57; Buchanan, To the Hebrews, 151-52.

¹⁰³See Chapter III, 84-89; 117, n. 2.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 117, n. 2. The reference is to J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews IX 15 ff. and Galatians III 15 ff."

¹⁰⁵J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews 15 ff. and Galatians III 15 ff.," 29-32.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 66.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 41-42.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 46.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 70.

¹¹⁰Ibid., 71-72.

¹¹¹Note especially Heb 11:18, where Isaac is specifically identified as the πατέρα of Abraham.

¹¹²J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews IX 15 ff. and Galatians III 15 ff.," 46-49.

¹¹³D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 246. D'Angelo gives the following reasons for seeing a conflation of the ceremonies described in Exod 24:1-8 and Num 7:1 in these verses: (1) the word ἐγχεαίνισται ("was inaugurated," Heb 9:18) is used in the LXX and the NT with reference to cultic objects, not to covenants; (2) Hebrews omits the reference to the division of the blood (Exod 24:6), and dwells on the inauguration of the altar (Exod 24:6b; cf. Num 7:1); (3) Hebrews refers to the blood of "bulls and goats" (Heb 9:19), animals used for expiatory offerings, and not just to "calves" as in Exod 24:5 (see *ibid.*, 244-46).

¹¹⁴Zimmermann, Hohepriester-Christologie, 25.

¹¹⁵Although Exod 24 does refer to the offering of "whole burnt offerings" and the sacrifice of calves "as a peace-offering to God" (v. 5, LXX), the account of the making of the covenant with Abraham contains the only full description of the kind of ceremony alluded to in Heb 9:16-17 (cf. Gen 15:9-10, 17-21). The Hebrew text of Jer 34 alludes to the events of Gen 15:17 (Jer 34:18; see Nicholson, Jeremiah, 97); the LXX version of Jer 34 (LXX:41) seems to refer only to the events surrounding the making of the Sinai pact: "And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, who have not kept my covenant, which they made before me, the calf which they prepared to sacrifice with it." See also Héring, Hebrews, 80.

¹¹⁶E.g., Héring, Hebrews, 81; Montefiore, Hebrews, 158-59; Stibbs, So Great Salvation, 67-68; Buchanan, To the Hebrews, 152-53.

¹¹⁷See Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 191.

¹¹⁸Cf. *ibid.*, 190-92. L.R. Helyer has suggested that the Christological title πρωτοτόκος (Heb 1:6) also has messianic associations: "This title, which was originally predicated of the Messiah and his community, was applied to Jesus and his community by the early Christians in the Diaspora" (see "the Πρωτοτόκος Title in Hebrews," Studia Biblica et Theologica [Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1977] 22). This title ("firstborn") has the connotation of "heir" (*ibid.*, 17); the faithful share in the inheritance of the first-born, Jesus (*ibid.*, 22). Cf. Weinfeld's comments on the idea of the messiah as "a legitimate heir" ("Covenant, Davidic," 191) and W. Michaelis, on the application of the title to the king of Israel ("πρωτοτόκος, πρωτοτοκία," TDNT 6, 874).

¹¹⁹See J.J. Hughes, "Hebrews IX 15 ff. and Galatians III 15 ff.," 38-39.

¹²⁰See Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 188-92; Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 45-46; McCarthy, OT Covenant, 45-52.

¹²¹Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 188.

¹²²Cf. *ibid.*, 190; Hillers, Covenant, 106.

¹²³Hillers, Covenant, 106.

¹²⁴See Fitzmayer, "'Now This Melchizedek,'" 233-38.

¹²⁵See E. Jenni, "Messiah, Jewish," IDB 3, 361; Ringgren, "dāvidh; dāvīdh," 168-69.

¹²⁶D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 23-35.

¹²⁷Filson, "Yesterday," 19.

¹²⁸Ibid., 84.

¹²⁹Manson, Hebrews, 23-34.

¹³⁰E.g., the high "Mosesology" of Hebrews versus the low "Mosesology" of Luke-Acts. See D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews, 112; cf. Manson, Hebrews, 45-46.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

As we noted in Chapter I, and as the description of the literature in Chapters II and III has shown, the Davidic imagery in Hebrews has generally been overlooked by scholars. The few who have noticed the presence of such imagery in the Epistle have not seen the implications of the Davidic content for the understanding of the relation of the two covenants.¹ Thus, while the conclusions about the relation of the old and new covenants reached in the exegetical chapter are in partial agreement with those of some scholars, the assertion that the "new covenant" of Hebrews is the Davidic/messianic covenant fulfilled is quite different from any of the explanations described earlier. In this concluding chapter, the insights into the relation of the two covenants given by the exegesis in Chapter V will be compared and contrasted with the interpretations of other scholars.² In addition, some observations will be made concerning the implications of the study for other areas of Religious Studies and Theology.

In certain respects, the findings of the study in the last chapter resemble those of some scholars who regard the two covenants in Hebrews as discontinuous. The conclusion that, in Hebrews, the main function of the Mosaic covenant and its cultic appurtenances is conceived negatively, as a "reminder" of sins (Heb 10:1-3), agrees with the position that the author of the Epistle regarded the OT cultus as a "tutor unto Christ" (e.g., Montefiore, Purdy, P.E. Hughes). As noted earlier, the "negative" function of the old covenant has a positive effect: by reminding the

"old people of God" of their sins, the OT ritual pointed to the need of a better sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Christ.

In Chapter IV, we decided that, even if the old and new covenants are regarded as discontinuous in Hebrews, there is one link with "the past" that the author accepted unreservedly, i.e., the OT scriptures. Therefore, we decided, the author of Hebrews must have seen the relation between the past and the present as a "dialectical" one (à la Käsemann, Michel, Zimmermann). The findings of the exegesis have deepened our understanding of the scope of the dialectic. For Hebrews, the new covenant is not the Mosaic covenant renewed or fulfilled (contra Spicq et al.); rather, the two covenants are two institutions of "the past" that the author makes judgements upon (à la Lutz, De Vuyst). The author regarded the oracle of the new covenant (Jer 31:31-34 [LXX:38:31-34]) as a prophecy of the fulfillment in Jesus Christ of the messianic hopes associated with the Davidic covenant. The "continuity" in the dialectic of past and present is provided by the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant in the "new" covenant. In contrast, the author regarded the old (Mosaic) covenant as having the useful, but negative, function of a "reminder of sins." Thus, in Hebrews, the old covenant is seen as a necessary, but temporary, episode in salvation history; "the first" is removed so that "the second" can be established (Heb 10:9). This understanding of the Mosaic covenant as a temporary measure provides the "discontinuity" side of the dialectic.

Of the three main representatives of the position that the relation of the old and new covenants is conceived dialectically in Hebrews (Käsemann, Michel, Zimmermann), Zimmermann comes nearest to the dialectic described in Chapter V. The realization that the "new covenant" of

Hebrews is the Davidic covenant fulfilled suggests that the Epistle's thought is grounded more deeply in the OT and eschatology than Käsemann would allow. The "three principles of interpretation" identified by Michel ("correspondence," "surpassing," and "perfection") describe the relation of the old covenant to the new, but do not grasp the complexity of Hebrews' attitude to the past. Zimmermann, in contrast, has seen that the author of Hebrews used two kinds of typology, antithetical typology and complementary typology, to describe the relation of the past and the present (cf. Nairne). The examination of Hebrews in the last chapter has corroborated Zimmermann's insight, and supplemented it, by associating the antithetical typology with the Mosaic covenant and its institutions, and by identifying the Davidic elements in the complementary typology.

By and large, the result of our "new approach" to the theme of covenant in Hebrews has been to bring out the complexity of the author's attitude to the past, and, in particular, of his understanding of covenantal history. In Hebrews, there are many points of contact between the past and the present: the old covenant and cultus function as a "negative preparation" for the Christ; the patriarchs look forward to the "heavenly Jerusalem" ruled by the messiah; the holy of holies of the wilderness tent is patterned after "heaven itself." Above all, the insight that the "new covenant" of Jeremiah is, for Hebrews, the Davidic covenant fulfilled provides an unbreakable bond with the past. Some scholars, notably those who see a relation between the Abrahamic covenant and the new covenant (e.g., Lenski, Praetorius, P.E. Hughes), have sensed the complexity of Hebrews' attitude to the covenants in Israel's history. The recognition that the Epistle's Christology is informed by the idea

that Jesus is the Davidic messiah, the royal priest of Jer 30:9, 21 (LXX:37:9, 21), clarifies the author's understanding of covenantal history. Like the Chronicler, the author of Hebrews thought of the Davidic covenant as the preeminent covenant in the history of Israel.³ In Hebrews, even the great patriarch Abraham is portrayed as "awaiting the city having the foundations" (Heb 11:10), the site of the conclusion of the Davidic/messianic covenant (Heb 12:22-24).

Hebrews' attitude to the past, then, is a complex one, and "negative" only in certain limited respects. Christ is by no means the only link between the temporal and the eternal, the past and the present (contra Cody, Buchanan, et al.), nor is the author as antithetical to Judaism as some scholars have thought (e.g., Héring, Stylianopoulis, Vanhoye). In a very real sense, the OT and its institutions "foreshadow" the new dispensation (à la Barrett, et al.); for example, the new covenant is the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies associated with the Davidic/messianic covenant. The new covenant, is, in fact, the realization of "simple predictive prophecy"⁴ (in Jer 30-31 [LXX:37-38]; the Nathan oracle/oracle to Eli; Ps 110:4 [LXX:109:4]). As such, the new covenant, at least, is much more than a metaphor for the relation of the Christian community to God (contra J. Smith et al.); it is a literal pact with David (1 Chr 17) promising a royal-sacral messiah (1 Chr 17:14 1 Sam 2:35; Jer 30:9, 21 [LXX:37:9, 21]; Ps 110:4 [LXX:109:4]), a "new people of God" (Jer 31:2-14 [LXX:38:2-14]), and a "new covenant" (Jer 31:31-34 [LXX:38:31-34]), ratified, concluded, and inaugurated by means of the blood of the Christ (Heb 9:15-23). On this interpretation, the eschatological perspective (past/present) of Hebrews' argument is more important than the "axiological" dimension (earthly/heavenly, temporal/eternal). I

would agree with J. Casey that, in Hebrews, the "axiological" content is "imagery," and the eschatological content is to be taken more literally:

...[the author of Hebrews] uses these terms and contrasts as images, as vehicles to convey his point which is not that the Christian has left the shadowy earthly world of the first covenant and has entered the eternal real and heavenly world of the second, but rather that, because of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Christian is no longer estranged from God as he was at Sinai. Forgiven his sins, he now, in the new covenant, has unimpeded access to his God. He meets him in joyful assembly, together with the angels, the saints, and Jesus himself.⁵

Hebrews' language of "heavenly" and "earthly," "shadow" and "image," "copy" and "original" serves to deepen the author's declaration that the messianic age, the time of the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, has come at last.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, then, can by no means be described as "anti-Judaic" (contra Héring, Stylianopoulis, et al.). For the author, Judaism is much more than one religion among many (contra Loew, Wendland, et al.). The history of Israel, as recorded in the OT, provides the traditions which promise the messiah and his covenant, and which help to define his person and work. To be sure, the author of the Epistle is more receptive to the OT traditions concerned with David and the Jerusalem cultus (e.g., the work of the Chronicler and certain Psalms⁶) than to those surrounding Moses, Sinai, and the law. In Hebrews, Jesus is, above all, the Davidic messiah. As we have seen, however, the author of Hebrews was not opposed to the Sinai tradition: his message is that the messiah is even greater than Moses (Heb 3:1-6); he assigns a useful function to the cultic observances carried out under the old covenant (Heb 9:8-9; 10:1-3); and under the new covenant the law is inscribed upon the hearts of believers (Heb 8:10 = Jer 31:33 [LXX:38:33]). For the

author of Hebrews, the OT scriptures are united in attesting to the Christ.

As noted before, the main contribution of this thesis to the field of Biblical Studies has been to bring out the complexity of Hebrews' understanding of covenantal history in the light of the Davidic imagery used throughout the Epistle. The findings of the study also have broader implications, both in Religion and Theology. For example, the author of Hebrews, like other Jewish and Christian authors of the time, regarded "covenant" as a category overarching salvation history: in Palestinian and hellenistic Judaism, the Mosaic covenant was the preeminent soteriological category;⁷ for Paul, the Abrahamic covenant provided the link between past and present;⁸ and the author of Hebrews saw the Davidic/messianic covenant as fulfilled in Christ. But while there is agreement among first century Jews and Christians that "covenant" plays an important role in salvation history, there are important differences underlying the similarities. In Judaism, the Mosaic (treaty form) covenant, where there is an obligation on the part of Israel (the "vassal") to obey the laws stipulated by God (the "suzerain"), is preeminent.⁹ In the Christian authors, however, the focus is on the promissory covenants in the sacred history (i.e., the Davidic and Abrahamic covenants), covenants in which God binds himself to a promise, with no corresponding requirements of the promisees. A possible explanation of the shift in emphasis from the Mosaic covenant (Judaism) to the promissory covenants (Hebrews and Paul) relates to the question of the soteriological function of the law. In Judaism, doing the law is a condition of remaining in the (Mosaic) covenant; the law is thus necessary to salvation.¹⁰ Neither Hebrews nor Paul denies that the law is good, but it is not necessary to salvation; for both authors, salvation comes only through faith in Christ. The two Christian authors, then, are

concerned to connect faith in Christ with the covenantal history without stressing the soteriological function of the law, and so they focus on covenant traditions in which the law does not figure prominently.

Some theologians have suggested that "covenant" is a theme which unifies the Old and New Testaments.¹¹ J. Jocz, for example, states that

The covenant . . . covers the totality of the historical venture. In the covenantal perspective history ceases to be a twisted skein of fortuitous happenings and acquires meaning and purpose.¹²

This study has shown that the author of Hebrews (and Paul) regarded Christianity as the fulfillment of the covenantal history of Israel. To an extent, then, theological formulations of the relation between the two Testaments that use "covenant" as a unifying theme are in agreement with the NT. The NT canon, however, contains different understandings of the relation of the "new covenant" to the covenants in Israel's past, and the NT authors disagree as to which covenant in the sacred history is of supreme importance. Theological explanations of the relation between the two Testaments that use "covenant" as a unifying theme must take into account the variety of biblical attitudes to the covenants in the sacred record.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹D'Angelo, Moses in Hebrews; Fuller, Hebrews, 19-20; A.J.B. Higgins, "The Priestly Messiah," NTS 13 (1966-68) 232-33.

²In Chapters II-IV, some scholarly explanations of the relation of the two covenants were rejected: the notion that the old covenant is "perfected" in the new (G. Hughes, Sowers, Wikgren, et al.); the idea that the Abrahamic covenant is continuous with the new covenant (Lenski, P.E. Hughes, et al.); and the notion that the old covenant and cultus serve as a "near at hand" example of the inadequacy of human religious institutions (Loew, Wendland, Schneider). It was also shown that the issue of conceptual provenance has little relevance to the question of the relation of the two covenants. In Chapter V, the "resemblances" between Pauline thought and that of the author of Hebrews were shown to be superficial (contra, e.g., Montefiore, Purdy, P.E. Hughes), and that the "covenant/testament" passage (Heb 9:15-18) is informed more by the OT concept of covenant (Gen 15:7-18) than by the hellenistic meaning of διαθήκη as "will" or "testament" (contra Lenski, Swetnam, et al.).

³See McCarthy, OT Covenant, 47; cf. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant, 46.

⁴Barrett, "Eschatology of Hebrews," 392.

⁵Casey, "Eschatology (in Heb 12:14-29)," 503.

⁶See McCarthy, OT Covenant, 47; Hillers, Covenant, 113-16; Weinfeld, "Covenant, Davidic," 189.

⁷See E.P. Sanders, "The Covenant as a Soteriological Category and the Nature of Salvation in Palestinian and Hellenistic Judaism," Jews, Greeks and Christians: Religious Cultures in Late Antiquity (ed. R. Hamerton-Kelly and R. Scroggs; SJLA 21; Leiden: Brill, 1976) 11-44.

⁸Cf. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 551.

⁹Holladay, "New Covenant, The," 623.

¹⁰Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism, 550-51.

¹¹E.g., W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament 1 (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961) 501-11; Jocz, The Covenant, 225-98.

¹²Jocz, The Covenant, 298.

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