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CHRIST THE FULFILMENT OF THE COVENANT

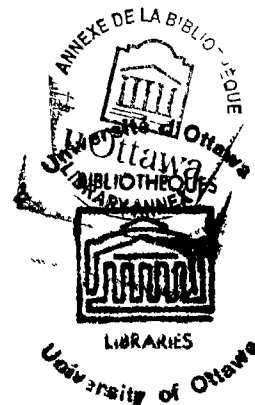
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Brother Alexander Luke Gillis, F.P.M., was born January 8, 1913, in Inverness County, Nova Scotia. He received his elementary education at Brook School, in Broad Cove Chapel, Inverness County, Nova Scotia, and his secondary education and Superior Diploma at the Presentation Brothers' Scholasticate, Longueuil, Quebec.

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INTRODUCTION

God's own divine nature and His plan for the salvation of men are revealed by the acts performed by Him as recorded throughout history. In the past, He established a Covenant with men. God continues to act for His people. His acts of the past are the butress of the believer's hope. What God has done for us makes us more conscious of the meaning of what He continues to do.¹ "In general, it can be said that the Covenant is a dominant idea in the story of God's dealing with man."² A recent writer notes:

The Covenant was experienced as a fact before it was expressed as a formula. One day, more than four thousand years ago, God suddenly intervened in the life of a man called Abraham. He promised to bless him, to protect him, to treat him kindly on the sole condition that he live according to the divine will. That God will intervene forcefully and sweetly in the lives of men who answer His call with humility is the Covenant principle. Again at Sinai, God recalled the great works that had expressed His power and His mercy: "You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself" (Ex. 19:4; Jos. 24:2f).³

Simply stated, He was to be their God and they were to be His people. But this Covenant was not to be fulfilled completely except in Christ. Our aim is to review points significant for

¹Aldo J. Tos, Approaches to the Bible: The Old Testament, p. 20.

²F.L. Moriarty, Introducing the Old Testament, p. 16.

³J. Giblet, "God's Covenant with Men," in The God of Israel the God of Christians, p. 24.

showing that Christ is the fulfilment of the Covenant. Various aspects of the Covenant will be examined for its distinctive contribution to the manifestation of God's intervention in the life of the Jews and the Gentiles. By tracing the Covenant theme from the Old through the New Testament, we shall try to bring out the unbroken economy of salvation; the marvels of the Old in the light of the New, and the glory of the New in the splendor of the Old, but are climaxing in Christ.

Commenting on (Ex. 19:4), Barnabas Ahern notes:

All through the Old Testament God was a Savior. If only the people of Israel had leaned upon Him they would have found Him like a rock in the strength of His support and like an eagle in the tenderness of His mothering care: "You have seen for yourselves," he told them, "how I bore you on eagle's wings, and brought you to myself" (Ex. 19:4). What men could not do of themselves God would have helped them accomplish.¹

In Christ we see the goodness and kindness of God who redeems man and restored him to His friendship.

Our Lord made fundamental observations bearing on the prophecies. From the beginning of His preaching He applied to Himself (Is. 61:1-2) regarding the Lord's anointed

¹Barnabas M. Ahern, The Critic, Vol., XXI, (Aug-Sept, 1962), p.79.

Quotations from the Bible in this thesis are from the Holy Bible Vols., 1 (Genesis to Ruth) 111 (Job to Sirach) 1V (Isaia to Malachia) and the New Testament -- published by the St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N.J., All other books of the Bible are quoted from the Douay version.

who is sent to announce the Good News: "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21). Later, alluding to Deuteronomy (18:15) -- "A prophet like me will the Lord, your God, raise up for you from among your own kinsmen; to him you shall listen"-- He told the incredulous Jews, "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, Moses, in whom you hope. For if you believed Moses you would believe me also, for he wrote of me" (John 5:45-46). Following His resurrection Jesus no longer referred to a book or part of Scripture to prove His mission. He put all Scripture before the Emmaus pilgrims to reveal their Messianic implications: "And beginning with Moses and with all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things referring to himself" (Luke 24:27).¹

So important and fundamental for Christian faith is this fact of the central theme of the Old Testament that Jesus dwells on it with insistence in His very last instruction to the Apostles before the Ascension. "And He said to them: 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled that are written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me' " (that is, in the three categories of writings that comprise the whole Old Testament). "Then He opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them: 'Thus it is written; and thus the Christ should suffer, and should rise again on the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached ... you yourselves are witnesses of these things'" (Luke 24: 44-48).²

¹R. Aigrain and O. Englebert, Prophecy Fulfilled, p. 15

²R. Kugleman, "The Central Theme of the Old Testament," The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. L, (Apr. 1950), p. 632.

It is clear then, that Christ considered Himself to be the fulfilment of the Old Testament.

The Covenant Accomplished

The last book of the Bible gives us a dramatic showing of the Covenant fully accomplished (Apoc. 5:1-4). Saint John saw a lamb "as if slain" standing near the throne of God, and it is only the lamb who is able to open a sealed scroll. Exegetes interpret this to represent Christ the fulfilment of the Covenant. For Christ is the spotless, pure One, the Lamb of God, Who by His sacrificial death atoned for the sins of man and renewed the Covenant with man (the scroll).¹ He is acclaimed by the whole heavenly court, then by every creature on earth, under the earth, and on the sea (v. 13) for one precise achievement: for having with His blood redeemed for His Father "a kingdom and priests" (Apoc. 5:9-10). Here is a clear allusion to the Sinai Covenant. It will be universal and unilateral.² At Sinai only one nation is important but here there is consideration for every tribe and tongue and people and nation (v. 9). The vision seen by St. John was the Sinai Covenant fulfilled by Christ with followers from all nations. They with Him, are the true "holy nation, kingly priesthood" of which the historic Israel was only the shadow and preparation.

¹C.C.Martindale, "The Apocalypse," A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, 966c, p. 1199.

²P. van Imschoot, "L'alliance dans l'ancien testament," Nouvelle revue théologie, LXXIV, (Sept-Oct), 1952, p. 802.

The Bible says: "And hast made them for our God a kingdom and priests, And they shall reign over the earth (Apoc. 5:10). Through the Covenant with Israel Yahweh acquired for Himself a kingdom of priests; and through the Blood of the New Covenant Christ acquired a kingdom of priests unto His Father. The latter is the fulfilment of the former. The Old Testament people of God existed only to prepare for the true and complete people of God, Christ and His members. "Israel has been chosen as a sort of filter in which the religious strivings of humanity as a whole are to be canalized and purified." ¹ "In Israel took place the sifting, the rectification and the spiritualization of religious life as it was lived by the people of antiquity from the beginning." ² In (Ex. 24:4-11) and (Lev. 1:2-9) we see that the sprinkling of blood in the Old Covenant meant acquiring union with God; it meant life and goodfortune and peace. The Blood of Christ means acquiring union with God, divine life, and all the blessings associated with peace. Because the people of the Covenant form a kingdom of priests, they already "are reigning over the earth." Here we have a concrete application of the principle the solidarity in Christ through the Mystical Body.

¹Albert Gélín, The Religion of Israel, p. 23.

²Albert Gélín, "The Messiah of God," in The God of Israel the God of Christians, p. 200.

CHAPTER 1

ESSENCE AND EXISTENCE OF THE COVENANT

Meaning of the Term "Covenant"

A brief consideration of the significance of the term "covenant" is in order here. A covenant is, in its broadest sense an "agreement" between two or more persons or parties.¹ A recent writer says: "The Hebrew word for covenant can be translated by the word pact or contract. It is used with a verb meaning to cut, an allusion to the rite of which (Jer. 34:18f) speaks."²

In the eyes of the ancients ... the covenant is a relation of mutual belonging. It involves consequent rights and obligations. It establishes a bond similar to the natural bond of blood relationship. It is a vital union that results from a free act. It is a bond guaranteed by the Divinity, and concluded by rites which signify and produce this vital union. In the Old Testament, this notion is transposed into the religious domain. It gives to the religion of Israel its essential character and distinction. Though the prophets prior to Jeremias might not refer explicitly to the covenant, they make constant allusions to it.³

The Deuteronomist stresses the Covenant's gratuitous and conditional character and its judicial aspects, and the Sacerdotal Code extends the Covenant to all humanity.

¹Neal M. Flanagan, "The Covenant and How it Grew," The American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. CXLIII, (Sept., 1960), p. 145.

²G. Pidoux, "Covenant," in Vocabulary of the Bible, (J.J. von Allmen ed.), p. 66.

³Imschoot, op. cit., p. 804.

The Covenant took on the aspect of a unilateral dispensation, a scheme ordained by Yahweh for man's salvation and of Israel in particular. This universal sense is that of the New Covenant, proclaimed by the prophets and understood as an interior religious regeneration to be brought about by Yahweh. This is the "New Covenant" Christ sealed with His blood (Luke 22:20).¹

The essence of the Covenant is the promise God made to His people, their acceptance of obligations imposed thereby, and the ratification of the Covenant by the shedding of blood. We now consider the Covenant development according to this pattern.

The original Covenant is an agreement made by God with Abraham. But God does not stipulate any duties on the part of Abraham. "This, too, was an agreement between God and the unique personal beginning of God's people. This people was to rise from the seed of Abraham" (Gen.12:1-3).² God imposes no obligation, neither does He attach any conditions.³ And the blood of animals seals this Covenant (Gen. 15:9-10).

¹Ibid., p. 805.

²Flanagan, op. cit., p. 150.

³Moriarty, op. cit., p. 16.

God renewed His promise to Abraham, and pledged Himself to make of Abraham's lineage a strong and vast nation, with land for himself and his posterity. At this time God changed the name of Abram to Abraham and he is commissioned by God to "walk before Me and be perfect." By way of sign of the Covenant, Abraham accepts circumcision for himself and his descendants (Gen. 17).

Circumcision gave man full membership of his clan and became a sign of membership of God's chosen people. The circumcised belonged to Abraham's family; he shared the privileges and obligations of the Covenant. Circumcision was a sign of the bond that united the descendants of Abraham with one another and with God. The Abrahamic Covenant was a decisive stage in the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth. Circumcision, like Baptism, was a rite of initiation into God's Kingdom.¹

What gives the concept of Covenant in the O.T. an incomparable theological significance is that the relations between God and His people are expressed thereby. It can be said that the entire religion of Israel presupposes for its basis a Covenant between God and the nation He has chosen.²

¹R.A.Dyson and A.Jones, The Kingdom of God, p. 11.

²Pidoux, op. cit., p.66.

N. Flanagan points out that the Covenant between God and Abraham is "the initiation between God and Israel." He goes on to say that this Covenant includes the promise and the blood, but there is not as yet a divinely given law, nor a divinely bestowed status. Abraham's response is "not obedience to a law, but faith to a promise."¹

Generations of the descendants of Abraham have passed away. In Egypt, the Israelites have suffered much at the hands of their oppressors. Their cry ascends to God Who remembers the Covenant He has made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He looks favourably on their descendants (Ex. ch. 2). C. Charlier observes that God's promises to the Patriarchs were, in part, fulfilled in Egypt. The Israelites had become a great people there. Afraid of their rising prestige, the Egyptians began to enslave the Israelite clan. The resulting demoralizing slavery had almost destroyed their identity and religious personality.²

Israel is God's own son, His first-born. Dr. Anderson says that Israel, Yahweh's "Son" (Ex. 4:22-23) has been called into being by divine love which is behind and within its history giving meaning and promise to everything.³

¹Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 150-151.

²C. Charlier, The Christian Approach to the Bible, p.176.

³B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, p. 248.

God chose Moses as His spokesman on behalf of Israel, and at God's behest Moses delivers the following message to Pharaoh: "Let my son go, that he may serve me. If you refuse to let him go, I warn you, I will kill your son, your first-born" (Ex.4:23). On another occasion God will say: "So you must realize that the LORD, your God, disciplines you even as a man disciplines his son" (Dt. 8:5). and Moses will speak to them of God their father, who created them, who made and established them (Dt. 32:6).

God delivers Israel from the Egyptians and their tyranny and leads them through the wilderness where they finally settle at the foot of Sinai.

A new world comes into being with Abraham and the patriarchs.

It takes definite form at the moment when the Law is given to Moses. God wishes to prepare a people that will be as it were a cradle to receive his Son at the Incarnation. The people are the Jews.¹

With the Jews, the regime of Mosaic Law succeeds to that of the natural law.

We have seen a general idea of the term "Covenant" and the Abrahamic Covenant, and we proceed to a more detailed study of the Covenant and its fulfilment in Christ.

¹C. Journet, The Meaning of Grace, p. 87.

The Covenant Takes Shape

The Covenant idea dominates the entire religious life of Israel, since it is the unique source of her privileges and responsibilities.¹ The word for covenant is berit, and it already appears in cuneiform writing as beritu a century before Moses' time.² Johannes Pedersen captured something of the meaning of Old Testament religion when he noted that the most apt expressions of the relation between Yahweh and Israel is the covenant, berith:

This denotes the psychic communion and the common purpose which united the people and its God. It is also expressed by saying that the peace of Yahweh reigns in Israel (shalom, Jer. 16:5); therefore the relation between them is characterized by love, the feeling of fellowship among kinsmen. The covenant finds expression in the nature and customs of the people. By observing this mishpat, Israel maintains the covenant, but a departure from true custom, to which in the first place would belong intercourse with other gods, is a breach of the covenant. Yahweh maintains the covenant by acting as the God of Israel.³

The pre-Christian covenant bound together God and Israel as the external expression of Yahweh's election of this people as His own. So we have to do with a well-known legal form to a religious use, with the changes necessary in such an adaptation.

¹Moriarty, op. cit., p. 33.

²Ibid., p. 33.

³J. Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture, Vol. III-IV, p. 612.

J. Giblett says that God asked the people of Israel freely to respond to His call, freely to enter His Covenant. This Covenant was essentially a favour and is, in no way, a bilateral contract. It was to be accepted without reservation and it was to be kept with faith in the divine promises and vocation.¹ And M. Buber views the all embracing relationship and everlasting bond of the Covenant with such a deity as this as no legal agreement, but a surrender to the divine power and grace.² M. Noth looks upon the Covenant as the submission of the people to the rule of God and the acknowledgment of the claim of God to their exclusive worship and the binding of the people to its God as forming the real substance of the Covenant-making in the Sinai tradition.³ J.L. McKenzie explains that God cannot submit Himself to obligations. But the Covenant permitted the Israelites to appeal to His fidelity and the bond of Covenant affection which arose as its consequences. By making Israel His own people, God had undertaken "to act as a kinsman" toward His people.⁴ What is demanded and why became clear in the opening words of God to Moses at Sinai:

¹Giblett, op. cit., p. 27.

²Martin Buber, The Prophetic Faith, p. 51.

³M. Noth, The History of Israel, p. 128.

⁴J.L.McKenzie, The Two-Edged Sword, p. 116.

Moses went up the mountain to God. Then the LORD called to him and said, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob; tell the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves how I treated the Egyptians and how I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself. Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. That is what you must tell the Israelites" (Ex.19:3-6).

M.Buber refers to the Covenant God makes with Israel as being not so much a contract as a royal proclamation, a decision stemming from His awful sovereignty.¹ It is this decision which creates Israel as a people. The canticle of Moses stresses the analogy between the formation of the people of God and the formation of man at the dawn of human history: "Is he not your father who created you? Has he not made you and established you?" (Deut. 32:6). F.L.Moriarty states that the consecration of a priest sets him apart from the common, secular interests of life, so Israel was marked off from all other nations by her summons to holiness.² When God decided to establish His own chosen people in order to prepare more immediately for the advent of the true High Priest, He established a special priesthood and legislated in great detail how that priesthood was to function, and what sacrifice it was to offer. The book of

¹Martin Buber, Moses, p. 104.

²Moriarty, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

Leviticus and a large part of Numbers is given over to that legislation. The Jews were to be His chosen people, because they were to worship Him more worthily.¹ "To me, therefore you shall be sacred; for I the LORD, am sacred, I, who have set you apart from the other nations to be my own" (Lev. 20: 26).

Recent studies of covenant forms in Israel, and in other ancient countries from the same broad area, have cast considerable light on the character of the Sinai Covenant and the relations it presupposed and established between the two covenanting members. The closest parallel discovered up to the present is provided by the suzerainty treaties concluded between the Hittite kings and his vassals.² G.E.Mendenhall reveals that each clan became a vassal of Yahweh by covenant and simultaneously bound to each other in a holy truce. There was no sovereign clan, and at the same time, the terms left each clan free to regulate its internal affairs so long as the religious covenant obligations were protected.³ In a good number of specific points the Israelite Covenant form follows the pattern of the Hittite suzerainty

¹G.Diekmann, "The High Priesthood of the Bishop," National Liturgical Week, p. 33.

²Moriarty, op. cit., p. 34.

³G.E.Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," Biblical Archaeologist, Vol., XVII, (1954), p. 64.

treaty. Comparative studies have provided examples of various covenant forms which existed before the Mosaic Covenant and the Decalogue in these obedience was enjoined by Yahweh on the tribes and then solemnized by oath. Of greater importance still, the likeness of the Sinai Covenant to a suzerainty treaty sets in its proper light the relation between the two covenant partners.¹ When God entered into covenant with the descendants of Abraham, it was visualized on the model of the covenant between a nation and its suzerain lord. Examples of such treaties are strikingly similar in form to that of the Sinai Covenant. Mentioned in such treaties are: titles of the overlord; obligations of subjects to him; claim of obedience; and other obligations. Blessings and curses were appended to the treaty which was placed in a shrine for the safe-keeping of the god.² N.W. Porteous says that the Sinai-Horeb Covenant should be looked upon as the limiting case of covenants between unequals in which the absolute transcendence of a partner makes it possible for him to lay down conditions absolutely and of indefeasible right and to demand obedience which will express itself as

¹Moriarty, op. cit., p. 35.

²Leonard Johnston, "Scripture Terms: Testament," Life of the Spirit, p. 20.

conformity to a certain pattern of conduct.¹ The Covenant then, is a fundamental reality in the life of its people.

The Covenant an Intimation of God's Fatherly Love

Since the Covenant forms the basis of Israelite life as a nation, it is necessary to dwell for a moment on that virtue to which each member of the Covenant pledged himself.

Hesed is the word the Hebrew used to describe that mutual manifestation of loyalty expected of those united in berit.

The word customarily used in the Old Testament to convey the notion of the covenant bond is hesed, translated variously as 'mercy', 'loyalty', 'devotion', 'lovingkindness', or simply 'love'. It was in hesed that God had chosen Israel and bound it to himself; hesed, correspondingly, was the duty of every Israelite in return, towards God and towards the other members of the covenant community. The covenant idea, therefore, was modelled after a family rather than a legal relationship. When an Israelite committed hattah, sinned, his offence was not terminated by the letter of the law which he had violated, but by the familial piety which he had ruptured, the hesed of which the Law was a formulated norm and expression.²

On Sinai God revealed to Moses that He was a God of hesed, but also one who would not let sin go unpunished. In biblical statements about God's attributes, we find the descriptive words "good", "righteous," "merciful," "gracious." Only once in (Nah.1:2) is the expression "angry God." Anger is an act or situation not a necessary attribute. We may also

¹N.W.Porteous, "The Theology of the Old Testament," in Peake's Commentary on the Bible, 122a, p. 153.

²B. Vawter, "Missing the Mark," The Way, Vol. 11, (Jan., 1962), pp. 21-22.

characterize the anger of the Lord as suspended love.¹ These attributes of God are well expressed in (Ex. 34:6-7).

In a sense the Covenant theme subsumes all others. It controlled the whole of Israel's history and is consummated in the Church Christ founded. God chose a people, made them His own, dwelt with them, united Himself to them and prepared them for an even more blessed intervention.² Two consequences of this marvellous mystery may be noted:

Israel's religion is historical and her history is religious. God is not a dim, distant, abstract supreme being, not the conclusion of a philosopher's syllogism. He is a Person, He is near, He acts in time, He creates and re-creates man, and His love can be known in an existential situation. Thus history is more than a succession of events, it is the disclosure of His saving design, a mystery of love and mercy. In the course of this history, God's covenants were first experienced and only later stated, hymned, proclaimed.³

God's plan is manifested in the divine election, the people of God, the Covenant between God and man shows His fatherly love.

The first reference to the divine fatherhood appears in the book of Exodus in a section belonging to the "Yahwist" tradition. It contains in embryo all later developments.

¹A.J.Heschel, "The Wrath of God," Jubilee, (July 1963), p. 38.

²H.H.Rowley, The Old Testament and Modern Study, p. 331.

³Kathryn Sullivan, "The God of Israel, God of Love," The Bridge, Vol. 1V, (1962), p. 27.

God had decided to free His people from servitude in Egypt. He sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh.

The very status of Israel was changed, ennobled. By becoming the people of Yahweh (Exod. 19:5-6: Lev. 26:12), His own as distinct from all other peoples of the world, Israel entered into a personal, a warmly intimate relationship with God analogous to that present between father and son. Israel became the "son of God," God says to Moses: "Then you are to say to Pharaoh, 'Thus say the Lord: Israel is my firstborn son; so I say to you, Let my son go ...'" (Exod. 4:22-23). First-born son of God, what a wonderful history that title was to have!¹

The term first-born here means "one well loved," one who is loved more than the others. Israel is thus termed, in so far as it was God's choice among all the peoples of the earth to be the object of divine predelection (cf. Deut. 7:6; 14:2). Since God loves Israel more than all other peoples He protected, watched and delivered it from the hand of its oppressors. Israel did not become the "first-born" on the day of the Exodus, yet it is at the Exodus that God's fatherhood was first shown to Israel.²

The fatherhood of God found its most complete expression in the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:4f), God the father has begotten His people (v.5), He has procreated it (v.6)

¹Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 146-148.

²M.E.Boismard, "God Our Father," in The God of Israel the God of Christians, (J. Giblett ed.) p. 90.

having chosen His people (v.9), He adopted it at the conclusion of the Covenant of Sinai (v.10), He cared for it so that it might grow strong (v.11), He procured for it the finest food (vv. 13-14). Israel responded to God's love with perfect fidelity (vv. 5,7,12). Then its love grew cold and it ungratefully honoured strange gods (vv. 15-18)! Israel was given into the hands of its enemies (vv. 19f.) until a loving God delivered it from its oppressors (vv. 36f.). To the idea of Israel, the son of God, because chosen by God, the Canticle of Moses adds another idea: that Israel was adopted by God at the time of the Sinai Covenant. The legal side to the filiation is that Israel becomes God's heir.¹

Regarding the intimate relationship of Israel with God analogous to that existing between father and son Pedersen notes well:

This relationship between the people and its God finds expression in many ways. Yahweh is the father of Israel, who has begotten or created the people. Israel is his son, the Israelites are his sons, Israel is called his first-born to express its preferential position.²

Sutcliffe commenting on God's fatherly love says:

¹ Ibid, pp. 91-92.

² Pedersen, op. cit., Vol. III-IV, p. 612.

As a consequence of the pact or covenant made with the patriarchs and to be renewed with their descendants Yahweh regarded Israel as his son: 'Israel is my son, my firstborn' (Ex. 4:22). And the depth of God's fatherly affection is proclaimed by Moses: 'In the wilderness thou hast seen how the Lord thy God hath carried thee, as a man is wont to carry his son, all the way that you have come' (Deut. 1:31; cf. 8:5; 14:1; 32:6). And this relationship was conceived to exist not merely with the people as a whole but with its members separately: 'Of the Rock who begot thee thou art unmindful and hast forgotten God who bare thee; the Lord saw it with abhorrence because his own sons and daughters provoked him' (Deut. 32:18f.). Note that women are the children of God equally with men.¹

Mowinckel answers the question why has God chosen this people. Isn't such arbitrariness an injustice? And he replies that the Old Testament itself has only this one answer: that it is out of pure love and grace, and adds that in Christ we know what it means: namely, love toward the whole world. It was an election of one as a means to reach all.²

In spite of the frequent failures of the Israelites, and their and our ancestors, love, God's love for man, is at work from the first page of Genesis to the last page of the Apocalypse. There is no dichotomy between the Old Covenant and the New, Salvation history unfolds between two visions

¹E.F. Sutcliffe, "The Religion of Israel," in A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, 110c.

²S. Mowinckel, The Old Testament as Word of God, pp. 61-62.

of eternity: God's creative love in paradise and God's triumphant love in the heavenly city. Love links the first scene with the last.¹

God chose Israel, and cared for her like a kind father. This He did out of love. And why did He love her? The answer is because He loved her. There is no other answer, no other reason, for love is its own answer. Another example of His love is shown in the promulgation of the Covenant.

The Covenant Promulgated

Singular proofs of God's favour had preceded the theophanies of Sinai hence the significance of the name "Yahweh" is in order here. In the accounts of Exodus, chapters 3 and 6, the charismatic career of Moses as leader and lawgiver of Israel begins with a revelation of the person of God by a disclosure of His name. The name was equated with the person. To manifest one's name was to reveal the secrets of one's nature, and thus give another power over oneself.² This name Yahweh, however, was not altogether new, for the God who bore it had been worshipped from earlier times as

¹Sullivan, op. cit., p. 25.

²Pedersen, op. cit., Vol. 1-11, pp. 252-253.

note⁴ (Gen. 4:26) explains. Professor Jacob interprets this name as signifying "life in its continuance and actuality. Yahweh is indeed he who is." ¹ The revelation to Moses was nevertheless, not without importance, for he learned that the name was charged with a wealth of meaning that he had not suspected. ² Moriarty explains that the word is derived from the Hebrew stem hwy, "to become, come into existence," and is translated as "He who causes to be." ³ McKenzie says that "He brings into being" is as likely as any other and agrees with F.Moriarty. ⁴ McKenzie adds: "Only since medieval times has it been established that Yahweh, and not "Jehovah" which the King James Bible adopted, is the correct pronunciation." ⁵

The Covenant relationship began with a vivid experience of Yahweh's personal presence. This element was of very great importance in the event at Sinai.

He appeared to Moses at the burning bush and He also personally manifested Himself to the Hebrews at the holy mountain. In this theophany, there was visible and audible evidence of His real presence. And this presence was perceived

¹E.Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament, p. 51.

²Ibid., pp. 49-50.

³Moriarty, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴McKenzie, op. cit., p. 129.

⁵Ibid., p. 129.

by all the people.¹ John J. Dougherty relates:

The Lord led Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, but even greater things awaited them at Mount Sinai. There the covenant was wrought between Yahweh and Israel. When the people were still in Egypt, Yahweh had promised, "I will take you as my own people, and you shall have me as your God" (Ex. 6:7). At Sinai the promise was fulfilled. The power and majesty of Yahweh were manifested in the desert wilderness where the red peaks of Sinai reared. "Mount Sinai was all wrapped in smoke, for the Lord came down upon it in fire. The smoke rose from it as from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. The trumpet blast grew louder and louder, while Moses was speaking and God answering him in thunder" (19:18 f.). There Israel received the Ten Commandments and the Law.²

"It is in a special and quite inconceivable manifestation that Yahweh makes himself known to Moses on the Mount of God. He comes down on to Sinai in order to conclude the covenant with his people." ³ Eichrodt also notes that it is unnecessary to demonstrate that religious enthusiasm alone was not enough to overcome the centrifugal tendencies of the individual tribes for long; the strong unifying bond of a common system of law was absolutely necessary.⁴ Yahweh gave the "sons of God" a living law which grew and adapted itself to changing situations with time, but which remained the

¹ M.L. Newman, Jr., The People of the Covenant, A Study of Israel from Moses to the Monarchy, p. 32.

² John J. Dougherty, Searching the Scriptures, pp. 60-61.

³ W. Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. 1, p. 103.

⁴ Ibid., p. 70.

expression of the divine will, to which the people were required to obey. The essential core of this law was the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:17). These Commandments were adapted to a primitive spiritual mentality as yet morally untrained. Yahweh's first-born, morally speaking, was a child and was treated as such. Consequently, the Commandments were based on the most primitive and obvious virtues: justice toward God and toward one's neighbour. To this law of justice the people were bound to comply.¹

The Covenant and the law were not viewed primarily as a legal burden to be borne. They were a divine act of grace and God's gift of life. The Lord's "Thou shalt" imposed in the Covenant an unconditional obedience on the group and individually. Yet the "Thou shalt" was God's gift that man might live. So Israel could rejoice in the law, for behind it lay the redemptive God who had set His love on a defenceless people for whom all justice had been denied.²

Psalm 118 is proof of this. In this psalm, the word Law or its synonyms, recurs nearly two hundred times. Psalm 118 is devoted entirely to praise of the Law.³ The Christian

¹Flanagan, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

²G.E.Wright, The Old Testament Against its Environment, pp. 58-59.

³Aigrain and Englebert, op. cit., p. 223.

living the life of the Spirit and experiencing the freedom of adopted sons of God will more easily perceive the dignity of the Law given to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Since the law of the Spirit is engraved on his heart, he will recognize in three thousand years of strong determination the fruit of a law and a love inscribed in their hearts:

Had not your law been my delight,
I should have perished in my affliction.
Never will I forget your precepts,
for through them you gave me life.
(Ps.118:92-93)¹

Albert Gélín comments on Israel's moral code:

We can deduce from these commandments the character and orientation of the morality they inaugurate. It is a morality based on gratitude, gratitude to Yahweh whose blessings and demands become apparent at the birth of Israel as a people. His very demands appear as a favour, for the law is a grace and, in a rabbi's words, "its commandments are the reason for Israel's existence."²

God explains how men are to love Him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" (Matt. 22:37). "God was to be served and feared--not with dread, but with reverence and love."³ Likewise the profound reason the Israelites had for

¹Joseph P. Brennan, "Love of God in the Talmud," The Bridge, Vol. IV, (1962), p. 148.

²Albert Gélín, The Religion of Israel, p. 30.

³C. Lattey, The Religion of the Scriptures, p. 39.

obeying was not fear, Pope Pius XII recalls:

For the people of Israel, the weightiest reason for obeying God was not the fear of divine vengeance, which the thunder and lightning from the Peak of Mount Sinai struck into their souls, but rather love for God.¹

This Law of love was not always in force. An example given by a modern lecturer shows that the Quamranites indulged in exclusiveness and intolerant hatred for all others and that the interpretations of the Law constituted a secret gnosis to be guarded closely and revealed only to members of that sect.²

If one had asked an Israelite why God had created the world, the answer would have been that He created it for the Covenant, that is to say because of His plan of love and salvation for humanity by means of Israel; in creating the world God already had the Covenant in view, and it is this motive which gave to the idea of creation its specific orientation.³

God asks love from His people: "Hear O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words

¹Pope Pius XII, Haurietis aquas, May 1956, p. 7. (A.P.)

²M. Black, "Notes and Comments," The Irish Theological Quarterly, Vol. XXV, (Jan., 1958), n. 2. p. 71.

³Jacob, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest. Bind them at your wrist as a sign and let them be as a pendant on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:4-9). The Decalogue, in spite of the supposed evolution of the human mind, still remains the basis of morality, and challenges any substitute.

Barnabas Ahern sums up the Covenant promulgation, Sinai was the scene of espousals that bound Israel to Yahweh forever. The thunder and lightning of the theophany were frightening; the Covenant ritual was detailed and impressive; but the heart of it all was a love story.²

This love constitutes Israel as a people, the pure gratuitousness of His mercy raises an outcast race to the dignity of sharing the royalty of Yahweh Himself. The nation which is constituted by the Sinai alliance is not exchanging one servitude for another; it is subject to Yahweh and His laws, but this is the subjection of a wife to her husband, a service informed by love. Synan writes: "As husband is to wife, so is Yahweh to His people. The Hebrew prophets did

¹Lattey, op. cit., p. 39.

²Barnabas M. Ahern, "The Exodus Then and Now," The Bridge, Vol. 1, (1955) p. 59.

not find this equation too hardy, too daring. The love of a husband is protective and exclusive: Yahweh is a jealous God (see Exod. 20:5; Deut. 4:24)."¹

The Covenant Accepted and Ratified

For three days the people prepared themselves by religious observance for the solemn acknowledgment of the Covenant. On the summit of Mount Sinai, Moses received God's conditions of alliance expressed in the Decalogue (Ex. 20:1-17) and in the civil laws which Moses inscribed in the Book of the Covenant (Ex. cc. 21-23).

On his return, Moses announced to the people all the divine precepts which he had heard on the mountain. On the following morning the whole nation dedicated itself to Yahweh with the most solemn rites that desert conditions would allow. The people accept the Covenant and to seal this agreement between God and man, blood was shed. The Bible says:

When Moses came to the people ... they all answered ... "We will do everything that the Lord has told us." Moses ... erected ... twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.... Moses took half of the blood and put it in large bowls; the other half he splashed on the altar.... Then he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words of his" (Ex. 24:3-8).

¹Edward A. Synan, "The Covenant of Husband and Wife," The Bridge, Vol. 1V, (1962), p. 150.

Dr. Heinisch says that when Moses had received the Book of the Covenant on a cloud-covered mountain, the people declared their willingness to keep its precepts and the Covenant was ratified under an ancient rite. The mediator between Yahweh and the people sprinkled the blood of animals upon the altar. Consequently God and the people were united most intimately and became mutually indebted to each other. The Covenant between Yahweh and Israel was sealed with the blood of animals.¹ Dr. Eichrodt discussing ancient ceremonies brings out the point of communion relationship. We quote:

In all these instances the entry of the deity into the sacral fellowship was symbolized by the sprinkling of the blood of the victim and the burning of the fat portions on the altar. Even older seems to be the practice, mentioned on only one occasion, that of the covenant sacrifice on Sinai, of sprinkling not only the altar but also the offerers with the blood, and by means of this 'blood of the covenant' bringing the sacramental relationship into being.²

"With the blood was associated the life (or soul)."³ Bernard Cooke agrees when he says that in Hebrew thought the relationship between the blood and life are almost identical. The blood carries that force that makes an animal live.⁴ Yahweh

¹Paul Heinisch, History of the Old Testament, p. 93.

²Eichrodt, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

³Lattey, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴B. Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," Theological Studies, Vol. XXI, (March, 1960), p. 27.

and the people became one sole "life" by being sprinkled with the same "life".¹ This sprinkling of blood was similar to present-day exchange of signatures which legalize a document.² The blood of the future sacrifices of Israel was a memorial to this covenant spilling.³ E.F. Siegman notes:

In evaluating the force of the Biblical statements about blood, we must also be aware of the differences between our psychology and that of the Bible. The Hebrew did not know of the body-soul dichotomy. Translations of the Bible often use the term "soul" to translate the Hebrew term nepshesh which really is more comprehensive and complex than "soul." "According to the specifically Semitic tendency to a synthetic rather than analytic conception, a man's nepshesh is a totality with a definite stamp." Hence the same term is used in contexts where we must translate differently in each case, e.g., by "will" or "appetite" or "life" or simply by the corresponding pronoun. With this background we can more accurately estimate the axiom, "... the nepshesh of every living body is its blood ..." (Lev., 17:14). Because God is absolute Master of life, shed blood must always be offered to Him: "Since the life nepshesh of a living body is in its blood, I have made you put it on the altar [*i.e.*, offer it to God], so that atonement may thereby be made for your own lives, because it is the blood, as the seat of life nepshesh, that makes atonement" (*ibid.*, 17:11).⁴

"At the Last Supper when our Lord sealed the new covenant with the symbolic sacrifice of Himself, He spoke of the

¹ Imschoot, *op. cit.*, p. 791.

² Flanagan, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

³ Ibid., p. 149.

⁴ E.F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," The American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. CXXXVI, (March, 1957), p. 170.

"blood which shall be poured out for the remission of many" (Matt. 26:28).¹ Ahern observes that Yahweh and Israel were bound in a covenant of blood. God would love and protect Israel and fulfill the rich promises He had pledged; Israel would ever live, act and faithfully fulfill the just and holy house rules of a perfect God. Just as God's word had delivered His people from Pharaoh, so on Sinai His word delivered their souls from the darkness of unbelief and evil practice. Israel is a people created by God's word; moreover, its very continuance depended on divine promises and demands.²

The Covenant between God and Israel presents us, here, with a group of themes which are of basic importance in the unfolding of sacred history. This we saw in the meaning and shaping of the Covenant, and motivated by His fatherly love, He discloses the name Yahweh to Israel freed from servitude. Yahweh promulgates His Law of love which is accepted, ratified and sealed by the Covenant which He freely bestows upon His people, making Israel a royal priesthood and a holy nation, dedicated to His service, chosen out of all the nations of the earth. The actual conclusion of the Covenant is marked by the aspersion of blood. These themes are destined to play an important role throughout the history of the chosen people.

¹Dyson and Jones, op. cit., n.2, p. 21.

²B.M.Ahern, "The Exodus Then and Now," The Bridge, Vol. 1, (1955), p. 59.

CHAPTER 11

VICISSITUDES OF THE COVENANT

The Covenant Broken

The Covenant agreed upon was sealed with the blood of animals. By this act God and the people were joined together most intimately and became mutually indebted to each other (Ex. 24:3-11). The chosen people bound themselves to the observance of the Law in their first enthusiasm, but already at Sinai they fell into idolatry and made a golden calf (Ex. 32:4).

But what was this golden calf? Albright gives three possible views: (1) strictly speaking it was an idol; (2) it was a pedestal, like the ones found in Canaan, on which the divine image stood. The Hebrews did not put any image on it, and the Lord remained invisible. (3) It was an accepted symbol of divinity among the people of the Orient; therefore, the Hebrews used it as a symbol of the Lord and adored Yahweh under this form. Very likely the Hebrews followed the second meaning. The danger of falling into idolatry would always be present, even if that of the third one were followed. Therefore the reaction of Moses is understandable.¹

¹William F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity, pp. 298-301.

McKenzie believes that modern studies have shown conclusively that the calf was the pedestal on which the divine image stood. Gods in this posture have been found in the remains of ancient Canaan. "On the golden calf stood-- nothing; even in this reprobated image the Lord remained invisible." ¹

God's election of His people and His many blessings upon them met with unfaithfulness.² Oesterreicher sees the disaster in paradise as having its counterpart in the desert (Ex. 32:1-6). There, Israel suddenly feels alone and unloved by God. She no longer values the Covenant that made her God's people. The absence of Moses tried her faith and found it wanting. The people demanded of Aaron a god to lead them, to worship, sacrifice to, dance around and revel about.³ In the words of Lyonnet, "instead of 'walking with God' [Israel] wanted God to walk with her."⁴ Her rebellion (Dt. 9:7) was lack of trust and fear to give herself wholeheartedly to God.⁵ The rabbis of old saw in the sufferings, bondage, evil, unrest and the burdens and anxieties of later days, a penalty

¹McKenzie, op. cit., p. 127.

²James K. Solari, "The Exodus in the Life of Israel," The Bible Today, (March, 1963), p. 296.

³John M. Oesterreicher, The Israel of God, p. 32.

⁴Stanislas Lyonnet, "Péchê," in Vocabulaire de théologie biblique, no. 777.

⁵Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, Vol. 111, p. 120.

for the idolatry of the desert generation.¹ This was Israel's "original sin," a parallel to the original sin of mankind. Once more God showed fidelity and pity. God's anger dissolved into mercy, instead of punishment, there was promise, in place of doom there was hope (Ex. 32:11-14).²

When Moses came down from the mountain, he smashed the tables upon which the Commandments were written. Moses, anxious to atone for Israel's grave sin, begged God to remember His pledge to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and forgive. Should not God be willing to pardon this desertion, Moses requested to be stricken from the book of the living (Ex. 32:1-14. 30ff; cf. Num. 17:11-15; Wis. 18:21). Moses' urgent, loyal prayer later became the model for St. Paul's prayer (Rom. 9:1ff).³ When Moses went back to the people, he was carrying new Tables of the Law in his arms. His face was shining with light, so that its brightness could not be borne.

The Mosaic vocation was to lead the Chosen People to the Promised Land. His was a unique but awesome privilege, but

¹Oesterreicher, op. cit., p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 34.

even he along with his brother Aaron displayed a momentary lack of trust in God so that even among the leaders of Israel God could not find a faithful covenant-partner. A. Tos explains (Num. 20:7-13):

The context of this event does not give any indication of the precise nature of the sin of Moses and Aaron. The sin does not appear to be the fact that Moses struck the rock twice, as is sometimes affirmed. A careful reading of the text points to a situation where Moses and Aaron upbraided the people. Moses, angry at the people, struck the rock and the water came forth. God had intended the incident as an expression of His divine power and mastery over nature, and of His constant providence over His people. It turned, however, into an occasion for denunciation instead of one of joyful revelation of Yahweh's power. If we see the incident in this light, we are able to understand why God punished Moses and Aaron. They had frustrated the plan of God.¹

Moses' single fall was not a selfish one, nor did he lack a spirit of sacrifice, but by believing God's patience, which had so often forgiven the people, had reached its limits.² God's choice of His people and His many blessings on them are met with infidelity. The disobedient having been punished, God is appeased by the intercession of Moses. He grants forgiveness and resumes His beneficence. Over and over again His people will be constant only in their inconstancy. Israel will be ungrateful and will resist the many

¹ Tos, op. cit., p. 108.

² Heinisch, op. cit., p. 105.

overtures of God's love.¹

In spite of the fact that God and His people were intimately joined together and were mutually indebted to each other, God's plan was frustrated. Even at Sinai, the Covenant was broken. Later, repeatedly, God's chosen people showed themselves unfaithful.

The Covenant Broken Repeatedly

Throughout Biblical history a story of sin parallels God's developing plan for man's happiness.² In spite of the fact that "a covenant relationship is no mere seeking of God on the part of man, but a stable, well-guaranteed sworn possession of God by man"³ the history of God's people is one of repeated unfaithfulness. Israel's danger was from themselves, not Yahweh's fidelity but their own would fail.⁴ However, their infidelity does not make the Covenant void, but it is a rejection of Yahweh by Israel.⁵

¹Solari, op. cit., p. 296.

²R. Kugleman, "The Unfolding of God's Plan," The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, Vol. L, (June 1950), p. 817.

³Anscar Vonier, The New and Eternal Covenant, p. 19.

⁴John L. McKenzie, "The Divine Sonship of Israel and the Covenant," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, (July 1946), p. 325.

⁵Ibid., p. 330.

Repeatedly the Israelites showed themselves an unfaithful and "a stiff-necked people" (Ex. 32:9; 33:3-5; 34:9). Moses recapitulates the infidelities in the desert (Deut. 9:7,12,13,22,24,31,32). In psalms 77 and 80 we find a summary of God's benefits for the Chosen People, notwithstanding their ingratitude. Jeremias alludes to the obstinacy of the people (Jer. 7:24-26). This is the pattern repeated throughout Scripture: "God is constantly urging His people to serve Him, and the people are as constantly being unfaithful, and, by their faithlessness, drawing away from God's gifts."¹ "They may so act that they will not reap the fruits of the covenant, but they can never cause it to be revoked."²

God revealed the future infidelity of His people to Moses: "They will forsake me and break the covenant which I have made with them" (Deut. 31:16) and yet in His love He will spare them: "Yet he, being merciful, forgave their sin and destroyed them not; Often he turned back his anger and let none of his wrath be roused" (psalm 77:38).

In Deuteronomy the Lord explains His seeming lack of concern for His people in their long sojourn in the desert (8:5). In another place, the Mosaic canticle recalls God's goodness and mercy and excoriates the unfaithful Israelites

¹Jean Daniélou, Advent, p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 35.

(Deut. 32:6). But this paternal solicitude on the part of the Lord is rejected by His children (Psalm 77-10) and especially does He lament their abandonment through His prophet, Jeremias (Jer. 7:23-24,26). "Unfaithful and idolatrous Israel was therefore a wicked and adulterous Israel" (Hos. 2:1-13; Ezek. 16:15-59).¹ The outlook of Jeremias on the future destiny of God's kingdom, revealed in his "Confessions" shows the utter corruption of the Hebrew people.²

Because the people of the Lord had abandoned their Lord, their moral fibre was rotten, and the Lord repudiated the Sinai Covenant (Jer.ii,1-iii,5). "No longer shall you have the Ark of the Lord's Covenant for your rallying-cry; from thought and memory it will have passed away" (Jer.iii,16), and in actual fact, when Nebuchadnezzar's armies destroyed the city of Jerusalem and its Temple, the Ark of the Covenant was either burnt or else taken to Babylon by the conquerors. It has never been recovered. It was never in the new Temple built in 516 B.C.³

"Time and again Israel hankered for the fleshpots of Egypt; and only too often, like Gomer, the wife of Osee, it proved unfaithful to its faithful Spouse."⁴ Bouyer notes that Osee described the Covenant sealed by Yahweh with the people

¹Quinn, op. cit., p. 98.

²Sister Laurence, "The New Covenant in Jeremiah and Ezekiel," The Clergy Review, Vol. XLVII, (Oct.,1962), p. 591.

³Ibid., p. 591.

⁴Barnabas M. Ahern, New Horizons, p. 37.

as a wedlock in which the Lord expects from Israel the faithfulness a husband expects from his wife. Against the background of the prophet's own unfortunate marital life with a woman who turned out to be a harlot, the oracles of Osee are a combination of strong denunciations and calls to penance. The Lord loves His people but they turn to other gods; they will be punished but will turn back and seek the Lord (Os.3: 1-5). He condemned the worship of the pagan gods as "adulteries" which would not remain unpunished, but one day Yahwah would forgive Israel and restore the Covenant bond.¹

The eleventh chapter of Osee's book contains a fine expression of Old Testament theology of hesed; the Covenant between Yahweh and His people is pictured as the love of a father for his son. We might add, a rebellious son.

When Israel was a child I loved him, out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the farther they went from me, sacrificing to the Baals and burning incense to idols. Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, who took them in my arms; I drew them with human cords, with bands of love; I fostered them like one who raises an infant to his cheeks; yet, though I stooped to feed my child, they did not know that I was their healer (Os. 11:1-4).

Here, Osee sketches the outlines of a picture which Christ was to complete and transform in the parable known as "The Prodigal Son" but which could be called "The Parable of

¹Louis Bouyer, The Meaning of Scripture, pp. 61-67.

the Forgiving Father" (Lk.15:11-32). Moriarty says that this pattern is one of sin, punishment, repentance and deliverance.¹

Thus far the Covenant is one of failure. But it was not because of God (cf. Deut. 32:4). But the Covenant failed because of the people who disobeyed (cf. 32:5). Yet the Covenant continued to shape the lives of the people as the Covenant renewal shows.

The Covenant Renewed

It is not certain that the Covenant was renewed annually in the Israelite religion. However, the Book of Deuteronomy assumes such a renewal with enunciation of ritual curses (Deut. 27:2-26) and a reading of the Law (Deut. 31:9-13. 24-27; 32:45ff) which is made every seven years (31:10) and its ancient practice can not be verified. But there was an effective renewal at crucial points in the history of the Israelites.² With great solemnity Josue renewed the Covenant at Sichem (Jos 24). Aigrain and Englebert observe that the choice of place was significant. The ceremony took place on the very spot where Yahweh had promised to give this country to the posterity of Abraham and where the patriarch had made an altar to his benefactor (Gen. 12:7). In this instance too

¹F.L. Moriarty, Foreward to the Old Testament Books, p. 30.

²J.Giblet and P.Grelot, "Alliance," in Vocabulaire de théologie biblique, p. 23.

Josue was obeying Moses who, in the speech to him in Deuteronomy (11:29-30), had asked that a blessing come down on and remain in this place.¹ Anderson relates that in the presence of the Israelite tribes and their leaders, Joshua referred to Israel's "sacred history," the patriarchal period, and dwelt especially on the Exodus events and the conquests in Trans Jordan and the Canaanite country. Joshua then challenged the people to be sincere and faithful to Yahweh or to serve the tribal gods of their fathers. Recalling that Yahweh is a jealous God, a holy God who forbade "strange gods," the people agreed to serve God, their deliverer from Egypt and their guide into Canaan. So Joshua demanded the abolition of their false gods, and the ceremony concluded with the making of a covenant, the giving of law, and the erection of a memorial stone.² Pedersen observes that the setting up of stones was intended to signify a united Israel and that there were solemn blessings and curses at Sichem (Deut. 27; Josh. 8:30-35). In this he sees hints that a renewal of the Covenant was held before the immigration of the people.³

¹Aigrain and Englebert, op. cit., p. 60.

²Anderson, op. cit., pp. 85-86.

³Pedersen, op. cit., Vol. III-IV, p. 85.

Gelin maintains that regular renewals took place yearly and notes the psalms which were used on these occasions (Ps. 49,80 and 94). In the ritual the original fact of the Covenant is repeated; Israel gathers to hear Yahweh's voice: "Muster in my presence my faithful servants, who honour my covenant still with sacrifice" (Ps. 49:5).

This liturgy is not merely commemorative; priests continually remind the people of the present (Ps. 94:8) and repeat in Yahweh's name the injunctions repeated since Sinai (Ps. 49.7; 16-21).¹

Bouyer remarks that the Covenant inaugurated on Sinai was renewed in the famous scene of the Second Book of Kings, Chapter 23, when Josias dedicated the people once more to Yahweh.

The essential elements here are the same as those in the assembly on Mount Sinai. The people were called together and heard a solemn reading of God's word as on Sinai where they had heard the Ten Commandments. Then the people agreed to the Word newly expressed. Following this came the Covenant renewal of alliance and the agreement was expressed and embodied in a solemn celebration of the Paschal celebration.²

¹Albert Gélín, The Religion of Israel, p. 32.

²Louis Bouyer, Liturgical Piety, p. 25.

The same author speaks of a renewal described in Nehemias (2 Esdras 8:17 and 13:1) following the exile and the destruction of the holy city. Providentially the released captives were permitted to go back to their former home. Amid the ruins and devastation, the only thing still standing was God's word. Esdras again called the Qahal together, and had this newly made Bible read to the people. A striking new element appears. Following the solemn reading of the Word, no sacrificial celebration was held. Such celebrations had concluded the two previous meetings. Instead, representatives of the people made a vow to carry out the sacrifices when the city and the Sanctuary would be rebuilt. Esdras offered a prayer of thanksgiving for the past and supplication for the future.

Here we see the beginning of the new type of worship which is still today the worship of the synagogue. Historians admit that this worship of Scripture reading and prayers with no sacrifice was not precisely a product of the Exile. It first gained importance when it became impossible to offer sacrifice after the destruction of the temple. Later, the rebuilt temple did not realize Ezechiel's hopes and was not even the equal of the older one. The primitive covenant began to be understood to be only a preliminary dispensation. The true worship and eternal sacrifice and everlasting Covenant were still to come. In the meantime when God's great deeds of the past were commemorated, they were to be recalled as the

pledge and foreshadowing of far greater deeds to be accomplished in the future by God.¹

Another renewal is found in (Hos.3). Anderson relates that Hosea continued to love his unfaithful wife, hence the analogy between Yahweh and Israel. Yahweh too steadfastly loved His idolatrous people (3:1). Hosea ransomed and restored Gomer to himself, although he disciplined her "for many days." Israel too had to be disciplined and quarantined (3:4). After "many days" of purification Israel would "repent" and seek Yahweh.

Discipline through suffering is developed at length in Chapter 2. There Hosea tells of the exposure of Israel's harlotry and her frustrating attempts to pursue her "lovers." But Yahweh continues to reconcile His faithless people to Himself: "So I will allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak to her heart. From there I will give her the vineyards she had, and the valley of Achor as a door of hope. She shall respond there as in the days of her youth, when she came up from the land of Egypt (Hos. 2:14-15). As Israel's life had been given her in the wilderness, so in the wilderness her life will be renewed."² McKenzie says that to

¹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

²Anderson, op. cit., p. 249.

find God, man must go into the desert where issues were reduced to decisions on which life and death depended.¹ "The first and classic encounter of God and man in the desert occurs in the vision of Moses" (Ex.3).² Hosea saw the precarious wilderness, Anderson notes, as a place where man depends on God's mercies and a place of a new beginning. Yahweh would lure Israel into the wilderness and there He would "speak tenderly."³ He sums up:

The wilderness was to be the scene of the renewal of the covenant, and there the long history of the broken covenant would be ended. In the wilderness, Israel would answer Yahweh's overture of love, as she had responded in trust and gratitude at the time of the Exodus. And Yahweh would restore Israel to the relationship of a wife, betrothing her to himself in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love (chesed) and in mercy. For Israel's persistent infidelity would be conquered by a love stronger and deeper than hers, and she would know Yahweh in the relationship of a new covenant (2:19-20).⁴

The Covenant had to be renewed from time to time in order that the people would not forget their special relationship. We find one such instance in Joshua 24, where he calls the people to "decide today whom you will serve" verse 15, and the people in turn promise to serve Yahweh. But he

¹John L. McKenzie, "Into the Desert," The Way, Vol. 1, (Jan., 1961), p. 30.

²Ibid., p. 31.

³Anderson, op. cit., p. 250.

⁴Ibid., 250-251.

first warns them of the seriousness of making a covenant, and the responsibilities which it entails especially faithfulness, and worship of Yahweh. When the people have heard this warning, they promise to obey in spite of the difficulties. Yet renewal attempts failed lamentably. Having failed in its religious mission, the nation collapsed as a theocracy in 587 B. C. (cf. Ez. 17-19). The Israelites were crushed by Babylon, and at this time, God raised up prophets to care for His people in this extremity.¹

The Covenant the Joy and Delight of Israel

The Jews owed everything that they became to the Law which gave them that cohesion, strength and indestructibility needed to do God's will. It governed all their life, and they even said that God made it before making the world.

Their love of the Law and devotion to it are seen in their writings and prayers. Nothing on earth is superior to the Law (Ps. 18:2-11).² Ellis interprets verse 8 by saying that the Law is perfect, steadfast, clear, giving wisdom, joy and truth. The psalmist sees the Law as something precious and a source of peace and joy. For him it is the truth that would make him free.³ The Law is pure, clean, brightens

¹Sister Laurence, op. cit., pp. 590-591.

²Aigrain and Englebert, op. cit., p. 222.

³Peter Ellis, The Men and the Message of the Old Testament, p. 539.

the eyes and quickens the soul.¹ In the Torah the faithful observer comes closest to God: "The Lord's perfect law, how it brings the soul back to life; the Lord's unchangable decrees, how they make the simple learned!" (Ps. 18:8-9).²

Kissane lists the attributes of the Law, and says that it is perfect, trustworthy, upright, pure, clean and true. Its benefits to men are: life, wisdom, joy, happiness, confidence and truth. The psalmist loves the Law more than silver and considers the Law better than choice honey.³

The Law was not a burden, but was the cause of great rejoicing. Wright notes that the Covenant was not imposed by Yahweh, but it was offered out of grace. There were advantages and blessings connected with it, such as: security from enemies, law, order and peace. By accepting the Covenant, Israel put herself under the obligation to obey the Law given by Yahweh. As a result, the Law was in the center of their thoughts. Both were founded on grace and were not primarily a burden. They were God's gift of life. 'Thou shalt' meant to obey the Law, individually and corporately, but it was God's gift that men might live.⁴ Anderson agrees that the

¹Patrick Boylan, The Psalms, Vol. 1, p. 66.

²Albert Gélén, The Religion of Israel, p. 63.

³Edward Kissane, The Book of Psalms, Vol. 1, p. 83.

⁴Wright, op. cit., p. 58.

Law, Yahweh's gift, should not be regarded as burdensome and that later on it was hedged about by caustic rules, as for example, what constituted work on the Sabbath. Then the ordinary people found difficulty observing it. In the Old Testament period and the later rabbinic period, the attitude of the Jews toward the Law was that of great rejoicing. To obey the Law was to surrender to the sovereignty of God. According to the Psalms, the yoke was easy and the burden light. The devout Jew delighted in the study of the Law, the source of life and blessings (Ps. 1). Its precepts, rejoicing the heart, were "more to be desired ... than gold" (Ps. 18:9-11).¹

Dr. Heinisch remarks: "At the time of Jesus Sirach the Law was not regarded as a heavy burden (Sir. 23:27). God indeed wished that His children should serve Him with a joyous heart" (Sir. 1:12).² And the Law was never meant to be a mere obligation but a revelation of the character of God Himself telling men what God was like and offering them this ideal (Lev. 19-2). Consequently it had to be received by faith. In that faith, Moses and God's people entered the desert and the promised land. This faith united them with God and the Law. The Commandments were a definition of the very

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 459.

²Heinisch, op. cit., p. 428.

character of God with whom they were united in covenant. In place of forbidden idols they had the Law. The Law did not schackle their liberty but was a charter of freedom, the freedom of the sons of God.¹ Lyonnet intimates that the Law is to the Jews what Christ is to Christians:

The Law was the word of God, the water that slakes all thirst, the life-giving bread, the vine laden with delectable fruit; in it were hidden the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. In short, the Law held the place St. John and St. Paul were rightly to announce as that of the Christ.²

Lefèvre remarks that man wrecked his happiness by disobedience. When he tried to be independent, he lost his power over creation and his liberty and became a slave of the creatures who should have served him.

God draws good out of evil. Man's slavery taught him submission which is the role of the Law. We quote:

The Law is a gift of the love of God who offers Israel His Covenant without, however, forcing its liberty (read Jos. 24). The Covenant gives hope of a return to the joys of the lost paradise, to friendship with God and enjoyment of its domain. But God does not impose His gifts, He offers them.... The Law is not a price that God sets on His gifts, it is man's opportunity to receive those gifts and remain free.³

Israel's memories of Egyptian servitude were meant to

¹Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²Stanislas Lyonnet, "St. Paul: Liberty and Love," *The Bridge*, Vol. 1V, (1962), p. 231.

³A. Lefèvre, "To Serve God," in *The God of Israel The God of Christians*, (J.Giblet ed.), p. 139.

make the yoke of the Lord sweet and the Law light.¹ Furthermore, the observance of His statutes had for their purpose, joy, prosperity and happiness. (Deut. 6: 20-24).²

Psalm 118--the one which Pascal found renewed joy in reciting--is a hymn in praise of the Law: the word or its synonyms recurs nearly two hundred times.³ Kissane says that the Law means the Mosaic precepts and all that God revealed to Israel as a guide of man's conduct including His promise, commandments, the justice of God and retribution. The Law is the equivalent of Israel's religion, and the psalm summarizes the beliefs of the pious Israelites. The statements 'the Law is my delight' and 'teach me Thy Law' are found more than twenty times. Sometimes the same thought is developed in various verses (e.g., 1-3; 41-42; 43-45; 51-52).⁴ Except for vv. 122, 132 (but see notes on vv. 149, 156), each verse is about the revelation of God's will as the norm and guide of correct living.⁵ Robert points out some advantages of the Law:

¹Ibid., p. 139.

²Ibid., p. 139.

³Aigrain and Englebert, op. cit., p. 223.

⁴E. Kissane, The Book of the Psalms, Vol. 11, p. 224.

⁵James McSwiney, Translation of the Psalms with Commentary, p. 523.

It is preferable to riches (72, 162). It gives life (50,93). It is the way on which there is no stumbling block (32, 165; cf. Prov. 1V, 12); it is a light to my path (105; cf. Prov. VI, 23; Is. LI, 4). It assures happiness (1, 2; cf. Prov. XVI, 20; XXI, 18; 111, 13; Ps. CVI, 3; CXXVII, 1). The psalmist declares eleven times that he loves the Law (47, 48, 87, 113 etc.).¹

Love is, above all, the characteristic of the theology of Deuteronomy and is directly concerned with the observance of the Torah: (Deut. V,10; VI, 5, 6; VII, 9; X, 12; XI, 13, 22; XIII, 4; XIX, 9; Jos. XXI, 5; XXIII, 11; Cf. Neh. 1, 5; Dan. IX, 4. To obey the Law, is to enter into His thought, to keep His promises and to be united with Him in love. Psalm 118 gives first place to the observance of the Law.² "Happy is he who keeps the Law" says the Book of Proverbs (29:18).

The giving of the Commandments, then, was a Salvation Event in the history of Israel that brought her life, and they were not regarded as regulations, as restrictions, as control, but were conceived of as a gift from Yahweh to His people. In Ezechiel there is a connection between the Commandments and life (Ez. 18: 5-9).

In the Old Testament, "the Law" is called the Ten Words--a title recalling the Old Testament tradition that the Word of God gives life.

¹A. Robert, "Le psaume et les sapientiaux," Revue biblique, Vol. XLVII, (1939), p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 19.

For this reason, the Commandments are never regarded as an imposition or a burden. The inspired author of the Psalms praises God for the Commandments, and thanks God for them (Ps. 118:13-16).

The guiding principle of all law is love. It speaks to men of the commandment which does not restrict but fulfills and gives life, for it comes from God. It is arrived at through the history of man, through reflection, through liturgical cult and through faith in God. Through the Covenant, man receives from God the Law or Word that gives life--not a chain upon his freedom. With the Law of Love comes the ability to fulfill personality and to enter into relationship with other persons and the world--relationships that would be forever closed to man if God in His mercy had not bestowed that Law. "All who cling to her [the Law] will live, but those will die who forsake her" (Bar. 4:1).

The Covenant and the Faithful Remnant

When the Hebrews had conquered the land of Canaan, God gave them a king and a kingdom. The time of prosperity that followed led to the neglect of God. Rivalries and dissensions occurred. Finally two kingdoms were formed, Israel on the north and Juda on the south.¹

¹Tos, op. cit., p. 21.

Then the prophets appear on the scene and unanimously proclaim that a 'remainder' of the chosen will be left, (Is. 7:3; 10:20-22; 11:11-16; 28:5; Amos 5:15; Mic. 4:7; 5:6; Zech. 14:2). This remainder is to be the foundation of the new community, the people of God of the 'last age', (Is. 65:17-25).

The task of the prophets was to remind the people of the obligations of the Covenant and to deepen their understanding of what the Covenant meant.¹ Humanly speaking there was no need for prophets, since the temple was in ruins and the nation no longer existed. All but the lowest classes had been banished.² As a result the nation's misfortunes, the idea of the Covenant became spiritualized and the 'remnant' announced by the prophets was to become the nucleus of the Church of God.³

The spirit of the chosen remnant is best expressed by the prophet Sophonia (Soph. 3:12f; 16f).⁴ Commenting on (Soph. 2:3; 3:11-13) Gélin explains that poverty becomes a willing openness to God and the poor man is Yahweh's client.⁵

¹Frank B. Norris, God's Own People, p. 39.

²Ibid., p. 42.

³Jean Levie, The Bible Word of God in Words of Men, p. 255.

⁴Barnabas M. Ahern, New Horizons, p. 55.

⁵Albert Gélin, The Religion of Israel, p. 58.

The exiled, as a group, took advantage of the opportunity for a spiritual awakening. The new Israel began to take shape (Is. 49:13).¹ StuhlmueLLer notes that Sophonia was the first to declare that the humble and the poor would be saved (3:12). Isaias, he says, dispels the discouragement of the Babylonian exile by his words that God will lead the poor and outcast to the promised land (Is. 40:29-31; 41:14,17; 42:16-23; 54:11). That the Messiah is the savior of the poor and lowly was the hope of New Testament saints (Lk. 1:48ff).² Oesterreicher refers to a group of psalms in which the anawin pour out their heart:

Harassed by the wicked (Ps 9B [10] 2), by proud braggarts, they were "a people humble and lowly ... the remnant of Israel." (So 3,12) Though they were mocked, shamed, and maltreated, their misfortune neither weakened their faith nor lessened their love. God was their Stronghold. (Ps 9A [9] 10) As the meat of sacrificial meals brought joy to the company of worshippers, so did God himself: He was their food, their portion, their cup. (Ps 15 [16] 5) They trusted him as a servant does his master (Ps 85 [86] 2), an orphan his guardian. (Ps 9B [10] 14) On him, they staked all they were and had. The Lord in turn took their misery into his hands (Ps 9B [10] 14), adorning them with victory. (Ps 149, 4)³

In God's providence, the trial of the exile resulted in a permanently reformed people. The purifying fire of the

¹Ibid., p. 58.

²C. StuhlmueLLer, "The Living Word of God: The Old Testament," Worship. Vol. XXXIII, (June-July 1959), p. 427.

³Oesterreicher, op. cit., p. 60.

exile burned out the dross of idolatry and infidelity to God. Levie sees the generosity of the 'poor' of Israel as part of the preparation for the Israel of God, and he describes Israel as the shadow in the past of the Church.²

The Lord's poor, the anawim, prepared for the fulfillment of the promises; they firmly believed in God and trusted in His word. They accepted Him when He came: His mother praised God for the promise which He made "toward our fathers, toward Abraham and his descendants forever ... " (Lk. 1:54); Zachary saw that God was accomplishing the "oath that he swore to Abraham our father" (Lk. 1:73); Simeon thanked God because he saw the "light of revelation for the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel" (Lk. 2:32); Anna "spoke of Him to all awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk. 2:38).

Nevertheless, the prophets had seen with growing exactness the limits of the Covenant: while they praised the love of God that met men's infidelities with an ever greater fidelity, they dreamed of a future day when men would be in a position to correspond unreservedly with the Lord's gifts. They began to look on the Covenant of Sinai as a preliminary phase or a promise that was only beginning to be fulfilled. At this decisive moment Jeremias announced the New Covenant.

¹Norris, op. cit., p. 43.

²Levie, op. cit., p. 253.

In this chapter we have seen that shortly after promising obedience to the law, the people and even their leaders proved unfaithful to God. Repeated Covenant failures of a faithless and rebellious people followed. But God remained merciful. On different occasions the Covenant was renewed, and the Israelites pledged their loyalty. God's people expressed their joy and appreciation of the law in their writings and prayers. In the Commandments, they experienced not a burden but new life. But the prophets predict that only a remnant, the poor and lowly, will remain faithful. It was these faithful few who prepared for the fulfilment of God's promises. Now the prophets clearly saw the limitations of the Covenant, and they looked forward to the day when the promise of Yahweh would become a reality in a New Covenant.

CHAPTER 111

A NEW COVENANT PROMISED

After the repeated failures of the Covenant, its renewal, the expressions of joy and delight, then its observance by a faithful few, God was ready to start anew. The Covenant He held out would be based on forgiveness and His acknowledgment by the people. Thenceforth, its members would do God's will in grateful awareness that they owed everything to His mercy.

The New Covenant promised by Jeremiah would come after a catastrophe had destroyed all but a 'remnant'. The judgment of God on Israel was their purification, giving them a 'new Heart' in which the 'New Covenant' is engraved by the Spirit of God, (Jer. 31, 33; 32, 29; Ezek. 18, 31; 36, 25ff; 37, 26). They are to become a 'holy people', (Isaia 62, 12) through whom all peoples are to share in the blessing already promised to Abraham (Isaia 2, 2; Jer. 4, 2). Bouyer observes that Jeremiah so clearly sees this metamorphosis of the heart, that he is the first to call it what it will be: a New Covenant.¹

Jeremiah stands almost half-way between God's Covenant at Sinai over six hundred years earlier and the Covenant

¹L. Bouyer, The Meaning of Sacred Scripture, p. 89.

He made with the Church on Calvary six hundred years later. The First Covenant was made in the period of the forty years' wandering in the desert; the second was proclaimed at the time of the fifty years of Exile.¹

It has been pointed out that Chapters 29 and 37 of Jeremiah deal with the joy of the New Covenant God will make with the faithful remnant, and that the climax comes in (c. 31) with the promise of deliverance of the Israelites (v.3). The children of Ephraim will adore on Mount Zion (vv. 2-7). God leads His firstborn back from the regions of the north (vv. 8-11) and changes mourning into joy (vv. 12-14). Rachel risen from her tomb weeps over her sons. God tells her that the captives are to return (vv. 15-17). Ephraim repents and God promises pardon (vv. 18-20). God will refresh thirsty souls (vv. 20-5). God will plant again the people He uprooted from the soil. The collective retribution of the past will be replaced by individual retribution (vv. 27-30).² There will be an intimacy in communion with Yahweh on the part of Israel. There will be "a personal encounter: a heart-to-heart meeting with God."³ Coppens commenting on (Jer. 31:31-34) sees these verses as the expression of the "zenith of his religious

¹Sister Lawrence, op. cit., p. 591.

²Ibid., pp. 591-592.

³L. Bouyer, The Meaning of Sacred Scripture, p. 83.

doctrine," "and one of the highlights of Old Testament Theology." ¹ They have also been referred to as "the Gospel before the Gospel." ² Jeremiah, looking forward to the completion of God's work in history, spelled out his vision in detail in an Exodus-Covenant frame of reference:

The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Juda. It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the Lord. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after these days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:31-34).

"Here is foretold the coming of that personal, spiritual religion, the religion of the new Covenant, of which Jesus was to speak at the Last Supper." ³

Ezekiel also preached conversion to the Israelites (Ez. 14:6). This conversion required "a new heart and a new mind" (Ez. 18:31-32). These are gratuitous gifts (Ez. 11:19; 36:26). ⁴ God will be personally active in the spiritual order. Ezekiel, affirms that God will move in the hearts of His faithful imparting His holiness to them (36: 25-27). Yahweh

¹J. Coppens, "La nouvelle alliance en Jer 31,31-34," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, Vol. XXV, (Jan., 1963), p. 13.

²Tos, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

³Aigrain and Englebert, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁴J. Pierron, "Conversion: The Return to God," in *The God of Israel the God of Christians*, (J. Giblett ed.) p. 172.

wishes to wash His people of all their sins so that they can honour His holy name.¹ Oesterreicher elucidates:

The new heart--Ezechiel calls it a heart of flesh (Ez 36:26)--Jeremia envisions will be a spring of loving response. The prophet looks beyond the heart of the individual Israelite to a heart-to-come. He looks to a heart in Israel that will be the exemplar, the living model, the inspiration and the strength of hearts the world over. "Storehouse of divine bounty," the liturgy calls the heart of Jesus. It was opened by a lance so that from it streams of grace might pour out upon men everywhere. (Preface of the feast of the Sacred Heart).²

The interior transformation of heart could only be achieved by a new initiative on God's part and a gratuitous remission of Israel's debt (cf. Jer. 31: 31-34).³ The New Covenant, like the Old rests on the initiative and authority of God, and man's faith will be a response to what God does.

The New Covenant, unlike the Mosaic Covenant, will be eternal. God's people will permanently acknowledge Him.⁴ The New Covenant is but a renovation, a new insistence on the Covenant and the accompanying Law.⁵ A higher union of the Lord with His people comes about. Explaining (Jer. 31:31ff)

¹C. Spicq, "Men's Sin," in The God of Israel the God of Christians, (J. Giblett ed.) p. 153.

²Oesterreicher, op. cit., p. 80.

³Y. Congar, The Mystery of the Temple, p. 73.

⁴H. Freedman, Jeremiah, p. 211.

⁵R.F. Collins, "The Berith-Notion of the Cairo Damascus Covenant and Its Comparison with the New Testament," Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses, Vol. XXXIX, (July-Sept.), p. 572.

and similar passages in Ezekiel and Isaias, Eichrodt says that outward regulation is to make way for inward readiness to accept God's will, and intercourse with God will triumph over external legalism.¹ "In the new covenant the Torah will be written "in the heart" or "inward parts and whereas the writing of the precious Torah was accomplished by human means, the Torah in the new Covenant will be inscribed by Yahweh Himself."² (cf. 11 Cor. 3:3; 1 Cor. 9). This understanding of inwardness received its supreme expression in the Sermon on the Mount where the externalism of the Old contrasts sharply with the spirituality of the New Covenant. In (Jer. 31 and Ez. 36) the essential mark of this New Covenant is in the new spirit. "The New Law is not a question of changing the old commandments for new. The New Law is Jesus Christ Himself."³ And Coppens commenting on (Jer. 31: 31-34) says the characteristic of this passage "is not the gift of a renewed heart, in truth new, but the gift of the divine law in the heart of man."⁴ To a Semite, the heart is not symbolic of love but the source of thinking, willing, of very deep penetration and firmest resolve. Hence, conversion must reach

¹Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 374.

²Congar, op. cit., p. 574.

³Joseph Bournique, "Jesus Christ is the New Covenant," Bulletin, No. 19, (Nov., 1962), p. 3.

⁴Coppens, op. cit., p. 17.

the center of personality (Jer. 31:18-19; 32:40).¹ Christ's redemptive work was (and is) an exodus-covenant, a deliverance, the formation of a new people, a new covenant, and a new Law written on the hearts of the recipients of the Holy Spirit.² Ezechiel knew that God takes up His abode where the people support the idea of a new type of sanctity.³ The prophetic scope of (Ez. 11.19; 36.26f.; Jer.24.7; 31-4; 32.38-40), while very important, must not include explicitly the gifts received only after Pentecost.⁴ In putting spiritual values first, and unveiling the intimate relations the soul ought to have with God, the prophets prepared for the New Covenant.

The New Covenant will bring into being a New Community, Yahweh's people (Ez. 11:20). "I will be their God and they shall be my people" is seen by different authors as an evocation of matrimonial union.⁵ The word "people" in (Jer. 31:31) is interpreted as the whole people Yahweh brought out of Egypt. The intimate nature of the new relationship is a

¹J. Pierron, "God's Fidelity," in The God of Israel the God of Christians, (J. Giblet ed.), p. 171.

²Ignatius Hunt, Understanding the Bible, p. 94.

³Y. Congar, op. cit., p. 69.

⁴Ibid., p. 271.

⁵Coppens, op. cit., p. 19.

step forward to an explicit recognition of its universality. Dr. Eichrodt sees the expression: "I will be your God" as "the supreme message of the Covenant," and in this connection he speaks of the universality of the divine plan.¹ Explaining (Isa. 45:22-23) Norris says:

He [Isaia] it is who develops for Israel a notion which was never more than imperfectly grasped but which was of the deepest importance in preparing for the Church of Jesus Christ: religious universalism. It is God's will, he declares, that all nations, and not just Israel alone, should come to know and serve Him.²

The people of God begin to be distinguished from all other people in that they are no longer a mass but a communion of persons, a church, the Church.³ The Covenant is always to be made with the nation as a whole (Jer. 31:31-33).

The New Covenant will rest upon divine forgiveness. God's people will have immediate, personal knowledge of Him, and forgiveness of sin, as surely as there is a sun and a moon and as surely as day follows night.⁴ "The soul which has good dispositions can obtain pardon for its faults: that is one of the benefits the Messianic age brings with it; it is

¹Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 58.

²Norris, op. cit., p. 44.

³L. Bouyer, The Meaning of Sacred Scripture, p. 84.

⁴Gabriel Hebert, When Israel Came out of Egypt, p. 11.

one of the essential elements of the New Covenant." ¹

To be sure, in (Jer. 33,8), the pardon appears to arise from the initiative of the Lord only, but He will attend to their purification beginning with Juda and Israel. He will cleanse them from all their iniquities. The passage which agrees nearer to (31,34), owing to the fact that it mentions neither purification, is (50,20). But even in this passage, the agreement is not perfect. Nothing is foreseen there to preserve the people from relapsing into sin in the future, while in (Jer. 31,31-34), the gift of the law guarantees perseverance. ²

When men stand humbly before God, shamed by their sordid history and contrite about their betrayal of their Lord, then all things will be made new (cf. Ez.16:63; Jer. 31:34). Comparing the aspect of the finality of forgiveness in (Jer. 31:34) with a passage in the New Testament, Dr. Morris notes: "In the New Testament it comes to expression in such a passage as (Heb.Xiii.20) in the benediction which speaks of 'the blood of the eternal covenant', the adjective reminding us that this covenant passes not away." ³ Ezekiel uses the image of water to express forgiveness (36:25). Oesterreicher relates: "Another saying calls God "You, the mikweh of Israel," mikweh meaning hope as well as pool of immersion. The Lord was thus seen as Israel's hope and as the fountain of her purity--a perfect background for Christ's institution of the

¹J. Bonsirven, Theology of the New Testament, p. 58.

²Coppens, op. cit., p. 19.

³L. Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross, p. 102.

sacrament of rebirth." ¹The "new heart" of Israel was only fully realized in the Sacrament of Penance which brings about the friendship symbolized by Eden and its life-giving streams (Ez. 36:35). The old Law was only a figure of the new law. The thanksgiving for deliverance from Egypt was to have a superior fulfilment in its liberation of the new People from the shackles of sin and death. ²Of itself the Old Covenant did not bring men sanctifying grace. The New brings absolute forgiveness of sins and transforms the individual within himself (Heb. 8:8-13; 10:15-17).

Under the conditions of the New Covenant, God would dwell in their midst, laving the land with "showers of blessings." The community of the New Covenant will be a Church.

For the Qahal Yahweh, the assembly of the Chosen People summoned by God, burdened as it was, in spite of the prophets, with racist ambitions and temporal hopes, was the Church-before-the Church. Indeed, the Septuagint called it "the Church of God." The authentic founder of the Catholic Church was none other than Abraham himself. Israel was prophetic, a "mystery" in the sense given above; an earthly sign pointing beyond itself to the eternal Church, and preparing for its coming. ³

Through the prophets, hope was kept alive and its dimensions were enlarged. Thus the perspective is extended.

¹Oesterreicher, op. cit., p. 70.

²Vincent Rochford, "The Plan of God," in Pattern of Scripture, (C. Hastings ed.), p. 47.

³Ibid., pp. 47-48.

The plan of the Covenant which dominates all human history will reach its culmination in the fullness of time. Revealed imperfectly in the past, it will be finally realized in a perfect form, both interiorly and universally by the mediation of Yahweh. The history of Israel will pursue its course. But this history will actually be turned toward the future, toward the New Covenant, toward the New Testament.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW COVENANT INAUGURATED BY CHRIST

The New Covenant Inaugurated

The New Covenant promised by the prophets has now become a reality. What was concealed in the Old Covenant is revealed in the New Covenant. The Old Law now gives place to faith and sonship. Just as Moses negotiated acceptance of the Law between God and His people, so also will Jesus be the Mediator of the New Covenant. We see the inauguration of this Covenant in Christ's forty day fast in the desert.

Neither the nature of man, nor the letter of the Law are sufficient to redeem man.¹ Since man is helpless by himself, he must needs have a representative able to uphold man's end of the Covenant. This representative of the human race is no less than the Son of God.

In the symbolism of the tempting of Christ is represented the whole life and ministry of Jesus.² Ahern observes that St. Matthew's Gospel is rich with typology, and that his purpose was to stress the continuity between the Old and the New Law.³ Vawter prefers to use the word oneness instead

¹Council of Trent, sixth session, The Church Teaches, n. 557, p. 230.

²G. Vann and P.K.Meagher, Stones or Bread? p. 14.

³Barnabas M. Ahern, New Horizons, p. 30.

of the word connection.¹

The beginnings of Christ's life are linked to similar incidents in Israel's history. Israel was baptized in the Red Sea, and Christ inaugurates His ministry by baptism in the Jordan (Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11). Israel and Christ later experience a period of desert life and temptation.² The temptation story is found in the beginning of the public ministry in Matthew and Luke, to inform us of the great struggle with Satan involved in the coming of the kingdom. From the time of man's sin until Christ came, Satan had certain dominion over nature and man. Satan would not yield without the fight that culminated with the hour of the power of darkness (Lk.22:53).³

Jesus wished to re-live the various stages of His people. As the Hebrews were tested so was He (Mt. 4:1-11). But Christ remained faithful where His forefathers had failed. The Exodus failure finds its explanation now:

Jesus is the first-born Son in whom is fulfilled the destiny of Israel. It is not impossible that the theme of paradise regained is read in the story of Mark.⁴

¹Bruce Vawter, "Our God is the God of History," Worship, Vol. XXXII, (April 1958), p. 292.

²Barnabas M. Ahern, New Horizons, p. 39.

³Raymond E. Brown, "The Gospel Miracles," in The Bible in Current Catholic Thought, (J.L.McKenzie ed.) p. 187.

⁴Charles Thomas and X. Léon-Dufour, "Désert," in Vocabulaire de théologie biblique, (X.Léon-Dufour ed.) col. 204.

Christ's temptations in the desert are related to His role as head of the true Israel. He proves that He is the new and genuine Israel. He is superior to the seductions of the tempter. Neither does He betray God for gain, honour or power as the Israelites had done. When He comes forth from the desert, He demonstrates His claim to fulfill Israel's destiny. He emerges with that strength which is acquired from man's struggle against the desert. Here we have a high priest who has feeling for our weakness, for He was tested in all ways like us without yielding (cf. Heb. 4:15).¹

"It is especially noteworthy that Christ defeats His tempter with texts from the Book of Deuteronomy, all of them summing up the wisdom of God that guided and strengthened Israel."² Here we consider the Book of Deuteronomy as the first Christians knew it, that is:

A work which spoke of the love of God for his people, of the good He had done for them, and the greater good that He promised to do them, on condition of their faithfulness. A work which promised them God's saving will. A work also, which in its narrative sections spoke of the infidelity of Israel and described the tests to which they had been subjected in the desert and how badly they had come out of them. A work, finally, which pictured the ideal people of God, praising and worshipping Him in the enjoyment of His perfect salvation.³

¹John L. McKenzie, "Into the Desert," The Way, Vol. 1, (Jan., 1961), pp. 35-36.

²Barnabas M. Ahern, New Horizons, p. 39.

³R.A.F. MacKenzie, "The Messianism of Deuteronomy," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. XLX, (July 1957), p. 302.

Jesus identified Himself as the new Israel in His baptism, temptations and in the new Law. Like another Moses he charted for the guidance of the true Israelites in time to come.¹

The early Christian community understood the Deuteronomic promises as fulfilled in itself. "Its members thought of themselves as the essential, the genuine Israel, the chosen people of God established at last in the perfection and salvation that had been promised."²

The Deuteronomic theme foretelling the perfect Israel is applied to the glorified Head of the community Who is God Himself.

Like the ancient Israel, He is led into the desert, there to pass a forty-day period (corresponding to the traditional forty years), of solemn preparation and testing of His vocation. His answers to the tempter are so many quotations from Deuteronomy (Mat. 8: 3; 6:16; 6:13), expressing the obligations laid upon Israel, which He is faithfully observing. These are the very tests in which the historic Israel had failed; by victoriously surmounting them, Christ demonstrates that He is in Person the loyal covenant-partner sought by God. He offers to His Father the perfect love and obedience which Deuteronomy had so urgently recommended and required, but which the Old Israel had shown itself incapable of giving.³

Guillet extends the parallelism of the number forty. After Israel had been chosen by God as His Son (Ex. 4:22),

¹Barnabas M. Ahern, "Sacred Scripture," The Critic, Vol. XXI, (Aug-Sept., 1962), p. 28.

²MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 302.

³Ibid., p. 303.

she was led into the desert by a column of fire, to be tested for forty years, so also is Jesus the well beloved Son of God (Mat. 3:17) impelled into the desert to undergo His temptation (Mk. 1:12; Lk. 4:1). If Jesus answers the tempter by sacred texts, it is because the devil placed Him in situations in which Israel had been unfaithful (Num. 11:33; Ex. 17:2,7; Ex. 32:1-35). In His triumph over the desert trial, Christ reveals Himself to be the authentic Israel, the Son of God.¹ Christ was tempted but did not yield (Heb. 4:15). We can then approach Him knowing that He is aware of the weakness which makes it necessary for us to seek forgiveness.² Christ's temptations are of vital interest to us since His temptation and His victory are, in a certain sense, also ours.³

The New Covenant was inaugurated in the desert by Christ who remained faithful to His promises whereas Israel fell away. The head of the true Israel rejects the temptations with the quotations from Deuteronomy (8:3; 6:13; 6:16). The early Christian community apprehended these prophecies of Deuteronomy as fulfilled in itself. The Deuteronomic theme foretelling the perfect Israel is applied to Christ Himself. Thus the early Church considered itself as the true Israelites.

¹Jacques Guillet, Themes of the Bible, p. 15.

²McKenzie, op. cit., p. 36.

³Vann and Meagher, op. cit., p. 15.

The New Covenant Promulgated

We have seen that the New Covenant was inaugurated in the person of Christ, but it has not been proclaimed to the world. This promulgation comes in Christ's public life, in His fulfilment of the types, signs, symbols and prophecies of the Old Covenant. There are various instances in Scripture which show conclusively that the new Moses fulfilled the Old Covenant.

Without Christ the Old Testament is a torso. He can not be understood without the Old Testament, and the Old Testament can not be comprehensible without Him.¹ "The history of Israel is the womb out of which Christianity was born."² In the Old Testament He is only partially visible, but in the New Testament He is always visible.³ By His attitude and teaching Christ told us that He came to perfect the morality of the Old Testament which was a preparation (Mat.5). Christ said that the expectation of the prophets and the people of the Old Testament pointed towards Him, and that all the ancient prophecies were fulfilled in Him.⁴ The center of gravity of Israel's history was God's promise to Abraham, and the object of this promise was Christ. By faith in Christ Abraham

¹Rowley, op. cit., p. 331.

²Ibid., p. 331.

³Ibid., p. 331.

⁴Levie, op. cit., p. 252.

was justified.

By the promise, Christ was from the beginning with the children of Israel, playing his part in all the events of their history, accompanying them in their journey as the miraculous rock of the Jewish legend: 'and the rock was Christ' (1 Cor. 10.4).¹

Christ our Lord said He had come not to "destroy the Law or the Prophets ... but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17). Many of the persons, happenings and institutions of the Old Testament pointed toward the realities of the New Testament, and prepared the way for them. The Chosen Race looked forward to Christ's coming--all these were "prophetic" (I Cor. 10:3).²

The types, signs, and symbols of the Old Testament were fulfilled in a way which surpassed all expectations; the figures of the past are dim realities in relation to the Lamb of God, the living Bread from Heaven and the Temple containing the fullness of the divinity. The Old had been the shadow of the New which is the reality.³ The Old Testament is a vast prophecy, a land of mystery in which we must see the royal roads leading to Christ. It was to Christ that God led Israel.⁴ The Old Testament is a preparation not an anticipation.

¹Ibid., pp. 252-253.

²Rochford, op. cit., p. 46.

³Tos, op. cit., p. 22.

⁴Albert Gélén, The Key Concepts of the Old Testament, p. 9.

The Old Testament prepares for the New, but it does not anticipate it in any way; there is no precedent for the Incarnation. The coming of Christ must be understood in two ways. It is joined, as if by a vertical line, directly to God; for, in the Incarnation, the Son of God entered human history and began to exist as man. And it is joined, as if by a horizontal line, to the mediators of salvation-history, from Adam through Abraham to Christ. In other words, Jesus is not only the one through whom God enters history, He is God intervening in history.¹

St. Matthew mentions twelve occasions that the Scriptures were fulfilled in Christ and His work. The beginning of our Lord's public preaching (Mt. 4:15) is seen as the shining of the Messianic light spoken of by Isaias (9:1), and Christ's first healings as the function prophesied of the Isaian 'Servant of God' (Mt. 8:16-17).²

As for the new order itself, it too is a fulfilment of the old and not its destruction, 5:17; ritual laws may pass, but the ancient moral code is protected, 15:3-6, and reinforced with a strong inner spirit, 5:20-48; though the new era is on a higher plane the old had looked towards it, 11:11-13. The message of the new Kingdom is addressed first to the subjects of the old, 10:5f; if it passes from Israel it is through Israel's fault, 21:28-44, and even our Lord's farewell words to his people hold a hint for the nation elect of old (23:39 note).³

Israel's refusal of the Messias is not a break with the past, but the climax of its sad history.⁴

¹Eamonn O'Doherty, "The Unity of the Bible," The Bible Today, (Oct., 1962), p. 57.

²A. Jones, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. Matthew," in A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture, 678d.

³Ibid., 678e.

⁴Ibid., 678e.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ is presented as the second Moses giving the New Law which fulfills the Old Law. What the prophets and lawgivers of old prepared has now been fulfilled by Christ. In changing the Law of Moses, Christ changed its spirit more than its formulation. Matthew organized what Jesus said, into discourses, having as his pattern the Five Books of the Law of Moses. The ten miracles in Chapters 8 and 9 are the antithesis of the ten plagues. The miracles are the salvation acts for God's new people, as the plagues were acts of judgment against the oppressors of His people in the old dispensation. In the Transfiguration Mark and Matthew see Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets witnessing the glory with which God is invested, as He prepares for the "exodus" of His passion and death.¹

Christ promulgates the New Law in His Sermon on the Mount; henceforth, Mount Sinai is replaced by the Mount of the beatitudes. The essentially interior spirit of the New Covenant is manifested in the beatitudes. The primary motivation of the Commandments of the New Law is charity (Matt. 22 37-40). The Covenant must be studied as a work of love or we will misunderstand the cause of God's dealings with men.²

¹F.L. Moriarty, Introducing the Old Testament, pp. 41-42.

²J.L. McKenzie, "The Divine Sonship of Israel and the Covenant," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, (July 1946), p. 323.

These concrete determinations of the Commandments of God represent the extreme limit beyond which love is excluded. Cut off from their biblical foundation and presented as a closed system of obligations which are imposed upon the Christian, the Ten Commandments are a form of intolerable legalism. The heart of Christianity is the Sermon on the Mount, not a litany of actions which merely protect love or keep it barely alive. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount the Commandments appear not as the separate articles of a code, but animated by the spirit that is their common soul. In this way all danger of considering them the sufficient conditions for salvation is avoided. What salvation requires is the sincere desire to go beyond that point of departure the Commandments represent to the perfection we are called to, a perfection which is comparable to a mathematical limit that we can attain only by constantly striving after it, or more exactly, by becoming polarized by it.¹

While the prescriptions of the Old Law remain, they are expanded to include not only man's external actions, but his internal ones as well; his very thoughts and desires are to be infused with the spirit of love. The Old Law of Justice -- "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Lev. 24:20) is superceded by the New Law of Love and Mercy (Mat. 5:39-42).

All this is possible only because Christ has renewed the Covenant with His heavenly Father. He has taken on the obligations of Israel; He will observe the Law perfectly and exhort His followers to do likewise: "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mat. 5:48).

In His public life Christ proclaims that He came to

¹B. Murchland, Themes of Theology: God Among Men, p. 48.

fulfill the prophecies of old. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled in the person of Christ. An important part of this fulfilment is the promulgation of the New Law, the Law of Love which was given in the Sermon on the Mount. As the Covenant theme unfolds, we see a continuation, a oneness and an advancement toward a higher plane from shadows to reality.

The New Covenant Ratified by its Head

The Covenant made at Sinai was not to last forever. It was a preparation for the new and everlasting Covenant which God would make one day with mankind. Jeremia, the prophet, referred to it as the New Covenant which would be written on the hearts of men (Jer. 31:31-34). Following the promulgation of the Covenant must come ratification, and, as of old, so now, the ratification will be in blood--the blood of the spotless Lamb. Jesus accomplished it when in the insignificant setting of an upper room, surrounded by His Apostles He ate the Supper and instituted the Covenant in His Blood.

The twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Exodus records the solemn sealing of God's Covenant with Israel. The ritual of sharing of blood in ancient times was closely related to the Covenant of Sinai. In (Ex. 24) Moses, in concluding the Covenant poured half of the blood of the sacrificial

victim on the altar and sprinkled the rest on the people.¹
 The Eucharist, the sacrifice of the New Covenant, parallels and fulfills beyond expectations the sacrifice of Moses sealing the old Covenant. In fact, it establishes and constitutes the New Covenant.²

Our Lord recalled the solemn scene of Sinai when He instituted the Holy Eucharist. Taking the cup of wine He gave thanks and said, "All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28). St. Paul records it, "This is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). "When Christ instituted the Eucharist, he did so in terms which recalled, in relation to his own blood of the New Testament, the blood of the Old Covenant with which Moses sprinkled the people (Ex. 24.8) as a former 'type' of the New Covenant."³ It is very likely that in instituting the New Covenant, Christ wished to indicate the link between the New and the Old Covenant.⁴ The New Covenant is not replacing the Old, but grows out of it and the relation is that of fulfilment to promise. Between Sinai and the cenacle there is organic continuity.

¹Cooke, op. cit., p. 27.

²Eugene A. Laverdiere, "The Real Presence: Sign of the New Covenant," Emmanuel, Vol. LXLX, (Jan., 1963), p. 10.

³Levie, op. cit., p. 259.

⁴Cooke, op. cit., p. 33.

Jesus had not come to "destroy"... but to "fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).¹

To a group of Jews gathered together for the paschal dinner that commemorated the Exodus, the words "blood of the covenant" could not but recall the blood that Moses poured upon the altar and sprinkled over the people to signify and effect the divine-human brotherhood of the covenant. This is the crowning aspect of the comparison of Jesus to Moses, which runs throughout the Synoptic Gospels; and it points, at the same time, to the profound continuity between the actions of Sinai and the Cenacle, and to the transcendent superiority of the latter.²

What began amid the convulsions of Sinai reaches its climax in the peace and intimacy of the cenacle.³

This new creation is the sign of, and the result of, a new testament. God's covenant with the Jewish people has come to completion, to perfection, and, in so doing, has burst from the confines of its cocoon into a newness merely hinted at in its embryonic state. This new covenant is mentioned for the first time at the most appropriate place imaginable, at the table of the Last Supper where the Blood of Christ is presented as the Blood of the New Testament to be poured out on Calvary's altar for the sins of mankind (1 Cor 11,25; Lk 22,20; Mt 26,28; Mk 14,24).⁴

This is the Covenant Jeremias foretold would be made with the with the house of Israel and the house of Juda (Jer, 31:31-34). St. Paul cognizant of this Covenant mentions it in his

¹Siegman, op. cit., p. 168.

²Cooke, op. cit., p. 33.

³Siegman, op. cit., p. 172.

⁴N. Flanagan, "Messianic Fulfillment in St. Paul," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. XLX, (Oct., 1957), p. 477.

description of the Last Supper in (1 Cor. 11:25), and emphasizes its superiority to that of the allegory of Sara and Agar (Gal. 4:24).¹

There are two Greek words for the word "new" 'kainos' and 'neos'. 'Neos' refers to the substitution of a person or thing for another. 'Kainos' means the renewal of the same substance or reality. The point is the New Testament, new Law, new Israel are the perfect developments of the old, is contained in that one word.²

Commenting on (Matt. 26:28) Sheen says that in one act, Christ interpreted the meaning of His death, and declared that He marked the beginning of the New Covenant ratified by His death. The Mosaic and pre-Mosaic system of sacrifice was thus fulfilled. No created fire devoured the life offered to the Father, as in the Old Testament, for the fire would be the glory of His resurrection and the Pentecostal flames.³ It is the Eucharist that establishes and constitutes the New Covenant, and it is the renewal of the Covenant between God and His people. To make sure that we do not miss the point, the Church has her priests say in Mass, "This is the cup of my Blood of the New and Eternal Covenant." We cannot expect

¹Ibid., p. 477.

²Rochford, op. cit., p. 62.

³Fulton J. Sheen, Life of Christ, p. 325.

to understand the Eucharist as the New Covenant unless we know God's dealings with man through the Old Covenant with which we contrast and compare what Christ did at the Last Supper.¹ Jeremias spoke as follows:

Behold the days are coming ... when I shall make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Juda.... I will put my law within them, and will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people ... for I will pardon their guilt, and their sin will I remember no more (Jer. 31:31-34).

The Supper fulfils the Old Testament notion of the New Covenant summed up in the text of Jeremias. It is a salvation act consisting in remission of sin (cf. Jer. 31:34); it is a royal Israelitic Covenant (Jer. 31:31), but it is not the previous Covenant (31:32), it is made with a new dynasty and a new people (Lk. 22:29-30). Christ identified Himself as the Son of Man, the Servant of Yahweh, the Davidic Messiah and a new Moses. His work inaugurated the era foreseen vaguely by the prophets, it was the definitive intervention of divine power in history for which the old dispensation was a preparation. The Eucharist terminates and realizes the Old Testament change of religious thought; it preserves, explains, transmits and transcends the Old Testament heritage.²

¹Godfrey Leo Diekmann, "The Theology of Worship," Theology Digest, Vol. X, (summer 1962), p. 135.

²Cooke, op. cit., p. 35.

Collins explains that the New Covenant comes into effect by death (Cf. Heb. 11:15). A testament is valid only when men are dead. It is a Covenant sealed in blood (cf. Heb. 10:29; 13:20), as the first Covenant was also inaugurated with blood (cf. Heb. 9:18-22)--a reference to (Ex. 24). In this context, Christ is the mediator of the New Covenant.¹

The significance of the Old Covenant consisted in a promise, a statement, since the Testator was still alive. The first Covenant was only provisional. Since it was inefficacious, a New Covenant was necessary (cf. Jer. 31:31-34). By His death, Christ constituted Himself the mediator. Thus He made obsolete the former Covenant. The old was imperfect, the new perfect and efficacious. Christ is mediator of a New Covenant because death redeemed man from the transgressions of the former Covenant, and the fruit of the New Covenant is sanctification.²

Regarding the establishment of the New Covenant, Diekmann remarks:

For the Last Supper sacramentally, but really and substantially, anticipated and realized the sacrifice of Calvary, and hence Christ could and did say: "This cup is the New Covenant."³

¹Collins, op. cit., pp. 590-591.

²Ibid., p. 591.

³Diekmann, op. cit., p. 136.

Every time the Mass is offered the members of the Israel of God are pledged by Christ their high-priest to the observance of the law of the New Covenant. This is done by charity, the loving obedience to God and the unselfish love for mankind that filled the heart of the crucified Christ. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:25-26).

Eichrodt makes an interesting point regarding fulfilment when he says:

Anyone who studies the historical development of the Old Testament finds that there is a powerful and purposive movement which forces itself on his attention. It is true that there are also times when the religion seems to become static, to harden into a rigid system; but every time this occurs, the forward drive breaks through once more, reaching out to a higher form of life, and making everything that has gone before seem inadequate and incomplete. This movement does not come to rest until the manifestation of Christ, in whom the noblest powers of the Old Testament find their fulfilment.¹

The Covenant concluded by Moses with Israel was signed in blood. Fifteen hundred years later Jesus echoed the words of Moses, but the victim of the sacrifice was now Christ Himself. The Covenant promised by the prophets was ratified at the Last Supper when Christ the mediator and the sacrifice declared that He was marking the beginning of the New Covenant.

¹Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 26.

The New Covenant was inaugurated by Christ in the desert where He answers the devil with texts from the book of Deuteronomy. Formerly, in the desert, Israel had proved to be faithless. Now, Christ, the head of the New Israel triumphs victoriously over the tempter. Christ promulgated the New Covenant, and in Him the prophecies and Scripture were fulfilled. On the Mount of the Beatitudes, the second Moses gave the law of charity, the law that the prophets foretold would be written not on slabs of stone but on hearts of flesh. Then, at the Last Supper, the scene of Sinai was vividly recalled when the New Covenant was ratified in the blood of Christ, the blood of the New Covenant.

CHAPTER V

NEW COVENANT LIVED BY CHRIST

The New Covenant Fulfilled on Earth by the New Israel

In Old Testament times the Chosen People were God's flock of sheep (Ez. 34; Jer. 10.21, 13.20, 23.1-4, 25.34; Zach.; Psalms). St. Paul, speaking of the clergy of Ephesus, talks of "God's Church ... that flock which he won for himself at the price of his blood." (Acts 20.28).¹

St. Paul sees the Church as the new covenanted community of God, and the Christian as forming part of the acquisition by Christ's death (1 Thes. 5,9; 2 Thes. 2,13). The Christian community deserves to be called "the Church of God" (1 Cor. 1,2), a title once held by the communities of Jerusalem and Palestine (1 Thes. 2,14). Like Israel of old, the Christians are known as "the saints" (Phil. 1,1), because they are the "spiritual worshippers of God" (Phil. 3,3).²

A recent writer expounds that the First Epistle of St. Peter contains a good deal devoted to an explanation of what it means to have become a Christian. The converts hearing the passage (1 Peter 2:9-10) would have recognized that St. Peter's words are based on the famous passage (Ex. 19:3-6). He makes

¹Rochford, op. cit., p. 48.

²D.M. Stanley, "Reflections on the Church in the New Testament," The Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. XXV, (July 1963), p. 395.

a comparison between their new community and the community of Israel. Yahweh has brought Israel to Himself by defeating the oppressors at the Exodus, He gave them a law and made a Covenant with them, thus forming the foundation of the Old Testament. The people are to be His priests, His holy nation. Israel is to be His special possession, His priesthood. It is to represent both God to all peoples and humanity before God. It is a people with an historical destiny standing as a mystery and a sign of God's concern for man. The Hebrew's religious beliefs were an interpretation of their own history.

What is foreshadowed in the Old Testament is first of all fulfilled in Christ. His defeat of Satan and His passage through death to life are the exodus of man from darkness to life. He is the word fulfilling the law, and in His body the established New Covenant unites God and man.¹

Bournique comments on (Ex. 19:3-6 and 1 Peter 2:9):

The manifestation of God who speaks personally to man and asks him to share in his glory reveals to mankind, and to each individual, how great man really is. A human being is indeed of great value, since God has deigned to make Him his collaborator....

The first greatness of the human soul comes, as Paschal says, from its admission into a person-to-person dialogue with God. It is, however, when God goes so far as to request that man work with him that we are able to suspect how very great, indeed how priceless, man is.²

¹Herbert McCabe, "What is the Church?-VII," Life of the Spirit, Vol. XVllll, (Nov.. 1963), pp. 162-163.

²Bournique, op. cit., p. 4.

The temple of Jerusalem was the center and abode of the Old Covenant. Sacrifices were offered in the temple alone. In the temple was inclosed the ark of the covenant, and the temple was the recipient of God's promises, protection and blessings..There God was present in a supernatural way, in a way connected with the divine indwelling.

The Church, the New Israel, is characterized by the authentic priesthood which is ultimately and basically inherent in Christ. The people of the Church constitute a "holy priesthood" and a "royal priesthood," by which the eternal sacrifice of Christ is contained. In a special way Catholic priests offer the Eucharistic sacrifice as Christ's instruments.¹

The same writer explains that the Second Epistle to the Corinthians has a passage in which the members of God's Church are designated by the name "temple of the living God". (2 Cor. 6:14-18). In this text St. Paul exhorts the members of the true Church not to marry persons outside of this society. He adds emphasis to his appeal by stressing the great dignity of the Church as the temple of God. and the difference and opposition between the Church and the world. In his teaching, St. Paul brings out the aspects of the Church seen

¹Joseph Clifford Fenton, "The New Testament Designation of the True Church as God's Temple," The American Ecclesiastical Review, Vol. CXL, (Feb., 1959), p. 113.

as God's temple.

(1) There is a definite and fundamental opposition between the Church and the association of those who do not belong to it.

(2) The one supernatural covenant of God with men according to the dispensation of the New Testament is God's agreement with the Catholic Church. The members of the true Church of the New Testament are the people of the covenant, God's chosen people, the true Israel of the new law.

(3) By reason of the old covenant, the people of the old temple of Jerusalem were in a special way the children of God. So, by reason of the new covenant, the people of the Catholic Church are God's adopted sons and daughters.¹

Jesus is present and active in the world in a body composed of human beings, a body that is alive with His Spirit. God gives His graces to men through a visible Church.

It was possible for Him personally, immediately to impart these graces to men; but He wished to do so only through a visible Church that would be formed by the union of men, and thus through that Church every man would perform a work of collaboration with Him in dispensing the graces of Redemption.²

The favourite expression of St. Paul when speaking of the Church is "the body of Christ." He taught that "just as in one body we have many members, so we, the many are one in Christ, but severally members one of another" (Rom. 12:4-5). He made known what should be the sentiments of Christians who are committed to Christ in the words: "I rejoice now in the sufferings I bear for your sake; and what is lacking of the

¹ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

² Pope Pius XII, Mystici corporis, 16,

sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body which is the Church" (Col. 1:24).

Christ is the head of the body which is the Church: "Grow up in all things in him who is the head, Christ. For from him the whole body ... derives its increase to the building up of itself in love" (Eph.4:15-16). Membership in the Church accomplishes union with Christ from whom comes divine life. The members of Christ are the heirs of the promise God made to Abraham. It is God's plan that the "blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal.3:14).¹

J. van der Ploeg sees the signs and symbols of the old dispensation as shades of things to come.²

The new dispensation which has come through our Lord Jesus Christ is considered by the Christian as a continuation, an amplification and a fulfilment of the old one. In this supernatural order of things it is only to be expected that the various signs which guided the faithful in the time of the old covenant should have been taken over with a more perfect meaning in the new. But these meanings are not wholly new; they are the "fulfilment" of the old and in harmony with them. The people of God has become the Church, gathered from all nations; and its holy signs are the sacraments.³

¹Tos, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

²J. van der Ploeg, "Old Testament Signs," Scripture, Vol. VIII, (April 1956), p. 44.

³Ibid., p. 44.

The Sacraments are the continuation of the wonderful acts of God performed during the period of the Old Testament. There is a history of successive acts of creative power; the call of Abraham, the Egyptian exodus, the Davidic kingdom, Christ's Incarnation and resurrection, the sacraments and the Last Judgment.¹

The Sacraments are the acts of the Lord, the Risen Christ, accomplished by the Church. Pius XII notes that when the Sacraments are administered, it is Christ who produces their effect in souls. Christ nourishes us with His flesh and blood, calms the soul's passions, gives increase of grace and prepares the redeemed for future glory. These treasures He disburses to the members of His Mystical Body. He selects, determines and distributes every grace to every person.²

The Church is the New Israel, marching toward heaven. The Old Israel marched through the desert to Canaan under the representatives of God; the New Israel is guided by Peter and his successors.

God's plan will be fulfilled at the Parousia, the period between the Ascension and the end of the world which is the period of the Church. This is the period during which

¹Jean Daniélou, The Lord of History, p. 139.

²Mystici corporis, 63-64.

the Gospel must be brought to all men.

The Church is the present stage in Salvation History which is the Second Coming of Christ and the preparation and the heavenly Jerusalem (Apoc. 21:2-4).¹

The Church, then, is the new community of the Covenant, the New Israel, His special possession, His holy and royal priesthood and the temple of the living God. And the New Covenant is fulfilled on earth by the members of this New Israel. From the Head of the Church the members draw divine life by encountering Christ in the Sacraments. Here we have a continuation of the work done by God in the Old Testament. Once again, what was foreshadowed in the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ.

The New Covenant of Love Through the Son in the Holy Spirit

Since the members of the New Israel fulfill the New Covenant, God is our loving Father and we are His sons when we receive the Spirit of His Son. Less than four decades previous to the final destruction of Jerusalem a Galilean carpenter began to preach that God is a Father and has a Son. He wants to be a Father to us and will become a Father if we become one with His Son by receiving the Spirit of the Son.²

This paternity is something more than Hosea's use of

¹Tos, op. cit., p. 25.

²Thomas Barrosse, "God's Plan of Salvation: Unfolding and Realisation," Scripture, Vol. XV, (Jan., 1963), pp. 12-13.

the marriage metaphor describing the Sinaitic Covenant. To become a child of God by being united with His Son meant to start living God's life. The Spirit's coming would bring about a genuine transformation in man's attitude toward God even in the least actions of his daily life. These actions would have to reflect God's own activity which is one of love.

When the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to deliver those subject to the Law so that we might receive the adoption as sons. And the proof that you are sons? God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, 'Abba, Father!' ... Now I say you must walk by the Spirit, and ... the fruit of the Spirit is love ... (Gal. 4:4-6; 5:16,22).

Acceptance of this union would effect the transformation of man. There would be freedom from sin, possession of divine life and final resurrection.(cf.Rom.8:11; 1 Jn. 3:2).

Under the New Covenant the word "Father" has taken on a new depth, dimension and intimacy which overshadows all others. A Christian calls God his father in union with the eternal Son. Gospel and epistles have retained the original ring of this name as it was spoken by Jesus: "Abba, Father." (Mk. 14:36; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6). Abba allows man to enter into the familiarity of Jesus' conversation with His Father. Abba takes him into the intimacy of the inner life of Christ, and gives him a glimpse of the infinite being of God: the

¹Ibid, p. 13.

mystery of the triune God.¹ Canon Cuttaz observes that in order to turn the Romans and Galatians from slavery to Jewish practices, St. Paul reminded his people that they were to free themselves from these practices since they were sons (Rom. 8:14-15; Gal. 4:5-7).² When we say the Lord's prayer, we recall that we are His children.³ What is true of the relations between the Father and the Son in eternity (Jn.17:10) is true of the relations between the Father and the Sons by adoption. They return to their Father's house and are filled, and they know the relationship expressed in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:31).⁴

With reference to (Rom. 8:14-16), St. Paul calls our reception of the Holy Spirit, "the first installment of our inheritance," A seed has been planted. Our life-giving union with Christ brings an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Our full inheritance will be ours when Christ returns at the end of time, when we will be transformed into the image of His risen glory. Only then will the work of redemption be completely accomplished (1 Cor. 15:54).

¹Oesterreicher, op. cit., p. 16.

²F.Cuttaz, Our Life of Grace, p. 69.

³Matthias Scheeben, The Glories of Divine Grace, Part 11, p. 35.

⁴Congar, op. cit., p. 231.

We will then realize what was begun in us when we first received the Son as a gift from the Holy Spirit. God's plan for us is that we should be Spirit-filled joined to one another through possession of the Holy Spirit.¹

Writing on the sonship of God, Durrwell says that the new race is composed of children of God (Rom. 1:4).² Christ's glorification was a flowering of His sonship by the working of the Holy Spirit. The believer's identification with His body gives him this birth as son. From a servant he becomes God's child (Gal. 3:26-27). The marks of servitude are effaced and replaced by a likeness to the Father (Col 3:9-10). Christ becomes the firstborn of many brethren (Rom. 8:29).

The principle of that birth is the Spirit (Rom. 8:14-15). According to (Gal. 4:6) filiation apparently precedes and brings with it reception of the Spirit. Filiation and possession of the Spirit come first for the believer, is given the Spirit by being grafted into the Son, we are then grafted into the Son by the Spirit.

If we are sons in Christ, we are co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17) possessing divine riches given by the risen Lord. Our possession is imperfect while our death and adoption remain incomplete (Rom. 8:17 and 23).³

¹Norris, op. cit., p. 10.

²F.X.Durrwell, The Resurrection, p. 230.

³Ibid., p. 231.

In Haurietis aquas Pius XII resumes and repeats some themes of previous popes and his own previous teachings. He develops the central fact of our religion, that God loves all of us with a boundless love and that Christ is the divine-human personification of that love. His human wounded heart is symbolic of the wounded heart that is the redeeming and often rejected love of God for men.

Devotion to His heart as the symbol of His redemptive love is devotion to the incarnate Word which is historically a proof of that love, extending through both testaments even to the end of time.¹ This devotion takes the form of adoration for

we know that His Heart, as the noblest part of human nature, is hypostatically united to the person of the divine Word and must therefore be adored in the same way in which the Church adores the person of the incarnate Son of God. We deal here with an article of Catholic faith since this point was already solemnly defined in the general council of Ephesus [Can. 8; D120] and the second council of Constantinople. [Can. 9; D221] The second reason ... stems from the fact that His Heart, more than all the rest of the members of His body, is the natural sign and symbol of his boundless love for the human race.²

When we focus our attention on the human heart of Christ as the understandable symbol of His love for us, we

¹Pope Pius XII, Haurietis aquas, May 15, 1956, Nos. 28-54.

²Ibid., Nos. 26, 27.

do not forget the reality of the incarnation: that God actually did become human for our sakes.

For the Word of God assumed not a fictitious and empty body, as some heretics maintained as early as the first century of the Christian era.... [Cf. 2 Jn 7] But the Word actually united to his divine person an individual, integral and perfect human nature.... Nothing, therefore, was lacking in the human nature which the Word of God joined to Himself ... [which was] in no way diminished or changed in its spiritual and bodily capacities, that is, a nature endowed with intelligence and free will and the rest of the internal and external faculties of perception, sense appetites and all natural impulses.¹

Among these impulses, love is very important and central. In Christ there is the infinite love which He has in common with the Father and the Holy Spirit; His human emotional love, based on the affections of His human heart; His human spiritual love, based on human knowledge of God and man. This human heart, symbolic of man's whole being and life given to another whom He loves is the focal point of all God's love shown for man in the incarnation of the Redeemer. It symbolizes not only His emotional love but Christ's inner life, formed and informed by those infinite and finite loves found uniquely in Him. Devotion to His heart ensures our adherence to the faith. It is devotion to God and God-made-man for love of us.²

The emphasis in this approach to Christ expresses an

¹Ibid., No. 49.

²Ibid., No. 103.

appreciation of God's love for us, shown in the gift of His Son as redeemer. Such appreciation is the central matter in our religious practice resulting in a loving service to God.

We become one with our loving Father by receiving the Holy Spirit and living God's life. Man then reflects the activity of God which is one of love. In the New Covenant God is a loving Father who adopts man into the intimacy of His own life, and transforms Him into the image of God who is the personification of love. His heart is the sign and symbol of this boundless love for all mankind.

The members of Christ's Church fulfill the New Covenant when they draw divine life from Its head. In the Sacraments the members encounter Christ, and with the reception of the Holy Spirit God's own people are brought into His inner life and share the nature of the God of love.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW COVENANT SEALED BY CHRIST

The New Covenant Consummated

We have seen that the people of the New Israel fulfill the New Covenant here and now. In this chapter we consider the New Covenant sealed by the Son of God Himself. The first Christians, as we see them in the New Testament writings, considered themselves to be the real fulfilment of the first covenant--the real and true "priestly kingdom" and "holy nation," the Church--"Holy Church" which was merely foreshadowed and prepared by the Jewish people under the first Covenant. Thus St. Peter speaks to the newly baptized: "You, however, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9).

St. Peter saw the Church as the true fulfilment of God's plan to have a kingly priesthood and a holy nation--a plan God first announced to Abraham (Gen. 17), which He foreshadowed in the first Covenant on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19), where, as Eichrodt points out, the idea of the kingdom of God was always present with the idea of a sovereign and his subjects.¹ All of which is fulfilled in the coming of Christ, the Head of the true Israel, the Church, sealed in His blood (Matt. 26:28).

¹Eichrodt, op. cit., p. 40.

The things that are foreshadowed in the Old Testament are represented sacramentally in the Church. St. Peter's listeners, as a result of their recent baptism, participated in Christ's exodus. They have received His Spirit, and the new law is written in their hearts. In the Eucharist they celebrate the New Covenant. Consequently, they too, have become a royal priesthood and a holy nation.¹ Again we recall that Christ

thought of his death as being the sacrificial act by which a covenant was ratified between God and a new Israel, just as the old covenant was ratified in the blood of the sacrificed animals of Sinai.²

St. Paul contrasted the sacrifices of the Old Law with the one efficacious, perfect sacrifice of the New Law (Heb. 9:13-14).

By Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and its continuation in the Holy Eucharist, He atones for the transgressions under the Old Covenant and sanctifies the people of the New Covenant (Heb. 9:12-14). These people whom He has sanctified by His sacrificial death are members of His Church, the visible society He founded to continue His work upon the earth. And it is through the Church and the Eucharistic sacrifice which He left that these newly chosen people are to be purified and sanctified. Christ has empowered His Church to

¹McCabe, op. cit., p. 163.

²Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament, p. 230.

transform its members into a "kingdom of priests, a holy nation."

The Church is said to be a royal priesthood, not because it contains clergymen, but it contains ordained priests because it is priestly. The priesthood is derived from, and is a sacrament of, the priesthood of the entire body of Christians.¹

It is the primary function of the priest to offer sacrifice, and the Church, possessing the priesthood of Christ and His one efficacious sacrifice can truly be considered "a kingdom of priests." For she, and only she, can offer truly worthy sacrifice to God; only the Body and Blood of His only begotten Son can be the perfect sacrifice to the heavenly Father.

Already the Church is eschatologically present in heaven, and her eucharistic worship is a participation even now in the worship in heaven; even now we are present at the marriage-feast of the Lamb. The fathers regard this as one of the chief differences between the worship of the old covenant and that of the new, it illustrates better than anything else the infinite difference between the inadequacy of the sacrifices under the old covenant and the complete efficacy of the one true sacrifice of Christ.²

The New Covenant Consummated in Heaven

The theme of the kingly priesthood and holy nation

¹McCabe, op. cit., p. 165.

²Richardson, op. cit., p. 383.

was preached not only by St. Peter (First Epistle 2:9) but also by St. John: "and made us to be a kingdom, and priests to God his Father" (Apoc. 1:6). The plan was finally consummated in heaven. This can be seen in the canticle St. John heard sung in heaven: "For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us for God with thy blood, [blood of the New Covenant] Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, And hast made them for our God a kingdom and priests [a kingly priesthood]" (Apoc. 5:9-10).

Just as the Old Covenant was superceded by the New, the old earth and heaven will be replaced by a new earth and heaven, and John saw the heavenly Jerusalem adorned as a bride for her husband and a voice proclaimed: "Behold the dwelling of God with men and he will dwell with them. And they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God" (Apoc. 21:3). The perfection of the New Covenant is indicated further: "I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (v.7). Hence the New Covenant-partner will be not only God's chosen people, but His adopted children.

In his heavenly vision St. John saw a lamb "as if slain" standing near the throne of God, and it is only the lamb who is able to open a sealed scroll (cf. Apoc. 5). Exegetes interpret this as a symbolic representation of Christ as the fulfillment of the Covenant. For Christ the spotless, pure Lamb of God by His sacrificial death atoned for the sins

of man and renewed the Covenant with man (the scroll). Henceforth, man will no longer be motivated merely by the fear of the Law but will be inspired by love, a sharing in the life of God, which will enable him to approach his ultimate destiny more confidently and more completely.

Here at last, in the next world "the kingdom and priests" spoken of at Sinai comes fully into being. Here the Covenant is completely fulfilled. The children of the New Covenant, participating in the Beatific Vision, will fulfill their final end, the eternal praise and adoration of their Father: "And every creature that is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are on the sea, and all that are in them, I heard them saying, "To him who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, blessing and honor and glory and dominion, forever and ever." (Apoc. 5:13).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The concept of the Covenant is a key idea in understanding the Bible. It is an important theme in presenting to the student God's acts to man because it reveals His nature and plan of salvation. He was the God of Israel and the people were His people. In the preceding chapters the Covenant theme is traced from the Old Testament through the New Testament, and endeavours to show the unbroken economy of salvation by bringing out the point that it is Christ who fulfills the Covenant.

After considering the term "Covenant" including the Abrahamic Covenant, a preliminary chapter studies the shaping of the Covenant. We observed that the Covenant is not a bilateral Covenant but a gratuitous act, and that it follows the pattern of the Hittite suzerainty treaty. The idea of hesed (merciful-kindness) and the significance of the name Yahweh are commented on. The Sinai Covenant recalls the benefits of the delivery from Egypt. As a result the people commit themselves to adhere to the stipulations of the Decalogue. The Covenant is ratified with the blood of animals, which acts as a sign of union. With the conclusion of the Covenant at Sinai, a new era of revelation opens. A nation is formed from a worthless people, and given historical awareness in its solidarity with the divine will. (Chapter One).

All aspects of life are regulated by norms of covenant faithfulness. Breach of the covenant brings disaster. The people are unfaithful to the Covenant. They adore a golden calf and rebel against their God. Instead of loving obedience, we find repeated violation of the Covenant. Israel, Yahweh's firstborn, with a covenant relationship which approximated the intimacy of marriage, is now guilty of harlotry. But fresh hope arises with the renewal of the Covenant, and the people rejoice in the Law which strengthened them to do God's will. The giving of the Commandments was an event in Israel's history which brought her to life. The Law is the charter of Israel. Then the prophets announce that only a faithful few will be left. This nucleus will later become the foundation of the People of God, the Church of the New Covenant. (Chapter Two).

Because He is a God of hesed, when the Covenant is broken, the Lord promises a New Covenant. The Covenant of Israel's youth will be remembered and renewed everlastingly. The promise of a New Covenant is the spiritual climax of the Book of Jeremias. (Chapter Three).

Christ inaugurates the Covenant in the desert, and comes out victoriously proving that He is the head of the New and genuine Israel. He states that He perfects the morality of the Old Testament, and that the prophecies of old were fulfilled in Him. In the Sermon on the Mount He is presented as the second Moses giving the new law which fulfills the old law.

In the institution of the Eucharist, the sealing with blood of the Covenant of Sinai is called to mind. This Covenant is a type of the New Covenant. The Holy Eucharist establishes and constitutes the New Covenant, the Covenant spoken of by Jeremias, which would bring about an inward change in man.

(Chapter Four).

St. Peter compares the Church to the community of God of the New Covenant, with the community of Israel as described in Exodus. The New Israel is a holy and royal priesthood. By membership in the Church there is a union with Christ, and the sign of the people of God is found in the Sacraments. Under the New Covenant the idea of the Fatherhood of God is evident. His fatherly love assumes a new depth in which union with Christ brings an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. (Chapter Five).

The first Christians considered themselves the true Israel, God's chosen people, established in the perfection and salvation that had been promised. Thus the Church that was foreshadowed in the first Covenant is the kingly priesthood and holy nation as found in the New Covenant. In the next world the Covenant finds its complete fulfilment. (Chapter Six).

From the analysis of the sources and references studied in these chapters on the Covenant theme, we conclude that Christ is the fulfilment of the Covenant. Despite ratification

and renewal, despite the warnings and exhortations of His prophets, the original Covenant ended in dismal failure. The long, weary history of Israel shows the people's positive inability to keep the Covenant. Only in the person of Christ and in His members do we find the Covenant truly fulfilled. This is the Covenant intended for "every tribe and tongue and people and nation" and it is a "new and eternal Covenant."

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