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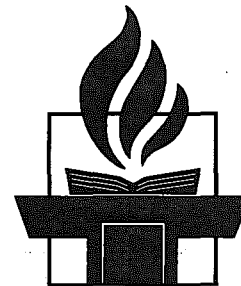
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Reformation  
& Revival



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The entire Mosaic law comes to fulfillment in Christ, and this fulfillment means that this law is no longer a direct and immediate source of, or judge of, the conduct of God's people. Christian behavior, rather, is now guided directly by "the law of Christ." This "law" does not consist of legal prescriptions and ordinances, but of the teaching and example of Jesus and the apostles, the central demand of love, and the guiding influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*Douglas J. Moo*

There is perhaps no part of divinity attended with so much intricacy, and wherein orthodox divines do so much differ, as stating the precise agreement and difference between the two dispensations of Moses and Christ.

*Jonathan Edwards*

## *What Is This Thing Called the New Covenant?*

Tom Wells

Since the present issue of *Reformation & Revival Journal* is devoted to the subject of the new covenant, we will need to grasp two things. First, we will have to have a clear idea of what the phrase "new covenant" refers to.<sup>1</sup> Following on that we will want to see in a rough way the points at which a "new covenant theology" comes into tension with other understandings of the same phrase, along with a brief defense of each of these points. Later articles will take closer looks at some of these points and offer more extensive exegetical underpinnings.

The only thing that all parties in the discussion agree upon is this: there is something called "the new covenant" spoken of in both the Old Testament and the New Testament (e.g., Jer. 31:31ff.; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:8). What it is and when it prevails has been a point of endless controversy. This century has witnessed the following variations.

First, some dispensationalists formerly held that there is not one but two new covenants in Scripture, one for the Jews and the other for Gentiles. This understanding, however, has been abandoned in recent years so we will not need to pursue it.<sup>2</sup> Other dispensationalists have held that the new covenant is still future. This position is also eroding among dispensationalists, although some still hold it.<sup>3</sup>

More pertinent to today's discussion is the view that the new covenant is simply an extension of an earlier covenant. In Reformed circles one often hears of "one covenant with two administrations," language that reflects the *Westminster Confession* (chap. 7, sec. 5) that says, "This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel. . . ." Behind this language lies the idea of a single covenant that God has made in redeeming fallen man, the "covenant of grace."

Arrangements between God and man that come later than the fall must be thought of as phases (administrations) of this single covenant. In the words of the *Confession* (chap. 7, sec. 6), "There are not, therefore, two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations."

This language underscores an important truth: God has a single purpose of redemption running throughout history. History runs toward a single goal of a redeemed world populated by a redeemed people. More than that, this goal comes to fruition by a single Redeemer which means that in some important sense all Scripture is about Him and His work (Luke 24:27; John 5:46). These truths are of paramount importance and we must never lose our grasp on them. Nevertheless it now seems clear that a mistake has been made in speaking of this purpose as "the covenant of grace." We may agree in asserting the unity of God's purpose through the ages, but the selection of the word "covenant" to describe this unity lent itself to important misunderstandings.

The reason for this is simple: in the New Testament the word "covenant" is almost always used to assert discontinuity. The evidence for this is overwhelming, as fully 79 percent of the occurrences of "covenant" in the New Testament are demonstrably used to assert discontinuity and the percentage goes up a good deal further if implicit instances of "covenant" are added.<sup>4</sup> The remaining instances (Luke 1:72; Acts 3:25; Rom. 11:27; Gal. 3:17; Heb. 10:29; 13:20) cannot be determined with the same certainty, but not one of them demands a reference to a single comprehensive covenant.<sup>5</sup> This kind of inductive survey cannot prove, but strongly suggests, that no such covenant is referred to in the New Testament.

The New Testament leaves no doubt that there is indeed a *new* covenant. We are not at all shut up to the kind of sta-

tistical argument that I have presented above. Other factors that enter the discussion include the following:

First, we must not overlook the fact that the covenant under which Christians now live is called *new*.

Second, the terms in which it is announced in Jeremiah 31 emphasize its newness. No one, it would seem, could doubt that the *prima facie* impression made by this passage is the prediction of something new in history. But we are not left with mere impressions. Jeremiah says that the Lord's covenant will be "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers" (Jer. 31:32) at the Exodus. Whatever else this covenant may be, it will be unlike the Mosaic covenant. The Mosaic covenant was one thing; this covenant is another.

Third, we need to remind ourselves that newness itself is not usually an absolute category. Many things are called "new" because that is the most accurate way to characterize them without asserting an absolute break with what has gone before. Flowing as it does from the mind and heart of the single, self-consistent God, the new covenant could not be novel in every respect. But within the constraints imposed by His own inner self-consistency, the Lord declares its substantive dissimilarity to the covenant that preceded it.

Fourth, the strong contrast between the Lord Jesus Christ, as the central figure in the new covenant, and His predecessors, argues strongly for a newness that recognizes a large measure of discontinuity. Before he takes up the new covenant directly, the writer of Hebrews signals the stance he will take in the following words: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son" (Heb. 1:1-2a).

At first glance one might take this to mean no more than that men and women in an earlier day had heard the

Prophets, but we who were contemporaries of Jesus Christ heard Him. Such an understanding of these verses, focusing, as it does, only on the passage of time is utterly inadequate. To take the least important fact first, it seems likely that the writer of Hebrews never heard the Lord Jesus speak. That seems implicit in 2:3b where he speaks of Christian salvation “which was first announced by the Lord, [and] was confirmed *to us* [emphasis mine] by those who heard Him.” As the NIV Study Bible says on this verse, “The author himself was apparently neither an apostle nor an eyewitness.”

What does the writer mean then? He gives us three contrasts, all of which point to one great truth: a new era in the history of revelation has arrived. The first contrast has to do with *time*. In the past God spoke, but in these last days He has spoken once more. The second contrast has to do with *those who received the revelation*. God spoke to “our forefathers,” but now He has spoken “to us.” The third contrast has to do with *God’s instruments*. Once God spoke through prophets, but now He has spoken “by His Son.”<sup>6</sup>

There is much more here than the recognition that God has been revealing Himself over hundreds of years of time to different people simply because none lived long enough to receive all that He has said. We are here at the turning point of the ages. Earlier history has been marked off by covenants, and it will not come as a surprise if we meet a new one here. But we are not left to conjecture. Though I cannot pursue the subject here, in much of the book the writer reflects on the newness of the new covenant.<sup>7</sup>

By ignoring the common use of *covenant* in the New Testament, theologians have tended to subsume all the covenants under the single “covenant of grace,” and have in the process largely ironed out the important differences between them. Nothing in the adoption of the phrase, “covenant of grace,” demands this kind of leveling process,

but it has certainly facilitated it once it was under way. Remove the two-administration language and the expectations of those coming to the biblical text will be changed somewhat. To speak of two covenants instead of two administrations of one covenant leads one to expect greater differentiation between the covenants than the two-administration language suggests.

It may be objected that theologians constantly make use of language in theology that does not exactly correspond to the language of the Bible. This objection overlooks the following:

First, when systematic theology uses language that does not appear in the Bible, it is usually for the reason that no suitable Bible word exists to express the concept. The word “Trinity” springs to mind here. It stands for a teaching of the Bible which cannot be expressed with any single Bible word. But all must agree that the Bible supplies the word “covenant” for what all sometimes call the old and new covenants. If this language is suitable for both Scripture and theology, the burden of proof must lie on those who would replace it.

Second, systematic theology has often confined a biblical word to one of its demonstrable meanings for the purpose of having a biblical term to use in talking about a biblical concept. The word “sanctification” is such a word. While it (or its cognates) has a number of uses in the Bible, in systematic theology it usually refers to the process of growth and development in the Christian life. The Bible clearly uses it that way, though that is not its only use. To use *covenant* in the overarching sense in which a single covenant encompasses virtually all of history first requires a demonstration that it is so used in Scripture. This is especially true since other words were readily at hand.

With respect to God’s intentions before time, the Scripture

designates them comprehensively as “an eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:11; see 1 Tim. 1:9). This “purpose” of God is elsewhere called a “decree” (Ps. 2:7), a “determinate counsel” (Acts 2:23; 4:28), and “foreordination” (1 Pet. 1:20). Jesus called it His “Father’s business” (Luke 2:49), “the work” given to Him by the Father (John 17:4), and “the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38; see Heb. 10:9).<sup>8</sup>

Third, this kind of substitution not only runs the risk of creating confusion but actually invites it. It seems time, then, to replace the language of two administrations in one covenant with the biblical recognition of covenants. Fortunately a growing number of scholars are recognizing this fact as they come to insist upon biblical and exegetical theology.<sup>9</sup> Willem VanGemeren has written: “Reformed Theology has always been interested in continuity, but continuity must reflect the results of exegesis. Hence, it is not desirable that covenant be the overarching motif.”<sup>10</sup> Systematic theology, as the crown of biblical investigation, can never come into its own until it is biblically based.

If we grant the “newness” of the new covenant, we must also ask the question, “Precisely in what way is the new covenant new? Is there a central point at which the new covenant sets forth a fundamental break with the Mosaic covenant?” Until one examines the literature one might suppose that all exegetes would agree on this matter. In fact, that is not at all the case; the answers vary widely. Nevertheless the question is repeatedly addressed because it is forced on us by the Bible itself.

Some have found this newness in the inwardness of the words, “I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts” (Heb. 8:10). But inwardness fails as the *central* point that sets apart the new covenant from all that preceded it, for the simple reason that inwardness has

always been both a command and a characteristic of true biblical religion. We may (and must) recognize some quantitative advance under the new covenant to God’s work in His people, but to draw the kind of absolute line suggested by denying inward inclination to individual Old Testament believers both as a command and an experience is ruled out of court by the Old Testament itself.<sup>11</sup>

Nor can we resolve its newness into the forgiveness of sins. “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more” (Heb. 8:12). There is here, especially, an evident affinity with the death of Christ. Forgiveness and atonement go hand-in-hand. His “blood” (=sacrificial death) establishes the new covenant (Luke 22:20). Surely here, if anywhere, we may find the heart of the distinction between the covenants. But again, the Old Testament evidence is against us. While the forgiveness of those under the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants was in anticipation of the death of Christ, and hence in a real sense dependent on the new covenant under which His death occurred, the fact of their forgiveness is beyond doubt. Abraham, we remember, was *justified* (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 22), but that is a meaningless description without the forgiveness of sins. Though the blood of bulls and goats could not produce forgiveness (Heb. 10:4), nevertheless forgiveness was the privilege of Old Testament believers.

Where, then, is the heart of the difference?

It is suggested in a comparison of the comment of the writer of Hebrews 8 in verse 8 with the promise of verse 11. “For finding fault with them, He says, . . . ‘And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, and everyone his brother, saying, “Know the Lord,” for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them.’”

In other words, God would form a people, a new nation, under the new covenant who would not break it, because all of them without exception would know the Lord. The

people of the Mosaic covenant were not the kind of people who would keep the covenant, so the Lord could have done one of two things: either change the people or change the covenant. In the event, He chose to do both. He formed a new people and gave them a covenant in keeping with the people He formed and the time in redemptive history at which He formed them. The new people, as I hope to show shortly, is the church of Jesus Christ. The time in redemptive history that demanded a new covenant was the time in which "God spoke . . . to us by His Son" (Heb.1:1-2).

But was the church a new thing in history? Many have denied it, finding the church in the Old Testament all the way back to Adam. Covenant theology has often identified Israel and church, so that they could not exist sequentially. When, then, did the church begin?

The evidence for the New Testament founding of the church seems ample. In the mind of the Lord Jesus as revealed in Matthew 16 the church could not have preceded His ministry. The evidence here for the newness of the church falls along two lines. First, Jesus uses a future verb in speaking of His church, "I *will build My church*" (16:18). In His eyes the church appears to be yet future and this is almost certainly what He means. In view of the fact that many commentators hold that the church has existed throughout the history of fallen mankind, it is surprising how nearly unanimous they are on this point. H.N. Ridderbos, in commenting on Matthew 16:18, in the compass of two pages refers to the "future church" four times as well as speaking of the "future fellowship of believers," the "future community" and the "community that would replace Israel as the people of God."<sup>12</sup> William Hendriksen qualifies his endorsement of this future understanding only slightly: "The expression 'my church' refers, of course, to the church universal, here especially to the entire 'body of Christ' or 'sum-total of all believers' in its New Testament

manifestation . . ." (italics added).<sup>13</sup>

Something else in Matthew 16:18 also points to the newness of the church: the foundation—"this rock"—which was contemporary with the Lord Jesus. Precisely what or who Jesus had in mind in speaking of "this rock" has been the subject of controversy. We need not settle that here, however. We have only to look at the two popular alternatives, the confession of Peter or the person of Peter himself. (It is interesting to note in passing that each of these two understandings has a long history going back to the early days of the post-apostolic church.)<sup>14</sup>

If the confession of Peter is the rock upon which Jesus built His church, the church could not be earlier than the time when that confession formed in the minds of His followers. The confession is not "the church will be (or is) built on Christ." That confession might have been made centuries before Peter's confession, although even that would have had to be predictive. Rather, on this understanding, the church is built on the certainty that "You [i.e., Jesus of Nazareth] are the Christ, the Son of the living God." If that is the church's foundation rock, the beginning of the church awaited men and women who could make that confession.

We get the same result if we understand Peter himself to be the rock. However glorious was the old people of God under the old covenant, that people existed without having Peter as its foundation. For Jesus' church to rest in any sense on Peter, the church could not be older than Peter himself. Both the future tense of the verb and the words of Jesus describing the foundation he was about to lay demonstrate that the church of Jesus Christ was a product of the age of the new covenant.

The rest of the New Testament confirms this understanding. Think first of Ephesians 2:14-22. This passage is, of course, rich in descriptions of the church, "the two one,"

“one new man,” “one body,” “fellow citizens,” “God’s household” and “a holy temple.” But the thing that interests us here is the foundation of the temple, which includes “apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone” (2:20).

The figure of the temple is intended to show the historical process that produced the church.<sup>15</sup> Paul is particularly concerned to describe the earliest layer in its composition, what we might call “the first generation” of “living stones” (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-5). Since the Lord Jesus is the cornerstone, these “stones” will have to be His contemporaries. There can be no question of this temple existing hundreds of years before He existed as “Jesus.” The foundation consists of Himself and His apostles, all men of the first century. In addition, however, there are prophets. Is there here, in the foundation, at least one group of Old Testament believers? Clearly not. This building has no basement; the apostles and prophets are joined to Christ Jesus, as I have pointed out, as His contemporaries.

We tend to identify “prophets” with Old Testament times, but we must not forget that prophets also play a major role under the new covenant, in the pages of the New Testament. Whenever Paul uses “prophet(s)” of the Old Testament prophets he makes the connection with Jewish history (1 Thess. 2:15) and the past indisputably clear (Rom. 1:2; 3:21; 11:2-3). Elsewhere he breathes the atmosphere of the New Testament situation, an atmosphere strange to us, where “prophets” was an everyday category both among the pagans (Titus 1:12) and within the church (Acts 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-10). We who use that word largely for men and women of the Old Testament have a hard time placing ourselves into the social environment in which Paul constantly lived. To look no further than the Ephesian letter itself we see references to these New Testament prophets in 3:4-5 (note the contrast between

“other generations” and the current “apostles and prophets”). Ephesians 4:8-11 describes the same persons as gifts “bestowed on the church by the *ascended* Christ; hence, prophets of the New Testament era. . . .”<sup>16</sup> According to Ephesians 2:20, then, the church is a New Testament entity.

We find the same truth set forth in a different way:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13).

In verse 12 Paul reflects on the interdependence of the organs of the human body and compares that body to the body of Christ. In verse 13 he explains how the body of Christ was formed.

Why does Paul speak of baptism in, with, or by the Holy Spirit? The answer seems straightforward; he alludes to the repeated and emphatic comparison between John the Baptist and Jesus contained in the four Gospels and in Acts. For example:

And he [John] was preaching, and saying, “After me One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:7-8; cf. Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:28, 33).

Or, again, in Acts 1:5, this time from the lips of the Lord Jesus, “John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” It is in such words as these that we find the antecedents to Paul’s lan-



guage and thought in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

In Mark 1:8 and parallels John foretold the striking difference between his ministry and that of Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 12 we have passed the point in salvation history where the prophecy of John has become reality and Paul refers to that fact.

This immediately clarifies one point. When Paul says, "We were all baptized," he does not specify the agent, but we see that the Lord Jesus is the One who does the baptizing. Why does He do it? To put us, as Paul says, "into one body," the body that he calls "Christ's body" in verse 27 and simply "Christ" in verse 12. We are looking here at Paul's account of the origin of the church from a different vantage point than he selected in Ephesians 2. There he was concerned with the corporate relation of believers to God as His temple. Here he is concerned with the corporate relation of believers to one another within the new thing called "the body of Christ," and "to explain how they, though many, are one body."<sup>17</sup>

One point remains: how did Christ do this? The answer to that question depends very much on how we translate the Greek behind the NASB's word "by" in the first phrase of verse 13. The options are either "by," "with" or "in," but, in my judgment, only the translation "in" does justice to the idea Paul is setting forth here. NASB's "by" seems to suggest that while Christ did the baptizing He did it by the agency of the Holy Spirit. But the truth set forth in the references in the Gospels and Acts is that the Holy Spirit, like the water in John's baptism, is the medium into which we are baptized; Christ baptizes us "in" the Spirit as John baptized his converts in water.

The image at the end of the verse, "and we were all made to drink of one Spirit," confirms this by introducing a complementary idea we find elsewhere in the New Testament, the idea that God is in His people and that they are also in

Him. As the agent of Christ the Spirit surrounds and occupies God's people. We are immersed in the Spirit and yet, by our "drinking Him," He is also within us. John bears witness to the same truth in 1 John 4:13: "We know that we live in Him [God] and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit."<sup>18</sup>

As a result we may paraphrase 1 Corinthians 12:13 as follows:

Christ has baptized all of His people in the Holy Spirit for the purpose of forming them into one body, the body of Christ. This body includes both Jews and Greeks, both slaves and free men and women. We also have had the Spirit put within us, so that the promise that God would be in us and we in God has been fulfilled.

First Corinthians 12:12-13, then, confirms what we have previously seen in Ephesians 2, that is, that the church is a New Testament entity. In the Gospels and in Acts 1 the baptism in the Spirit is still a future prospect, though fully certain, but by the time Paul wrote to the Corinthians he could treat it as a past experience for every believer. "We were baptized," Paul says, and as a result we are part of the church which is Christ's body.

We may pause for a moment to see where we have been in trying to establish the character of the new covenant. After glancing at several contemporary views of when the new covenant prevails, we observed that its very name "covenant" points to discontinuity with what has gone before. This discontinuity is not absolute, but real, prominent in the New Testament and a feature that is ignored at the peril of the church. Finally, we asked in what that newness consists and concluded that its essential feature was a new people of God, called in the New Testament "the church" and "the body of Christ." *The new covenant, then,*

*is the bond between God and man, established by the blood (=sacrificial death) of Christ, under which the church of Jesus Christ has come into being. Many will agree to this definition, but others raise questions that we must address next. They concern Israel (the Old Testament people of God), the church's relation to her and the "law" that prevails in this new people.*

Historically there has been no consensus on the relation of Israel to the church of Jesus Christ. On one extreme classical dispensationalists have tended to deny all connection between the two,<sup>19</sup> while on the other extreme classical covenant theologians have tended toward an identification of the two as one body. In each case I have used the words "tended to" because both systems have sometimes recognized typological connections between the two while not varying much from their basic positions. Both sides, in my judgment, have therefore touched on the truth but emphasized an understanding that is basically false. Though few dispensationalists today would defend the classical view of "no connections," they remain leery of anything that suggests too close a relationship. In particular they continue to deny that the church is in any sense either old or "new" Israel. Covenant theologians also remain close to their classical moorings. The evidence of both Testaments, however, points to the typological connection as more nearly basic. It will be possible here only to outline this evidence.

First, it is evident that the writers of Scripture read the terms of the Abrahamic covenant in two different ways.<sup>20</sup> Old Testament writers often see the promises as fulfilled to the literal nation of Israel while New Testament writers find their fulfillment in the church. A simple survey of those promises in Genesis 12-17 with the fulfillments noted in both Testaments will illustrate what I mean.<sup>21</sup> While we cannot pursue that in detail here, we may look at two biblical statements that point up this contrast. In Joshua 21:43-45,

Joshua tells Israel: "So the Lord gave Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they possessed it and lived in it. . . . Not one of the good promises which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass."

God had promised the land and other things to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joshua records the fulfillment of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel. Here, without doubt, the physical nation is in view. In Joshua's judgment, speaking by the Spirit of God, the promises were given to ethnic Israel. We must read the Abrahamic covenant in that way.<sup>22</sup>

But here another biblical writer, this time from the New Testament, reflects on the Abrahamic promises. In Hebrews 11:39-40 we read: "And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

Here is a quite distinct view of the promises of God, that calls for several observations. While it is possible that Joshua and the writer to the Hebrews did not have precisely the same promises in view, they nevertheless are looking at the promises connected with the Abrahamic covenant and seeing them in quite different ways. Everything is fulfilled in Joshua; nothing is fulfilled in Hebrews. Clearly they are reading the evidence from differing perspectives. What is the basic difference? Earlier in chapter 11 the writer of Hebrews tells us that Abraham went "to a place he was to receive for an inheritance" (11:8). This place was "the land of promise" and the promise extended to Isaac and Jacob who were "fellow heirs of the same promise" (11:9). So far the writer of Hebrews might well be laying the foundation for Joshua's statements on fulfillment. But the following verses show a very different understanding. We are told that Abraham

had his eye on a different land altogether.<sup>23</sup> And he was not alone. All his faithful descendants died “without receiving the promises,” and confessing “that they were strangers and exiles” on the very earth that contained the land of Canaan (11:13).

How can we make sense of this? By seeing the typological nature of the land of Canaan. It pictured the larger “country” which therefore was also contained in the promises. That will explain how they can be said not to have received the promises that took in “the land of promise.”

Another evidence of this type/antitype connection between Israel and the church is found in the common names given them in the New Testament. A fair number of these exist, and this fact is probably one of the things which led covenant theologians to identify Israel and the church. If that identity is impossible, as it must be if the church is founded in the New Testament era, then to understand Israel as a type or picture of the church seems the most likely way to grasp their relationship. For example, the phrase “My people” (approx. 125 times in the Old Testament, of Israel) is either applied directly to the church (Rom. 9:24-25; 2 Cor. 6:14-18) or plainly adapted to it (1 Peter 2:9-10). This last reference falls in a group of Old Testament phrases, “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession,” all of which are taken directly from the Old Testament and made descriptive of the church. The easiest explanation for this is the typological one. I may illustrate this by referring to a picture of my wife. If I showed you her picture I would say, “This is my wife, Luann.” But if I had the privilege of introducing her to you in person I would say the same thing, “This is my wife, Luann.” And that is what the New Testament writers do.

Further evidence of this typical connection is found in

the rites, ceremonies and ordinances of the two Testaments. Such things as circumcision, the Passover, and the sacrifices on the one hand, and baptism, the Lord’s Table and the New Testament “sacrifices” (Heb. 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5) along with the sacrifice of Christ are obviously both distinct and related. Typology explains this relationship.

Finally, we may think of the parallels between the Lord Jesus in His relation to His church, and various officers of ancient Israel. As Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon and others stood at the head of Israel in various capacities, so the Lord Jesus stands at the head of His church as One “greater than” any and all of these (Matt. 12:42; John 8:53ff. Cf. Matt. 12:6, 41). (Compare the summary of the offices of Christ as Prophet, Priest and King, popularized by John Calvin but reaching back as far as Eusebius.)<sup>24</sup> The ancient nation was “baptized into Moses” at the decisive moment in its history (1 Cor. 10:1-2), i.e., they came under his leadership. But the new nation is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 12:12-13) and so has come under His direction.

Typology, however, does not quite exhaust the relation of Israel to the church. Covenant theologians have often insisted on an “organic” relation as well, and in one sense they are right. From the standpoint of eternity future, looking back, the church will prove to have been God’s elect individuals from every era. We may illustrate this point by Paul’s discussion of Israel and the olive tree in Romans 11 and, at the same time, see how it fits with the New Testament establishment of the church.

Paul starts the chapter by recognizing that Israel, God’s ancient people, is made up of both believers and unbelievers. A godly remnant has always existed (vv. 1-6), but the masses stumbled and fell (vv. 7-11). So much is this the case that the nation itself is spoken of as stumbling, transgressing and suffering rejection by God (vv. 11-15). Paul proceeds:

For if their rejection be the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? And if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too. But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you (11:15-18).

In order to grasp Paul's extended figure we must ask two questions: first, what is the olive tree, and second, when does Paul think that some of the branches were broken off?

The critical point in answering "what is the olive tree?" is to reflect on the unity of root and branches. The branches are obviously human beings; the root must be of the same kind, a person or persons. This conclusion is confirmed by the other analogy in verse 16, the comparison of the firstfruits of dough and the rest of the batch. Clearly whatever the firstfruits is, the batch must be as well. The root, then, as most commentators have held, is either Abraham or the Patriarchs. "Nothing is more natural than to call the ancestors the root, and their descendants the branches."<sup>25</sup> The olive tree stands as a whole for Israel as that nation has been derived from Abraham (cf. Jer. 11:16). This is in keeping with Paul's interest throughout Romans 9-11 to trace the history of salvation as it bears on the Jewish nation.

When does Paul think of the natural branches as being cut off? Is this, in Paul's mind, an ongoing process in Israel's history, or is there some definite point in their history where this "breaking off" occurred? Though few older commentators directly address this issue, implicit in their discussions is the idea that there came a time in history when

this happened. The reason lies close at hand: for Paul, Israel's "rejection" (v. 15) comes at the time in salvation history in which God turned to the Gentiles. Their trespass and rejection "trigger the stage in salvation history in which Paul (and we) are located, a stage in which God is specially blessing Gentiles . . ." <sup>26</sup> (cf. Matt. 21:43). With these points before us, we are now prepared to look at the relation of ancient Israel to the church.

Paul's figure of the olive tree reminds us that throughout her history ancient Israel was a mixture of believers and unbelievers. This has led some to call the tree "the visible church in the Old Testament." With Gentiles grafted in, it would presently stand for "the visible church as it now exists." This understanding, however, is not consistent with the figure itself, since there has been no time in history when unbelievers have been cut off from this assumed visible church. To the extent that the visible church idea is true, it is still an amalgam of believers and unbelievers. That "cutting off" awaits the final judgment. Instead, the olive tree is the church of God's effectually called elect, formed after the death of the Lord Jesus out of the true believers of the Jewish nation and believing Gentiles.

Paul describes here the process by which the true church was formed. First, God stripped all Jewish unbelievers from the ancient nation, leaving only the spiritual children of Abraham. Then He added to them (starting at Pentecost) both Jews and Gentiles, as they were born again, to continually augment His new community, the church of Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 2:47b). Certain things follow from this. First, ancient Israel with her unbelieving branches was never the church of Jesus Christ. Second, Paul does not contemplate unbelievers being added to the olive tree. If God had intended that, He would have had no reason to strip off the unbelieving branches to begin with. Third, there is nevertheless an organic relation between the

church and God's individually elect people from ancient Israel. We who are believers in Jesus Christ are now part, with them, of the olive tree as it exists today, i.e., the "invisible" or "universal" church of God.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, we must ask the question, "What law now governs the new covenant community, the church of Jesus Christ?" Here is the other major point of tension with some other understandings of the church. The answer to this question is not only difficult, but has suffered, perhaps more than any other related question, from severe misunderstandings among the parties. Let us see if we can clarify the subject. Two or three points will be in order.<sup>28</sup>

First, we must be absolutely clear that the category "law" is indispensable to the church. Much confusion has existed over what is intended by it, but the category itself is basic to the relation between God and man.<sup>29</sup>

Second, we must recognize that the New Testament speaks of "the law of Christ" as the rule of the Christian (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2), whatever is intended by this phrase.

Third, we must also acknowledge that the New Testament offers us little exposition that directly explains what this law is. Nevertheless, we have the materials for determining the question in what I propose to call *the logical priority of the Lord Jesus*. Let me explain.

The Christian church has a long tradition of treating Christ as a lawgiver to His people going back at least to the Epistle of Barnabas (ca.70-100).<sup>30</sup> Among the Puritans this was a very popular idea, and rightly so.<sup>31</sup> To accept a law from someone means to accept that person as the authority within some limited sphere of life. Such authority, however, is never absolute except in a single case, that of God. There is no appeal from His authority, either by judicial trial, by the use of force or by any other means. Of such misguided efforts the Psalmist says, "The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them" (Ps. 2:4). All

Christians agree to this fact, so it requires no argument.

Under the new covenant, however, it undergoes a subtle variation in that Christ sets Himself forward as the comprehensive Lord, a position that we understand can be accorded only to God himself. The justification for this remarkable claim by Christ is twofold: first, by very nature He was God and, second, His person as the God-man was awarded the full title "Lord" (=Yahweh) upon the completion of His mission in this world (Phil. 2:9-11). We should not be surprised, then, to hear Him say, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matt. 28:18). While we understand that even such "absolute" authority has a single limitation (1 Cor. 15:27), for us men there can be no appeal from the rule of Jesus Christ.

Certain things follow from this.

First, for us there is no competing authority in matters that pertain to God. There is nothing logically prior to Jesus Christ to which we must look for the regulation of our lives. (The word "logically" is very important here, signifying the necessity of coming to the Lord Jesus first for instruction, even if He quotes from law that comes from a time earlier than the time of His public ministry.) The authority of Jesus is such that this is true for all men since the ascension of Christ.

Second, what is true of all men is especially true for Christians who have consciously owned the lordship of Christ as the organizing fact around which their lives must revolve. That means they have no moral and ethical allegiance to anything, including the Old Testament and its laws, *that is logically prior to Jesus Christ*. That is what absolute authority claims, and that is what allegiance to absolute authority concedes. Whatever other authorities may exist in this world (and there are many others) each must be submitted to only out of the understanding that Jesus Christ lays such submission upon believers in Him.

Any other acceptance of a prior claim is illegitimate. This is to say no more and no less than what is implicit in the confession, "Jesus Christ is Lord."

As radical as all this sounds, it is not new. It has played an important (though, sadly, often subsidiary) role in the consciousness of Christians from the very beginning. We may illustrate this point from the English Puritans: "Because of easily-recognizable differences between the relation of men to the Law before and after faith, it became customary to speak of the believer as related to the Law 'in the hands of Christ.'"<sup>32</sup>

This is, of course, an assertion of the logical priority of the Lord Jesus in the direction of His people. More than a thousand years earlier the church father Origen illustrated the same point: "We who belong to the catholic church do not reject the law of Moses, but we welcome it, provided it is Jesus who reads it to us, so that as He reads we may lay hold of His understanding and interpretation."<sup>33</sup>

Once more, we see here the logical priority of the Lord Jesus in the moral and ethical instruction of His people, even where there is no rejection of "the law of Moses." It is this priority of Jesus that the New Testament is concerned to maintain against all competitors. It is the sense of this, which virtually every Christian feels when he first comes to the New Testament, that occasions the apparent devaluation of the Old Testament that many complain of. But the Old Testament remains the inspired Word of God while virtually all Christians recognize that the great mass of its legislation is no longer directly applicable to the *practice* of believers today.

It is this priority of the Lord Jesus that is so evident in the Sermon on the Mount. There is no consensus among scholars on the precise aim of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:21-47 where He quotes Old Testament law (or in one case, what apparently purported to be Old Testament law, 5:43b)

and proceeds to comment on it. Clearly He is not abolishing this law (5:17-19), but is He modifying it, explaining it more fully, and/or delivering it from the perversions of the traditions to which the Pharisees were heirs? As interesting and important as this question is, however, it does not yet come to the central issue. Whatever Jesus is doing He is doing as the final authority on the subject, and He is doing what no other contemporary Jew would dare to do. His repeated "But I tell you" (5:22, 28, 34, 39, 44) shows the consciousness of an authority that transcends the work of all other interpreters.

Ned Stonehouse has captured the two points made above in the following paragraph:

That Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament law involved far more than an affirmation of the validity of the law appears unmistakably in the illustrations of his interpretation of the law provided by the antitheses of the sermon on the mount. The accent on the authoritative new utterances of Christ in truth is so powerful that in certain instances an apparent impingement upon the abiding authority of the law is disclosed. Six times Jesus, completely on his own authority, and without any attempt to vindicate his categorical declarations, seems to set his own pronouncements in antithesis to "that which had been spoken," the deliverances consisting of, or at least including, in every instance a quotation from the law of Moses (Matt. 5:21ff., 27ff., 31ff., 33ff., 38ff., 43ff.). It was the absoluteness with which Jesus spoke, as possessing authority in his own right, and not deriving the authority of his utterances from Scripture or revered traditions like the scribes, that caused the crowds to express amazement at this teaching (Matt. 7:28). There had appeared on the scene a new self-confident voice, the voice of one who assumed an authority in no sense inferior to that of the commandments of God given through Moses.

The sovereignty with which Jesus speaks is so absolute that his fulfillment of the law seems to carry with it the invalidation of the law of Moses.<sup>34</sup>

Here Stonehouse repeatedly sets forth the *impression* left on the reader: “apparent impingement upon the abiding authority of the law,” “seems to set his own pronouncements in antithesis” to the law of Moses, “not deriving the authority of his utterances from Scripture,” and an authority which seems to carry with it the invalidation of the law of Moses.

From what do these impressions arise, if not from a desire to destroy Mosaic law? They arise from the priority which Jesus demands for Himself, even in handling the undoubted Word of God.

We come now to the final critical question: How does the priority of Jesus Christ work out in practice?

To answer this question we must first address a number of impressions often held in connection with the Mosaic law. First, when many speak of “the law” they have in mind only the Decalogue or Ten Commandments. That meaning has an honored history in the church, but as far as I can see the Scripture does not use the phrase in that way. If it does, it is a rare and uncharacteristic use. Second, the idea that “the law” is the Ten Commandments is often associated with another idea, the conviction that, generally speaking, the New Testament regulations and rites that parallel those in the Old Testament are simpler under the new covenant. Since the Decalogue is itself a relatively short statement, when these two ideas are combined they produce a demand that some very compact summary must be given for the rule of Christ if the Decalogue is to be replaced.

We find a naive answer to this search for compactness in the popular notion that all God asks of us is that “we do as we would be done by,” i.e., the “Golden Rule.” More sophisticated answers make the presence of the Holy Spirit all we

need or a serious effort to love God and our neighbor. This last solution comes to us on the firmest biblical ground, but represents an overly realized eschatology. In eternity future it will be a sufficient rule, but just now it is short on details. All of these solutions founder on the same fact: The New Testament contains a multitude of commands and demands, the very things that we normally call “law.”

Can these rules and regulations, at least on their moral side, be reduced to the Ten Commandments? Or to put it another way, is “the law of Christ” identical to the Decalogue? There are important reasons for answering these questions negatively.

First, the highest and best revelation of God is found in the Lord Jesus Himself. Yet it is beyond dispute that the display of the excellencies of God found in Jesus Christ is primarily the display of His moral excellencies. Can we really believe that all of this is fully anticipated in the Decalogue? Second, only on the assumption that the Ten Commandments explicitly or implicitly contain all of this same revelation can we think of putting them on the same level as the Lord Jesus Himself.

Now it must be said in defense of many older scholars that they did, in fact, make this assumption. They did not mean to whittle morality down to ten rules or a hundred, to the neglect of all else. The Puritans, for example, repeatedly show that they believed that the Decalogue contained implicitly all the demands of God as reflected in His moral character. But the evidence for that fact was always wanting, as indeed it would have to be, if there is such a thing as progressive revelation. The only alternatives are to empty the word “implicit” of tangible content or reduce it to mean that whatever else would be revealed would be consistent with what had already been given. Given the fact of the self-consistent lawgiver, that is simply a truism.

Nevertheless the Puritans tried to hold the “implicit”

view. There are a number of ways of seeing this. We find it in the individual Puritan authors<sup>35</sup> as well as in the more authoritative catechisms, such as the *Westminster Larger Catechism* in its exposition of the Ten Commandments. John Frame has written:

The Larger is sometimes thought to be over-detailed, even legalistic, in its exposition of the law. One emerges with an enormous list of duties that are difficult to relate to the simple commands of the Decalogue. There is truth in such criticisms, but those who urge them often fail to realize the importance of applying scriptural principles authoritatively to current ethical questions.<sup>36</sup>

To be fair to Frame we must carefully note his qualification, but the criticism, as he himself says, is just.

But what of the simpler, briefer *Shorter Catechism*? Look at its exposition of the fifth commandment, "Honor your father and your mother." The exposition features two questions concerning the meaning of the commandment:

Q. 64. What is required in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to everyone in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals. . . .

Q. 65. What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and duty which belongeth to everyone in their several places and relations.<sup>37</sup>

What shall we make of this? Though this is excellent in itself, it is evident that unless someone already came to the

commandment with the conviction that *it had to be comprehensive of all human relations*, one would never gather it from the simplicity of the command.<sup>38</sup> As evidence for the wider sweeping conclusion that everything moral is comprehended in one of these Ten Commands both the *Larger* and *Smaller Catechism* offer just three verses, Matthew 19:17-19.<sup>39</sup> This is, surely, much too narrow a base from which to draw such a comprehensive conclusion. Further than that, assuming that Matthew 19 contains the best evidence for this opinion, we must note that it was not available to Old Testament believers at all.

Nor is that all. In the Mosaic law the penalty for breaking this command in some degrees was death (Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9; 21:9; Deut. 21:18-21). It is difficult to see on what grounds this penalty could be avoided among all the other relations that are thought to be in this text. If it be argued that the case laws make this distinction, one comes very close, on this assumption, to setting the case laws against the fifth commandment itself.

The Ten Commandments, then, could not have functioned as a compact summary of all moral law. And they never did among the Jews. In a book written for the direct purpose of insisting that Christians must keep the Ten Commandments, we read: "The Jews did not divide up their Law into moral, judicial and ceremonial precepts. For them it was a whole, covering God's revealed will for all the areas of their common life. The Christians have had to divide it."<sup>40</sup>

As soon as we see that the demand for a compact rule of life is neither found in the Scriptures nor implied by them, we are prepared to receive from Christ a comprehensive law based on the new covenant documents. No slogan, even of Scripture, can contain it, but it is clearly there, as it must be if Jesus Christ is Lord.

Let me suggest its parameters. First, it consists of the



commands of the Lord Jesus Himself in His public ministry as illuminated by His own example. Second, it consists of the demands laid upon believers in the books of the New Testament, the new covenant documents. These are the basic items, and both are subject to the further illumination of the Holy Spirit who has been given in greater measure, in part, for this very purpose. Finally, as a personal and secondary suggestion, I add the examination of the Old Testament law with the idea in mind of finding those things that are in keeping with the explicit demands of Christ in the New Testament.<sup>41</sup> In these, it seems to me, we have *the law of Christ*.

What is this thing called the new covenant? We may now sharpen the definition that we earlier gave with our findings on Israel and the law: *The new covenant is the bond between God and man, established by the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, under which all who have been effectually called to God in all ages have been formed into the one body of Christ in New Testament times, in order to come under His law during this age and to remain under His authority forever.*

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**Endnotes:**

1 For definitions of "covenant" see the standard lexical authorities plus O.P. Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), chap. 1; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955),

chap. 2.

- 2 See Bruce A. Ware in Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God" (pp. 91-92) for the grounds of this abandonment.
- 3 A vigorous defense of this position was given at the 1995 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Philadelphia by Ronald N. Glass.
- 4 This is easily calculated by adding the instances in which "covenant" is modified by an adjective that stresses discontinuity to the instances that specify a single historical covenant not now in force and the instances in which "covenant" is plural. Carl Hoch has done a similar study of the implicit uses of "covenant" in Hebrews 8:7,13; 9:1,18 and 10:9 in Carl B. Hoch, Jr., *All Things New* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 122-23.
- 5 Hebrews 13:20, which speaks of "the eternal covenant," has often been cited as comprehensive. Something that is eternal certainly might extend backwards into eternity past. But several things militate against this understanding. First, to place any covenant into eternity past ignores the fact that the covenants of Scripture are all initiated in time. Second, the reference to "the blood" of the covenant ties it immediately to the sacrificial death that establishes the new covenant (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). Third, we may note that other "eternal" things in the Bible start within time and are eternal by virtue of extending into the future. This is true both of eternal punishment and eternal life (Matt. 25:46). For recent discussion and literature see Richard L. Mayhue, *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 7:2, Fall 1996, "Covenant of Grace or New Covenant?", 251-57.
- 6 It is possible to read the last phrase as qualitative: "He has spoken to us by nothing less than a Son!" Either translation contains a strong contrast to God's Old

Testament instruments.

- 7 Elsewhere in this issue Carl B. Hoch discusses this subject at greater length.
- 8 Jon Zens, *Baptist Reformation Review*, autumn, 1977, "Is There a Covenant of Grace?", 44.
- 9 O. Palmer Robertson shows sensitivity to this issue in *The Christ of the Covenants*, though he retains the use of the word "covenant" to describe God's overarching purpose.
- 10 John S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity*, "Systems of Continuity" (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway, 1988), 52. In my judgment this seminal book, in which men from both sides of this controversy speak plainly, needs to be reissued, perhaps with some up-to-date revision.
- 11 As for commands, very obvious is the tenth commandment of the Decalogue: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor" (Ex. 20:17; cf. Deut. 6:5-6). For experience see 1 Kings 9:4; 1 Chronicles 29:17-19; Psalms 9:1; 119:10-11; Isaiah 38:3. The following Old Testament verses mention the law of God in the heart: Psalms 37:31; 40:8; Isaiah 51:7.
- 12 H.N. Ridderbos, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 303-304.
- 13 William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1973), 648.
- 14 For extensive documentation of this point see the older work by John Peter Lange, *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960), 296-97. See especially the notes added by the American editor, Philip Schaff.
- 15 Speaking of Paul's emphasis on growth here, Rudolph Schnackenburg (*The Church in the New Testament* [New

York: Herder & Herder, 1965], 96) writes, "The edifice is no finished, well-constructed fortress equipped against attacks, but a structure that is still being built, striving towards heaven, led by inner forces towards completion."

- 16 The words, including italics, are from William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967), 142, on Ephesians 2:20. They are part of a larger argument which concludes: "[R]eference to the prophets of the old dispensation is definitely excluded. . . ." Hendriksen represents the consensus among modern commentators, though Lenski is an exception.
- 17 Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 603 on 12:13. His entire discussion of this verse on pp. 603-606 is excellent.
- 18 This is a repeated emphasis of the Johannine writings. See also John 6:56; 14:20; 15:5; 1 John 2:24 and 3:24.
- 19 One thinks of Lewis Sperry Chafer's rejection of the word "parenthesis" to describe the church age on the grounds that a parenthesis is connected to what proceeds and follows. He spoke instead of the church age as an "intercalation." See his *Systematic Theology*, Dallas Seminary Press, 4:41.
- 20 Typology is, in one sense, a part of the larger promise/fulfillment motif. In the following discussion the Abrahamic covenant contains the promise side of this motif, both with respect to ancient Israel and to the body of Christ.
- 21 In speaking of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant I include the promises of Genesis 12 which precede the formal establishment of the covenant in Genesis 15. This is accepted by many scholars on the ground that they "have viewed the covenant as a vehicle by which the promise of God is formalized" (John Walton,

- Covenant: God's Purpose, God's Plan* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 15).
- 22 Joshua, of course, is not alone in the Old Testament in this reading of God's promises. Cf. Jehoshaphat's prayer: "O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?" (2 Chron. 20:7).
- 23 Though the text uses the word "city" in verse 10, verses 13-16 show that another country (with other cities?) is in view.
- 24 See J.P. Baker in Sinclair B. Ferguson et al, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology*, "Offices of Christ" (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1988), 476.
- 25 Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 366-67.
- 26 Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans, New International Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 696.
- 27 I do not have the space to discuss here the question of who is the individual threatened with being yet "cut off" in Romans 11:21-22, if the reference is to God's elect. It seems to me best to take the representative view of this individual as seen in the commentaries of John Calvin, Charles Hodge and Everett Harrison, among others, on these verses. In the words of Hodge, "Paul is not speaking of the connection of individual believers with Christ . . . but of the relation of communities . . . . There is no covenant or promise on the part of God, securing to Gentiles the enjoyment of these blessings through all generations, any more than there was any such promise to protect the Jews from the consequences of their unbelief" (op. cit., p. 370).
- 28 Elsewhere in this issue Fred Zaspel discusses the subject of law in much greater depth.

- 29 Examples of various uses include the Lutheran characterization of law (=commands) as the opposite of grace (=promises) and the common Puritan use which identified "the law" with the Decalogue.
- 30 *ANC, The Epistle of Barnabas*, 1:138: "[God] has therefore abolished these things [i.e., incense, new moons, etc.], that the new law of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is without the yoke of necessity, might have a human oblation."
- 31 Ernest Kevan marshalls the evidence in *The Grace of Law* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 184-85. They did not, however, think of this law as a new law, but as the "moral law of God," which they identified with the Decalogue.
- 32 Ernest Kevan, op. cit., p. 184.
- 33 Quoted in Alec R. Vidler, *Christ's Strange Work* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1944), 50, from Origen's *In Josuam*, ix, 8.
- 34 Ned B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Guardian, 1944), 198-99.
- 35 Thomas Vincent (*The Shorter Catechism Explained from Scripture* [Banner of Truth, repr. 1980], 113), e.g., asks the question, "Is there, then, anything included, as commanded in the moral law, but what is expressed in the ten commandments?" Though he does not answer the question directly, it is clear that he intends a negative answer.
- 36 In Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, "Westminster Catechism" (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 1168.
- 37 Of the many sources for the *Shorter Catechism* I have chosen to quote from James Benjamin Green, *A Harmony of the Westminster Presbyterian Standards* (Collins/World, n.c., [repr.] 1976), p. 134. This is an out-

standing presentation of the *Standards* with commentary by Green.

- 38 See a similar criticism of this kind of treatment of the Decalogue in John Brown, *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord Jesus Christ* (London: Banner of Truth, repr. 1967), 1:197ff.
- 39 See Green, op. cit., p. 117, *Larger Catechism*, Q. 98, and *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 41.
- 40 Alec R. Vidler, op. cit., p. 54.
- 41 This idea is parallel to the suggestion heard in many places that the explicit types/antitypes of Scripture encourage us to seek out others that are not explicit. For discussion and literature cited, see an article by Scott Swanson in *Trinity Journal*, 17:1, No. 1, 67-76.