

DE TESTA

MENTO SEV FOEDERE

Dei unico & æterno

Heinrychi Bullin

geri breuis

EXPOSITIO.

IESVS

HIC est filius meus dilectus in quo
placata est anima mea, ipsum audite.

Matthæi 17.

TIGVRI, IN AEDIBVS CHRI

STOPH. FROSCH. MENSE

Septemb. An. M. D. XXXIII.

A Brief Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God

by Heinrich Bullinger

JESUS

This is my beloved Son,
in whom my soul is reconciled.¹

Hear him!

Matthew 17:5

Zurich: Christopher Froschauer,
September, 1534²

1. "*Hic est filius meus dilectus in quo placata est anima mea, ipsum audite.*" Bullinger used this sentence, or a variation of it, on the title page or on the last page of all his books, always using *placatus*, or the German equivalent *versonenen*, rather than *placitus*, which would be the correct Latin translation of the Greek word *eudokesa*, used in Matt. 17:5 (see Matt. 3:17, where *eudokesa* is also used).

2. Almost two years prior to the first publication of Calvin's *Institutes* in 1536. Bullinger had finished the manuscript of this treatise in November 1533. It was written during a period when the Anabaptists seemed to him to be an especially dangerous threat. For a detailed analysis of the circumstances under which Bullinger wrote the treatise, see J. Wayne Baker, "Church, State, and Dissent: The Crisis of the Swiss Reformation, 1531–1536," *Church History* 57 (1988): 135–152.

A Brief Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God

Heinrich Bullinger

*Translated by Charles S. McCoy and J. Wayne Baker
With notes by J. Wayne Baker*

This brief discourse sets forth the one and eternal testament or covenant of God, which both the prophets, inspired with the divine spirit, and the apostles, commissioned by the Son of God, explained by writing entire books. As I begin, I especially pray for your spirit, Christ Jesus, in order that, imbued with it, I may be able to discourse clearly, briefly, soberly, and according to the analogy of faith concerning a subject that is difficult but at the same time necessary and useful.

First, however, in order that greater clarity and more certainty may enter into the entire discussion it seems that a specific, definite meaning ought to be established for the word “testament,” (2b) because its usage varies in Scripture.

The Meaning of Testament

The Hebrew term *berith*, which the Septuagint always translated into Greek as *diatheke* and the Latin writers rendered as *testamentum*, sometimes signifies the inheritance that results from a will (*testamentum*). The Greek verb *diatithemai* means “to make a will,” and therefore the phrase *o diathekas ooio* means “I leave something to heirs in a will.” And to the Latin writers “to make a testament” means “to make known one’s final will.” By the word *testamentum* they mean “a testimony (*testimonium*) of our will.” The jurist Ulpianus³ said that the lawful expression of our will was anything that one wants to be executed after one’s

3. Domitius Ulpianus (d. A.D. 228) was a Roman jurist who made major contributions to Roman legal literature.

death. Gellius⁴ and after him Lorenzo Valla⁵, contesting the etymology of the jurists, (3a) deny that the word *testamentum* is a compound word composed from *contestatio mentis* (“the calling of the mind as a witness”). They assert, rather, that it is a simple word derived from “an invoking as witness” (*contestatione*), just as, likewise, “a small shrine” (*sacellum*) is not composed from “sacred” (*sacro*) and “small room” (*cella*) but is a diminutive form of “a sacred place” (*sacro*). Further, from *testor*, which means “I make a will,” comes *testator*, “one who makes a will.”⁶ And it is with this meaning that Christ used the word in Matthew, ch. 26 [v.28], as did Paul in his letters to the Galatians, ch. 3 [15–18], and to the Hebrews, ch. 9 [15–17]. It is used extensively in this sense also among jurists. Second, the Greek phrase *diatithemai anti toi suntithemai* means “I make a pact” and “I make an agreement.” Therefore, *diatheke* in the singular means “a pact,” “an agreement,” “a promise,” that is, in Greek *epaggelia*. And among Latin writers, from *teste* (3b) comes the word *testor* which properly means “I give evidence” and “I affirm by oath.” For this reason *testamentum* in Scripture is used several times for a “promise,” not of any sort, but one confirmed by oath. Zechariah says in Luke [1:72, 73]: “In order that he might remember his sacred testament which he swore to our fathers that he would give us.” And Peter says in Acts [3:25]: “You are sons of the prophets and of the testament which God swore to our fathers.” Finally⁷, *diatheke*, or *diathekai*

4. Aulus Gellius (b. ca. A.D. 130) was a Latin author whose major work, *Noctes Atticae*, or *The Attic Nights*, consisted of excerpts from authors of his day on a variety of topics, such as language, philosophy, law, and history.

5. Lorenzo Valla (ca. 1407–1457), an Italian Renaissance humanist, was a pioneer in textual criticism. It was Valla who exposed “The Donation of Constantine,” the document on which the papacy based its claims to temporal supremacy, as a forgery. He was also quite important in setting the Renaissance standards of Latin literary style.

6. This entire discussion was lifted almost verbatim from Gellius’s *Noctes Atticae* 7.12.1–6. See *The Attic Nights of Aulus Gellius*, with an English translation by John C. Rolfe, 3 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London, 1927), 2:123.

7. Bullinger published his own German translation of this treatise, also in 1534 (*Von dem ewigen und ewigen Testament oder Pundt Gottes* [hereafter cited as *Von dem Testament*], which has been consulted to clarify Bullinger’s meaning in the Latin version. Here it is clear from the German that Bullinger has presented three different meanings of *testamentum*: the first meaning had to do with a last will or the inheritance itself; the second meaning signified a promise confirmed with an oath; the third meaning was covenant (*foedus*). He went on to state clearly that the third meaning—covenant—was the basic meaning of *testamentum* in this treatise. Although the Latin text uses only *rursus* and *item* to make the progression from point to point, leaving the possible impression that the second and third meanings could simply be shades of meaning, the German makes it clear that three different meanings are being discussed, using *item* and then *zuletzt* (*Von dem Testament*, sigs. Aii(v) and Aiii).

in the plural, means “pact” and also “covenant” (*foedus*), to which the Hebrew word *berith* most closely corresponds. *Berith* is derived from *barah*, that is, “he made a pact” or “he entered into a covenant.” Moses used it with this meaning in Genesis 15 and 17. We too shall use it in this way in the present treatise.

(4a) Latin grammarians think that *foedus* derives from the circumstance that in the making of a covenant (*foedus*) a pig was “horribly” (*foede*)⁸, that is, cruelly, slain. Indeed, a covenant is properly made between enemies when ending a war. Though it puts forth proposals for harmony and fellowship, yet it is still entered into solemnly and with special ceremonies and conditions. For in the covenants of the ancients there were certain ceremonies, conditions, restrictions, or principles, or, if you prefer, main points. Under these conditions one may enter into a covenant for its duration. The chief negotiator who confirms⁹ the covenant gives agreement with formalized words and ceremonies. Then, immediately, the records containing the account of the entire document are written, describing and transmitting the covenant in writing to posterity. In fact, in wills also, (4b) the arrangement is scarcely different, inasmuch as the heirs are first written down, then the inheritance is described, as well as those who are to be excluded from the inheritance. Everything is recorded and then signed and sealed so that no fraud may occur. However, as long as the death of the testator does not occur, the will does not take effect. But what is the purpose of this discussion? The point is that the very God who has graciously deigned to call this mystery of the unity and fellowship with the divine by a human expression has at the same time followed human custom, on account of the weakness of our nature, in making the covenant or instituting the testament. Thus, I shall be acting most appropriately if I proceed in this order, by the way of the conditions of the covenant, to discuss the one and eternal covenant of God.

8. *Foede* is an adverb derived from the adjective *foedus*—“foul” or “horrible.” But the etymology and the play on words here are more complex than that. To make a covenant is *ferire foedus*, one meaning of *ferire* being “to kill.” Thus the metonymy “to make a covenant” from “to kill a sow cruelly.” See Karl Ernst Georges, *Ausführliches Lateinisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch*, 12th ed. (Hannover, 1969), 1:2723.

9. The Latin term is *fetialis*. In the German edition, Bullinger used *pater patratus* (*Von dem Testament*, sig. Aiii). In either case, the reference is to the chief priest of a group of priests, who concluded and sanctified treaties and covenants (Georges, *Handwörterbuch*, 1:2742–2743; 2:1507).

(5a) The Record of the Covenant

The following words of Moses, which are set forth in this passage from Genesis, ch. 17 [1–14], testify to the fact that God entered into a covenant with us according to human custom: “Now when Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said to him: ‘I am the almighty, all-sufficient God. Walk before me and be upright.¹⁰ And I will make my covenant between me and you and between your seed after you in your generations an everlasting covenant, that I may be your God and the God of your seed after you. And I will give to you and to your seed after you all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God. And you on your part will keep my covenant, you and your seed in their generations. This is my covenant (5b) between me and you and your seed after you. Every male from among you will be circumcised. The male, however, whose flesh shall not have been circumcised on the foreskin, his soul will be blotted from his people, because he has made my pact void.’” These are the words of the covenant, not written down verbatim but brought together and united in a summary. If you examine these words carefully, you will see that God has acted according to human custom at every point. First, the passage explains who bound themselves together, namely, God and the descendants of Abraham. Second, the text states the conditions under which they bound themselves together, specifically that God wished to be the God of the descendants of Abraham and that the descendants of Abraham ought to walk uprightly before God. Third, it is explained that the covenant is made between them forever. And finally, the entire covenant is confirmed with a specific ceremony (6a) in blood. I should explain why there is no mention of legal records. Indeed, in place of such records are the words of Moses which we have already quoted, or, if you prefer more abundant words, the whole canonical Scripture. Thus nothing now remains except to speak specifically about each aspect of the covenant.

God’s Covenant with the Descendants of Abraham

The ineffable mercy and divine grace of the eternal God are proven, first, in that God offers this covenant not in any way

10. It is quite clear in the German text that Bullinger uses *integer* in the moral sense: “*Schick dich vor mir zewandlen und biss ufrechter redlicher dingen/ trüw und ganggheylic an mir*” (“Prepare yourself to walk before me and do upright, honest things, true and holy to me”). (*Von dem Testament*, sigs. Aiii(v)–Aiiii.)

because of the merits of humans but rather out of the sheer goodness which is God's nature. I do not know whether humans are capable either of conceiving this mystery fully or conveying how praiseworthy it is. For what greater deed than this has ever been heard of in the world, that the eternal power and majesty, the immortal (6b) all-knowing God, the creator of the universe, in whom all things subsist, by whom all things exist, and through whom all things are preserved, joined himself in covenant with miserable mortals corrupted by sin. This indisputably is the origin of our religion and its primary point: we are saved solely through the goodness and mercy of God. Without doubt, this is what the prophet of God proclaimed to the whole world in a sacred song: "The Lord is holy and full of grace, slow to anger and great in mercy. He does not blame forever nor does he bear anger to eternity. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor punish us according to our iniquities. As far as the heavens are high (7a) above the earth, so does God's steadfast mercy prevail toward those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far does God remove our transgressions from us. As a father has mercy on his children, so does the Lord have mercy on those who fear him. For he knows how we are made, and that we are from the dust" [Psalm 103]. So whatever we are and whatever things have been created for our use and delight, we owe to the divine goodness and mercy. For God created all things for the benefit of humans. God has exhibited in many ways powerful demonstrations of his steadfast mercy toward humanity. Thus he raised up the faithless and fallen Adam immediately and ordered him to be of good hope (Genesis 3). And when the entire progeny and posterity of Adam deserved to be completely destroyed because of heinous crimes, (7b) God not only exercised justice when the flood engulfed the earth but also showed his steadfast mercy abundantly to Noah and his sons (Genesis 8). Why did he manifest the same mercy most clearly before the eyes of all mortals by making the everlasting covenant with Abraham and his posterity? So that I can now say the same of God and his goodness that Sallust¹¹ said of Carthage: "It is far better to be silent than to say little." But I prefer this saying above all others: "The same God who made covenant with Abraham and his

11. Gaius Sallustius Crispus (86 B.C.–ca. 34 B.C.) was a Roman historian. This quotation is from his work, *The Jugurthine War* 19.2. See Sallust, with an English translation by John C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1947), p. 175.

descendants is the greatest possible God." Now we shall say a few words about the descendants of Abraham.

Who Are the Seed of Abraham?

And indeed one may easily get in trouble here unless one proceeds on the royal highway. For those people who consider only the conditions of the covenant and in fact disregard the grace and (8a) promise of God exclude infants from the covenant. It is true that children not only do not observe the terms of the covenant but also do not even understand these terms. But those who view only the sacrament, ceremony, or sign of the covenant count some in the covenant who are really excluded. But if you consider each one separately, one at a time, not only according to the conditions of the covenant but also in terms of the promise or the mercy of God, and the age and reason of a person, then you will realize that all those who believe from among the Jews and the Gentiles are the descendants of Abraham with whom the Lord made the covenant. In the meantime, however, their offspring, that is, their children, have by no means been excluded from the covenant. They are excluded, however, if having reached the age of reason they neglect the conditions of the covenant.

In the same way, we consider children (8b) of parents to be children and indeed heirs even though they, in their early years, do not know that they are either children or heirs of their parents. They are, however, disowned if, after they have reached the age of reason, they neglect the commands of their parents. In that case, the parent no longer calls them children and heirs but worthless profligates. They are mistaken who boast about their prerogatives as sons of the family by virtue of birth. For he who violates the laws of piety toward parents is no different from a slave; indeed, he is lower than a slave, because even by the law of nature itself he owes more to his parents. Truly this debate about the seed of Abraham has been settled for us by the prophets and the apostles, specifically that not everyone who is born of Abraham is the seed of Abraham, but only he who is a son of the promise, (9a) that is, who is faithful, whether Jew or Gentile. For the Jews have already neglected the basic conditions of the covenant, while at the same time they glorified themselves as the people of God, relying on circumcision and the fact that they were born from the parent Abraham. Indeed, this error is denied and attacked not only by Christ along with the apostles but also by the entire body of the prophets.

***The People of the Old Testament, as a Spiritual People,
with Spiritual Promises***

We bring up this topic because of those who think that the first mention of the spiritual seed of Abraham was made in the New Testament. Compare Jeremiah, ch. 4, where the prophet examines the true circumcision, with chapter 2 in Paul's letter to the Romans; compare what Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the other prophets wrote about the fidelity of the descendants of Abraham with what (9b) Christ said according to John, ch. 8, and with what Paul argued in his letters to the Romans and the Galatians. Then it will be quite clear that it was the same Spirit who spoke through the prophets and the apostles, both before and after the birth of Christ concerning the true seed of Abraham. Consequently, those things spoken in Scripture against the carnal seed and in favor of the spiritual seed were directed against those adults who have neglected the true piety of the soul while trusting in their birth and circumcision, or, if you prefer, trusting in the flesh and in the ceremony of initiation and taking pride in external things. Nevertheless, these passages of Scripture do not exclude children, born to faithful parents, who belong to God because of the grace and the call of the One who promises.

Children of the Faithful as the Seed of Abraham

For in this passage God has promised through grace and said, "I will be your God and the God of your seed (10a) after you." And even more clearly, "This is my covenant between you and me and your seed after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised." Again, lest anyone think this saying applies only to people of the Old Testament but not also to those of the New Testament, let him listen to Paul speaking in Galatians: "Those who are Christ's are the offspring of Abraham" (Gal. 3:29). Again, "Those who are heirs are the descendants of Abraham." Yet again, "Those who are holy are the seed of Abraham." If you connect these statements—they are children of Christ, they are heirs, they are holy—it follows automatically that the children are the seed of Abraham and they are in the covenant. Here the words of Christ are pertinent: "Let the little children come to me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 18:16). Also this passage from Paul: "For the unbelieving spouse is made holy through marriage to a faithful one. Otherwise, your children (10b) would be unclean, but they are now holy" (1 Cor. 7:14). Undoubtedly this happens through the

benefits. Furthermore, God wished to reveal to them what his nature is, or how his statement “I will be your God” should be understood. The other promises also serve as an explanation of this: “I will bless you and (13b) I will magnify your name and you will be blessed. I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” [Gen. 12:2–3]. Again, “Fear not, Abraham, I will be your shield and your exceedingly great reward” [Gen. 5:1]. Once more, “I will multiply you as the stars of heaven and I will make you the father of many peoples” (Gen. 15 [5]).

From all these promises we are able to gain a full understanding that this God is the highest good, that he is our God, that he is all-sufficient, that he has made a covenant with us, and that the promises and conditions offered in that covenant are not only material but also spiritual. Most important, as explained to the Galatians [3:16] by the apostle, Abraham was promised the Lord Jesus, in whom is all fullness, righteousness, sanctification, (14a) life, redemption, and salvation (1 Cor. 1 [30]), of whose fullness we have all received, grace for grace (John 1 [16]), because it pleased the Father that all fullness dwell in him, and through his blood on the cross he has made peace with everything that is in heaven and on earth (Col. 1 [19–20]). And this same Jesus is the inheritance itself which has been bequeathed to those who trust in the one and eternal covenant of God, the summary of which (if anyone seeks a recapitulation) is this: The God of heaven, that highest and eternal power and majesty, through whom all things exist, in whom all things consist and are moved, wishes to be the God of Abraham and of his descendants. That is, God offers himself for their benefit, seeing that he is sufficient for all those things necessary for humans, so that now he might promise to them power and every kind of strength. Namely, (14b) God will be their protector, confederate, and savior, who is going to strengthen the otherwise weak human race in spirit and in flesh, and who through Christ the Lord is going to liberate the human race from sin and from eternal death and give eternal life. These things have to do with the office and participation of God in this covenant, the God who appeared to us under the cover of the land of Canaan and the blessed seed as the horn of plenty and all the treasures of heaven, and invited the entire human race to enjoy these blessings (Isaiah 55). Now let us listen to what God in return demands and expects from us.

The Duties of Humans and What They Owe to God

God says, “You will keep my covenant, you and your descendants in their generations. Walk before me and be upright.” These, I say, are our duties; these things must be observed by us. And God says, “You (15a) will keep my covenant,” that is, “You will trust me alone for all your needs in every situation and you will be faithful with all your heart to me alone.” For thus also Moses explained in Deuteronomy 13 [4], saying, “Follow the Lord your God; fear him, keep his commandments, and listen to his voice! Serve him and cleave to him.” What follows next in the actual words of the covenant? “Walk before me.” It can be said that nothing is more brief, nothing more evident than these words—except that the phrase “to walk” according to Hebrew usage is the same as “to live,” which we express idiomatically, “Prepare yourself to walk and to live uprightly.”¹² And God adds, “before me,” which means “according to my will and pleasure.” Therefore the meaning is, (15b) “Arrange your life in every respect according to my will.” Then, with these rather clear words, “and be upright!” God further explains what his will is and how we can walk before him. For firmness and sincerity of faith, along with innocence and purity of life, is that integrity and straight way by which the saints walk before God. Thus Moses in Deuteronomy 10 [12] also says, “And now, Israel, what does your Lord ask of you, except that you fear the Lord your God and walk in his ways, love him and serve the Lord God with your whole heart and with your whole soul?” And Micah 6 [8], “I will show you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: namely, to use good judgment and to love mercy and to walk carefully before your God.” (16a) But what is central among these many things? It is our duty to adhere firmly by faith to the one God, inasmuch as he is the one and only author of all good things, and to walk in innocence of life for his pleasure. For anyone who has neglected these things and has sought false gods, who has lived shamefully or impiously, and who has worshiped God more with ceremonies or external things than with true holiness of life, will be excluded, disinherited, and rejected from the covenant.

12. “*Schickt dich wohl und raecht zewandlen und zelaebenn.*” This is the only German sentence in the Latin edition. In the German edition, Bullinger wrote: “*Schick dich vor mir zewandlen. Das ist also vil geredt: flyss dich wohl und recht vor mir zelaeben*” (*Von dem Testament*, sig. Biii).

grace and mercy of the Lord. But here some object: While the parent is unfaithful, a child born of him is excluded from the covenant. And they call “unfaithful” the one who profanes the name of the Lord with an impure life who otherwise confesses it with his mouth. But these who make such an objection do not consider the fact that the parent is once for all inscribed among the people of God and that the guilt of the parent does not spread to the children. The Lord has made this clear in the 18th chapter of Ezekiel. The sons of Israel were circumcised and called the people of God even though they had been born of evil parents, those whom the Lord struck down in the desert because of impious complaining. For God said, “Your sons and little ones who today (11a) are ignorant of the difference between good and evil will enter the land; I will give it to them, and they shall possess it” (Deut. 1:39). In like manner, the apostle clearly demonstrates in 1 Corinthians, ch. 7, how the Lord is gracious toward those children who are born of only one parent who confesses the name of the Lord. Now is it probable that the most merciful God acted less favorably and more harshly toward our children after he sent the Savior than he had acted toward those children whom he had chosen as his possession before Christ had been sent? No! Since it has been established sufficiently that their children, even those who have been born of evil parents, were circumcised and inscribed among the people of God, we have no doubts at all about the children of Christians, and we recommend that these children of the faithful be freely received into the church by baptism. (11b) I will say more about these things elsewhere. Concerning those things which have been explained up to this point, I think it is clear who are the seed of Abraham and that the inheritance is owed to this very seed.

The Conditions of the Covenant

Now we come to the conditions of the covenant. Those who are connected by covenants are joined together by certain regulations, so that each of the parties might know its duty, namely, what responsibilities the primary party might have toward the other, and what in return the primary party might expect from the other.

The Promises of God and His Offer of Himself in Covenant

Therefore God, who holds the primacy in this covenant, first expresses and sets forth the divine nature, as much as he wishes

to show himself to us. Then God further explains what he demands from us in return, and what is fitting for us to do. For that reason with solemn words and with a great authority God thus declares: "I am (12a) the abundantly all-sufficient God, the horn of plenty." That is to say, he alone is that power and that good which suffices for humans. He who is in want of nothing supplies everything for everyone. Eternally he lives, moves, and acts from the divine energy itself. For this signifies at once everything that the Hebrew word *Shaddai* comprehends. By this name, the Lord wonderfully, felicitously, and concisely sets forth his unity, his omnipotence, and all his moral excellence and goodness. But since too great a brevity might generally lead to obscurity, God soon adds an explanation: "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your seed after you in order that I may be your God and the God of your seed after you." For it is not sufficient to have believed that God exists or even that he is all-sufficient unless you further (12b) believe that the same omnipotent God, the creator of all things, is your God, indeed the rewarder of all who seek him (Hebrews 11). Now in order that he might clearly show what it means to be the all-sufficient God, the God of the faithful and the rewarder of those who fear him, God adds as vivid examples for the covenanted people: "I will give to you and to your seed after you all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession, and I will be their God" [Genesis 17:8].

***The Promises to the Ancients
Not Entirely Carnal***

Although these things promised about the land of Canaan were fulfilled physically (for the Lord also demonstrates his goodness in matters relating to the necessities of this life), they are nevertheless set forth with many terms about the eternal inheritance, especially life in heaven. Paul makes this point clearly with these words that he writes to the Hebrews, ch. 11 [13–16]: (13a) "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob died in faith, at a time when they had not received the promises but had seen them from a distance and believed them, and had embraced them; and they confessed that they were strangers and foreigners in the land. For those who said these things declared that they sought a homeland. Yet if they had in mind that land whence they had come, they had the opportunity of returning. But now they expect a better land, that is, a heavenly one." The Lord spoke in like manner about the land of Canaan, but in doing so he also included other greater spiritual gifts and

The Covenant—The Subject of All Scripture

The Covenant as a Target at Which All Scripture Aims

The entire sum of piety consists in these very brief main points of the covenant. Indeed, it is evident that nothing else was handed down to the saints of all ages, throughout the entire Scripture, other than what is included in these main points of the covenant, although each point is set forth more profusely and (16b) more clearly in the succession of times. For whatever things have been said in the Holy Scripture about the unity, power, majesty, goodness, and glory of God are included in this one expression of the covenant: "I am the all-sufficient Lord." Whatever promises have been written about bodily blessings, glory, the kingdom, victories, labors, and the basic needs of life, are included in this one expression of the covenant: "I will give to you and to your descendants the land of Canaan; I will be their God." In the same way, those things which have been handed down afterward at various times about Christ the Lord, both in figure and in truth, whatever has been said about his justice, about the sanctification and redemption of the faithful, about the sacrifice, the priesthood, and the satisfaction of Christ, about the kingdom and eternal life, and, further, about the calling of all peoples, (17a) about spiritual blessings, about the abrogation of the law, about the glory of the church gathered from Gentiles and Jews, are foretold in this single promise: "And all the nations will be blessed in you and you will be the father of many peoples; wherefore from now on your name is not Abram, but you will be called Abraham." Again, those things which have been said about faith in God, about the vanity of idols, about worshiping the one God, about the calling upon and the reverence of the one God, and also about true justice, about judgment, and about cultivating equity and charity—all of these things that have been transmitted through various laws, through the many discourses of the prophets, through the epistles of the apostles, and finally through the Gospel narratives, have been summed up in these few words: "You, however, shall keep my covenant, you shall walk before me, and you shall be complete or upright."(17b)

A Collation of the Entire Scripture Around the Main Points of the Covenant

Compare, if you will, the law, the prophets, and the very epistles of the apostles with these main points of the covenant, and you will discover that all of them return to this center as if

to a target. For the law (as we shall speak about this first) truly teaches, with the Lord himself as a witness, partly the love of God and partly the love of the neighbor. This is precisely what is taught by the main points of the covenant. In fact, the Decalogue itself seems to be almost a paraphrase of the conditions of the covenant. For what is said in the brief phrase, "I am the all-sufficient Lord," is more fully explained by the Decalogue in approximately the same way: "I am the Lord your God who led you out of the land of Egypt." Again, what is proclaimed very concisely in the words of the covenant, "You will keep my covenant, you will walk before me, and you will be (18a) upright," is explained this way in the Decalogue by means of a specific list: "You shall not have other gods before me. You shall not make images for yourself. You shall not use the name of the Lord in vain. You shall keep the Sabbath holy. You shall honor your parents. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery," and whatever other commands of this sort there are that describe and establish true integrity.

We shall speak about ceremonies a little later, when we discuss the relationship of the Old and New Testaments.

Civil or Judicial Laws

The judicial or civil laws provide rules for the maintenance of peace and public tranquillity, for punishing the guilty, for waging war and repelling enemies, for the defense of liberty, of the oppressed, of widows, of orphans, and of the fatherland, and for the making of laws of justice and equity (18b) relating to the purchase, the loan, possessions, inheritance, and other legal subjects of this sort. Are not these things also included in that very condition of the covenant which prescribes integrity and commands that we walk in the presence of God? Now if anyone thinks that this opinion of ours is not valid or clear enough, let him consider the very deeds of Abraham, whom the apostle calls the father of all believers (Rom. 4 [11]). Abraham certainly endured faithfully within the covenant of God and walked uprightly before him. Insofar as judicial, civil, or external affairs are concerned, Abraham conformed to certain principles in punishing crimes, in making covenants, in declaring war, in preserving possessions and public peace—and these principles are nothing else than what purity of the soul, sincerity of faith, and love (19a) of virtue and the neighbor dictated. Indeed, much later, Moses, speaking for God, taught the Jewish people to observe the same principles (insofar as it

pertains to the same substance and sum of the matter). For these are also the obligations of piety, or necessities for the holiest churches, so necessary that without them they could not properly exist, and they have never existed apart from them without danger. In connection with that, according to the word of the Lord (Matthew 13), there will always be tares in the field of the Lord, nor will it ever be without them. For the Lord did not wish the tares to be uprooted because their uprooting would ruin the wheat, that is, the righteous and the holy church. So Jesus said, "Allow both to grow, lest while you gather together the tares you at the same time also uproot the wheat with them." But who doubts that those same (19b) tares ought to be cut off with the scythe of justice, when their excessive and untimely strength and quantity tends toward the subversion of the church? Furthermore, the saints consist not only of spirit but also of flesh. As long as they live on this earth they do not entirely lay aside the human shape and totally turn into spirit. But also their laws are made to order external dealings among people in their social life. For these reasons, they need magistrates and the works of the civil law covering many subjects. What is more strange than the insanity that drives those who exclude¹³ the magistrate from the church of God, as if there were no need of his functions, or who consider his functions to be of the sort that cannot or ought not to be numbered among the holy and spiritual works of the people of God? (20a) Nevertheless, those deeds of Abraham which are truly judicial are praised by the Holy Spirit of God as among the first and the most excellent works. Therefore that same Abraham, inasmuch as he was named the father of all believers by the apostle and called a friend of God prior to the law, possesses a foremost place in the true church of Christians; he nevertheless exercised judicial powers. Now we turn from the law to the prophets.

The Prophets

The prophets write partly history and partly discourses, which some call declamations and others sermons or homilies. In these histories they provide examples, indeed, nothing else but examples, of this covenant, just as Moses does in his

13. This is the closest Bullinger came to actually naming the Anabaptists in the entire treatise. For a succinct expression of the early Anabaptist attitude toward government, see the Schleithem Confession of 1527, especially article 6 (John H. Yoder, trans. and ed., *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* [Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1973], pp. 39–40).

historical narrative, where one can see how God stood firm in his covenant, how he was the God of the seed of Abraham, (20b) that is, their all-sufficient defender, their salvation and their greatest happiness. One can also see how he led them into the land of Canaan where he made them into a most powerful kingdom, how he destroyed the enemies of the seed of Abraham by his powerful hand and mercifully protected his own people. Finally, one can see how the saints walked before him uprightly, that is, how they adhered to the one God through true faith and worshiped him in holiness of life, and furthermore, how some of them neglected this covenant and were punished for their impiety. Therefore the prophetic histories are like living paradigms of this covenant.

In their discourses the prophets also deal with nothing else but those same terms of the covenant, teaching what the nature of God is; how good he is; how just, powerful, (21a) truthful, kind, and merciful he is; how he must be served in truth, faith, righteousness, and love. Furthermore, they severely condemn crimes, especially the forsaking of the covenant, idolatry, desertion, and faithlessness, as well as murder, the oppression of the poor, usury, injustice, rape, extravagance, adultery, and other shameful crimes. They also urge repentance, they promise the rewards and the benefits of God, and they threaten plagues and the fearful punishments of God. Finally, how very clearly do they speak about the seed of Abraham, about Christ and his blessing, about the kingdom and its whole mystery, and about the calling of the Gentiles and the glory of the church. Indeed, at times they seem to have woven together not only prophecy but also a history of past events. (21b)

Christ, the Seal and Living Confirmation of the Covenant

What am I to say about Christ the Lord, who, not only in every teaching but also in his most astounding incarnation, explained and confirmed in a marvelous and living way that eternal covenant of God made with the human race? For when the true God assumed true humanity, then he no longer acted with words or arguments, but by that very event he bore witness to the greatest mystery in the entire world, namely, that God admitted humans into the covenant and into partnership, indeed that he bound them to himself with an indissoluble bond by the highest miracle of love, and that he is our God. Thence, truly we also believe the name given to Christ in Isaiah [7:14], when he is called "Emmanuel," which is to say, "God with us." Thence the Gospel writers (22a) recount those outstanding and

innumerable miracles and benefits of Christ, giving many examples. For in these ways Christ declared that he is the beneficent God, and what is more, the cornucopia, father and *Shaddai* of the human race. The death and resurrection of Christ are the most certain testimonies of divine mercy, justice, and life restored, with which God has revealed himself, poured out his entire self for us, blessing us and receiving us who have been cleansed by him into partnership and into the eternal kingdom. John the Evangelist said all of these things with a few, but heavenly, words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we saw his glory, the glory which was fitting for the only-begotten (22b) from the Father, full of grace and truth. Of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth appeared through Jesus Christ" (John 1 [1, 14, 16–17]). Hear that greatest mystery: God was made human, that is, was totally made one of us and has dwelt among us. Hear that his power and glory have brought light into the world, and for no other reason except to draw us by the most beautiful benefits into his love, he who is our fullness, the God *Shaddai*. For as Paul says, "In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and you are completed and perfected in him" (Col. 2 [9–10]). In this way, therefore, the Lord Jesus confirmed and unfolded the first part of the covenant, by this very fact (23a) pointing out that God is the God *Shaddai*, the blessing and the eternal happiness of the seed of Abraham. The other part of the covenant, as we have said, explains what God in turn demands from us and what sort of people we should be, which the Lord no less diligently and clearly has placed before our eyes in Christ. He prescribed in the conditions of the covenant: "Walk before me and be upright." Therefore, when Christ the Lord came into this world, and entered into that path of God, he left us a living example which we might follow. For in the life of Christ, which the Gospels have described rather diligently as in a mirror so to speak, we see what we ought to follow or avoid, what pleases or what displeases God. Those (23b) sayings of the Lord found in John's Gospel are pertinent here: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me does not walk in darkness, but has the light of life" (John 8 [12]). Or, "I have given you an example, that just as I have done, so also you should do" (John 13 [15]). That text in John's first epistle also pertains to this: "He who says that he abides in Christ ought himself to walk as that one walked" (1 John 2 [6]). These things concern the life and living example of Christ.

Now there is no reason for me to treat what pertains to his

teaching at any length. For who does not know that he taught partly faith in God and partly love of the neighbor? The former explains the first aim of the covenant, the latter the second. For faith believes that God is the highest good, that he is righteous and beneficent toward humanity. And love (24a) is the fountainhead of innocence and uprightness of life.

The Apostles

We come to the apostles of Christ, the heralds of the Lord, who also are in agreement on this matter. They teach what the nature of God is, that he alone is good, righteous, saving, and *Shaddai*, that he has given to us the promised blessed seed of Abraham, and that in this one person there is salvation, benediction, life, and redemption. Furthermore, they teach who the heirs of this testament are, who the posterity of Abraham is, so that they are seen to have undertaken a most purposeful exposition of this covenant. Why does the apostle Paul declare more than once that he invents no new doctrine but teaches the whole of Christianity on the authority of the Old Testament? In the first chapter of Romans [vs. 1–2] he says that he was made an apostle (24b) and set apart for the preaching of God's gospel which God had promised beforehand through his prophets in the sacred Scripture. Furthermore, pleading his case before King Agrippa and Festus, the ruler of the Jews, Paul openly testified that he had taught nothing other than what the prophets had predicted would come to pass (Acts 26 [22]). Therefore, since the apostles recognize the prophets as teachers and masters of the true faith, and since it is absolutely certain that the prophets were interpreters of that single eternal covenant, who does not see that everything in sacred Scripture is directed to that testament or covenant as to a most certain target?

The Unity of the Covenant

The third point now follows from the above facts: the testament or covenant is both one and everlasting. For in plain words the Lord himself says among the other statements about his covenant: (25a) "I will make my covenant between me and you, and between your seed after you in their generations as an everlasting covenant, so that I may be your God and the God of your seed after you." In all that we have said up to this point, we have established nothing about true religion in relation to posterity that the ancestors had not already heard, certainly insofar as it pertains to the substance of the matter. Abraham

was clearly justified by faith alone, without ceremonies, prior to circumcision and the law (Rom. 4 [1–13]). He saw the day of the Lord Jesus and rejoiced (John 8 [56]). Furthermore, he hoped for an everlasting fatherland, holding this earthly land in contempt, and thus searched for an eternal land, not merely a carnal or earthly one (Hebrews 11 [8–10]). Moreover, the apostles of Christ, indeed Christ the Lord himself, told us why Abraham must be imitated in faith and innocence (Luke 19 [9]). (25b) There can be no sameness or equality among things that are contrary by nature. If, therefore, the faith and innocence of Abraham had not been the true Christian faith and piety, then the Lord would have falsely proposed that he should be imitated by Christians (Isa. 51 [1–2]; John 8 [39–40]). There is therefore one covenant and one church of all the saints before and after Christ, one way to heaven, and one unchanging religion of all the saints (Psalms 14 and 23). And, indeed, I would offer several testimonies about this matter if the very point which we have treated up to now were not convincing to the doubter with its clarity and simplicity. But if anyone is more influenced by the force of testimonies, let him listen to the Lord himself speaking in Matthew: “A multitude will come from the east and from the west and will sit (26a) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while children of the kingdom will truly be cast forth into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8 [11–12]). Also in the Gospel of John [10:16], Jesus speaks more clearly about the gathering together of the church of the Gentiles: “And I have other sheep which are not of this fold, and it also behooves me to draw them in, and they will hear my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd.” In addition to this, several very clear parables in the Gospels are pertinent, especially the one about the wedding feast and those which deal with the vineyard (Matt. 20 [10–16]; 21 [33–41]; 22 [1–14]). In these parables the guests and the laborers are changed, but the wedding feast and the vineyard always remain the same. Not dissimilar to these is the parable of the apostle about the olive tree and the branches (Rom. 11 [17–24]). For the same olive tree always remains, the same tree, but (26b) the shoots of a wild olive tree are grafted in with the natural branches that have been broken off. Also, with eloquent words to the Corinthians, Paul says, “I do not wish you to be ignorant, brethren, that all of our fathers ate of the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of the spiritual rock which accompanied them. But the rock was Christ” (1 Cor. 10 [1–4]). But if our opinion and Paul’s

opinion from these texts seem to anyone to be a new interpretation, he should know that Doctor Aurelius Augustine drew the same conclusion as we did from this very text of Paul to the Corinthians. Augustine's words in his *Commentary On the Gospel of John*¹⁴ support this interpretation: "The just ones who preceded the advent of our Lord Jesus who humbly came in the flesh believed in him who was to come in the same way that we believe (27a) in him who came. The times are different, but not the faith. Although the times did indeed differ, we see that those of both times entered through the one doorway of faith, that is, through Christ. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, that he came in the flesh, that he suffered, rose, and ascended. Now we believe that *all of this*¹⁵ already has been fulfilled, just as you heard the words in the past tense. Those fathers who believed that he would be born of a virgin, that he would suffer, would rise, and would ascend into heaven are in the fellowship of this faith with us. For the apostle made these things clear when he said, 'We have the same spirit of faith, just as it is written, "I believed and for that reason I have spoken, and we also believe and for that reason we speak."' The prophet (27b) said: 'I believed and for that reason I have spoken' [Ps. 116:10]. The apostle says: 'We believe and for that reason we speak.' In order that you might know, however, that *there is one faith*, listen to him saying, 'Having the same spirit of faith, we believe.' And so in another place he says, 'I do not wish you to be ignorant, brothers,' " and what follows, for this text of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10 is familiar. Furthermore, Augustine, writing elsewhere¹⁶ and speaking of the church, says, "The

14. *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus CXXIV* 45.9, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina* (Paris, 1844–1864), 35:1722–1723 (hereafter cited as *PL*). Philip Schaff, ed., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (New York, 1886–1889), 7:252 (hereafter cited as *PNF*).

15. The emphasis is Bullinger's.

16. *De baptismo contra Donatistas*, 1.16. 25 (*PL* 43:123; *PNF* 4:422). Donatism, a schismatic movement in the church in North Africa, began in the early fourth century. The dispute centered on whether *traditores*, those who had given their copies of the Scripture to the authorities during the Diocletian persecution, were eligible for priestly office. The Donatists argued that ordination, baptism, and other sacerdotal activities were not valid when performed by a *traditor*.

In A.D. 411, Augustine arranged a conference between the Donatists and the orthodox Catholics. Of those who attended, 286 were Catholic bishops and 279 Donatist bishops. The imperial commissioner declared Augustine and the Catholics the winners of the three-day disputation. The Donatists were ordered to conform under severe penalties, including death. Most of Augustine's writings against the Donatists came prior to A.D. 412, including *De baptismo*, which he wrote about A.D. 400.

same church that gave birth to Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Abraham also at a later time gave birth to Moses and the prophets before the coming of the Lord; and that very same church gave birth to our apostles and martyrs and all good Christians. For it gave birth to everyone who appeared, born at different times but joined together in the fellowship of one people; (28a) and the citizens of the same city have experienced the hardships of this pilgrimage, just as some are now experiencing them, and others will experience them until the end of the world." From all of this I think it is truly evident that there is only one church and one covenant, the same for the patriarchs and for us.

***The Source of the Terms
"Old" and "New" Covenant***

Many arguments are found in Scripture that at first glance seem clearly to distinguish between two covenants, two peoples and two spirits, such as that which we read in Jeremiah 31 [31–32]: "Behold the days will come, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah, not according to the covenant I made with their fathers," etc. And again in Ezekiel 36 [26], "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit (28b) in your midst." Again in Galatians 4 [24], "These are the two covenants." Now I will explain from whence these terms were born and how they should be understood. To begin with, it is certain that the nomenclature of the old and new covenant, spirit, and people did not arise from the very essence of the covenant but from certain foreign and unessential things because the diversity of the times recommended that now this, now that be added according to the contrariety of the Jewish people. These additions did not exist as perpetual and particularly necessary things for salvation, but they arose as changeable things according to the time, the persons, and the circumstances. The covenant itself could easily continue without them.

Ceremonies

Indeed, the ceremonies are of this sort, as well as the Aaronic priesthood itself, the law prescribing the manner of sacrificing, purifying, (29a) and slaying, and even the choice of foods, what type of tabernacle had to be constructed, and innumerable other things of this sort. For the holy patriarchs were without such things—Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph—

but they were nevertheless pleasing to God at a great cost through faith, and they attained salvation without such things. Wherefore Paul speaking to the Galatians, ch. 3 [16–17], says, “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It does not say ‘to his seeds’ as of many, but only of one, ‘And to your seed,’ which is Christ. Moreover, I say, the law which originated 430 years later does not make void this covenant established earlier by God in Christ, so that it would abrogate the promise.” Hence the patriarchs were saved by the blessing of the covenant, not of the law or of the ceremonies. (29b) For just as Abraham believed in him who had said, “In you all the nations of the earth will be blessed” (Gen. 22 [18]), so the fathers of Abraham preceding him in time believed in him who had said, “The seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent” (Gen. 3 [15]). Then you ask, Did God introduce the law without a plan, without a definite reason, without a benefit?

The Institution of the Law

Far from it. Rather, during the time that the souls of the seed of Abraham, that is, the Jews, had been corrupted by their long stay in Egypt, to the extent that they were not only ignorant of the ancestral religion and of the covenant itself but were also going over daily more and more to Egyptian idolatry and to the entire way of worship of the Gentiles, at that time it pleased the wise and merciful Lord to come to the aid of the collapsing covenant with certain supports.

First, therefore, he (30a) restored the main points of the ancient covenant, but unfolded it more fully, and inscribed it on tablets of stone with his own finger. There is no mention, however, of ceremonies in these events up to this point. For enough had already been prescribed for the faithful. But when they continued to be unfaithful and wicked, the burden of worthless ceremonies was thrown on their shoulders, ceremonies that the patriarchs did not have. Nevertheless, it is evident that the burden was imposed for an urgent reason, for this aim and with this plan, so that they would not introduce the worship of strange gods. Therefore, God instituted his own worship, and he declared that it was pleasing to him (Psalm 50), which he actually despised, so that, with this plan, he confirmed the covenant, and in addition to that he enveloped the mystery of Christ in these ceremonies as types. Nor has this concept been created recently in our own land; rather, it has been brought to light from prophecies and gleaned from the faith of the church

fathers. (30b) For Tertullian, in his *Against Marcion*, book 2,¹⁷ says, “No one should blame God for the burden of the sacrifices, or the troublesome scrupulosities of the ceremonies, and oblations, as if he had desired such things for himself who clearly exclaimed, ‘What are the multitude of your sacrifices to me and who requires them from your hands?’ (Isa. 1 [11–12]). But one perceives God’s diligence, by which he wished to bind together in his own religion the people, who were otherwise inclined toward idolatry and transgression, with obligations of this sort, ceremonies by which the superstition of the time was carried out, that he might call them away from these things, ordering them to be performed toward him as if he desired them, lest the people lapse into making images. But in the very ordinary transactions of life and of human relationships at home and in public, even to the care of (31a) small vessels, he marked out every detail so that, when encountering these legal disciplines everywhere, they might not at any moment be apart from the care of God.” So writes Tertullian.

Now, therefore, in respect to the Decalogue and civil laws, no difference at all has arisen regarding the covenant and the people of God. For everywhere the love of God and the neighbor, faith, and love maintain the mastery. The diversity has arisen from the minds of men and from the additions foreign to the covenant, so that the covenant, which is one among all faithful people, began to be called “old” and “new,” “carnal” and “spiritual,” on account of certain alien elements and rather superstitious people. Indeed, it is called the “old” because the “new” follows it (as the rule of relations demands); it even promises the remission of sins, which it offers through Christ; and it also teaches faith and love. But it cannot be called “new” entirely on account of these facts, since it teaches nothing new. For it receives from the old tradition those things which we already have received (1 John 2 [7]); consequently it is called

17. *Adversus Marcionem* 1.18–19 in *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Vindobonae, 1866–), 62:359–362 (hereafter cited as *CSEL*). Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers. Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325* (Buffalo, 1885–1926), 3:311–312 (hereafter cited as *ANF*).

Tertullian (d. ca. 225) was the first great church father who wrote in Latin. In earlier writings, Bullinger depended heavily on Tertullian for patristic support on the covenant. In *The Covenant*, Bullinger quoted him here and then mentioned him later in the treatise.

Marcion, a gnostic Christian, lived in the middle of the second century. He made an absolute distinction between Judaism and Christianity. He taught that the God of the Jews and of the Old Testament was the Demiurge, who was opposed by the all-powerful, good God of the new covenant, who appeared in the person of Christ.

“new” from the fact that all the ceremonies were fulfilled by Christ, whom alone it proclaims. Since they were types and shadows of eternal things, they became obsolete. So, that ancient religion, which was thriving in that golden age of the patriarchs before the law was brought forth, now flourishes throughout the entire world, renewed and restored more fully and more clearly by Christ and made perfect with a new people, namely, the Gentiles, as though a new light had been introduced into the world. For thus also Paul (32a) speaks concerning this matter both when he addresses the Hebrews (ch. 8) and the Ephesians (ch. 2). With a similar method and plan the Scripture called carnal not those people who persevered through true faith in the covenant of God but those who depended more on carnal things than on the enduring, spiritual terms of the covenant or the promise of God. I summon Paul as a witness here, who said long ago, “For these are two covenants” (Gal. 4 [24]); he said just before that, “Tell me, you who wish to be under the law, have you listened to the law itself? For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one from a slave girl, the other from a free woman” (Gal. 4 [21]). From this we conclude that the carnal person is one who wishes to be under the law. Furthermore, not all the seed of Abraham is under the law or carnal. For he is called carnal who depends on legalities without knowledge and without the spirit and who believes firmly that he can be saved through these legalities. (32b) For ceremonies also have their own spirit, which Paul explained in detail in many passages in his letter to the Hebrews. But when they despised and did not understand the spirit and purpose of the ceremonies, they abused the law. Furthermore, the true sons of Abraham are free and they put their trust in the promises of God. Accordingly, antiquity also had the spiritual Israel. For they judge falsely who judge the whole from the part, as those who stigmatize—not without insult to the saints of God—all the fathers preceding the coming of the Lord by the name of the carnal Israel. They do not consider that this knot to be untied is a synecdoche, a common trope in Scripture. But, lest some declare that they laugh at tropes, even though we have already sufficiently established our case, I will (33a) nevertheless provide for their sake three testimonies of the greatest men in religion. Each of these men claim that Israel was a spiritual people and, what is more, that the prophets had taught the same things concerning legal matters that the apostles taught. Jeremiah, first of all, in his seventh chapter [vs. 21–23] wrote these words: “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Join your burnt offerings

to the sacrifices, your holocausts to the victims, and eat the meat. For I did not speak with your fathers and I did not instruct them about burnt offerings and sacrifices on the day when I led them out of Egypt; but rather I gave them this command, saying, 'Hear my voice and I will be your God and you will be my people; walk in every path I have commanded you so that it might be well with you.'" And with these words he clarifies what had (33b) been the doctrine of the prophets concerning legal matters, namely, what is the highest of all the commandments of God, the highest commandment of the covenant—obedience or faith itself. It is evident that the saints were tested by this commandment, and not by laws. Truly the Lord ordered those legal things, but with another intention by far, namely, that he might come to the aid of the collapsing covenant and that he might divert all of his own from idolatry, weld them together in faith, not that he might justify worshipers by those means but that he might foreshadow the righteousness to come, Christ. But because they were unwilling to understand, they were accused most severely by the prophet in this passage. The Lord therefore approved of the spirit and not the flesh among the Israelites. For that reason he had formed a spiritual people from the Israelites before Christ was born, because he disapproved of the carnal people so much. (34a) The most holy martyr of Christ, Stephen, in the seventh chapter of Luke's Acts of the Apostles, also proved with almost countless examples from the ancients that faith in God before the law, under the law, and after the law was pleasing to God, not ceremonies; and he established that the saints, that is, all the patriarchs and the prophets, and the righteous before the birth of Christ, worshiped God in faith and with purity of life, not with external things. Behold you have an entirely spiritual and voluntary people. Why does the apostle Paul also declare this in almost the same way in his eleventh chapter to the Hebrews with examples drawn from the patriarchs from the beginning of the world almost up to the very time of Christ? Since these men held to these things in this manner, who is there who does not see that the names "old" and "new," both of the people and of the Covenant, (34b) cannot tear asunder the very covenant and the very church of the ancient people and of our people? Even the Spirit is the same in both Testaments. But with regard to the carnal things and the transgressions of those whose sins brought them to naught in Babylon, God said that he would give a new spirit by which he meant the abundance and riches, the gift to be imparted to the faithful by Christ. We have argued the truth of this matter in our commentaries on the

epistles of Peter. Up to this point I have wished to assert the unity of the covenant and to point out the reasons why it began to be called “new” and “old.”

The Ways We Surpass the Ancients

Now in order that I might conceal nothing in this matter, I will briefly mention how the church of Christians, which was established after the birth of Christ, excels. (35a) First, we are indeed better off than those who lived under the law with this name because, having been freed from the entire burden of ceremonies, we have a close connection with the ancient and distinguished religion, namely, that of the patriarchs, which rested upon faith and innocence without ceremonies, that is, on the basic terms of the covenant. Second, we rejoice then in the evident truth that the shadows have been dispersed by the bright light of the gospel and that the typological foreshadowings have been fulfilled. Third then, God has made our church superior to the church of our dead fathers before the coming of Christ because we believe that the Christ has come to us, who they believed would come and whom they awaited with the greatest desire. He has given his Spirit most abundantly; he has now spread his glory throughout the whole world; and he has perfectly completed all things. (35b) For this reason, that very elderly man, Simeon, counting himself very fortunate, cries out, “Now, Lord, dismiss your servant in peace according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel” (Luke 2 [29–32]).

Matthew, Chapter 5

Some people use Matthew 5 to object to this viewpoint. But they do not see that the Lord Jesus in that elegant and divine sermon of his did not attack either Moses or the prophets, as if they either felt or taught anything different from Christian doctrine, but he wished to correct the error of the people and to teach the true nature of the law. For the wickedness of the time and the ignorance and avarice of the Pharisees had corrupted everything. Wherefore, witnessing with eloquent words, (36a) just before he began the exposition of the law, he said, “Unless your righteousness is more abundant than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven.” Therefore, Christ attacked the Pharisees, not the

spirit of the law itself or of the prophets. Just a little before that he had said, "I have not come to dissolve the law but to fulfill it." Moreover, in this sermon he taught that the law was the will of God, which is entirely holy, pure, and of a most refined spirit. The law also demands the mind and the soul of humans, to the extent that it forbids covetousness. It cannot be fulfilled by humans of corrupt flesh, who do not see the plan of the whole sermon, which is to lead us to a knowledge of ourselves and to bring us (36b) to an utter denial of ourselves so that we might throw ourselves totally on the mercy of God. In the meantime, we should conform all our plans and deeds to the eternal and most pure will, that is, the law of God, not in the usual way but with the highest and most exact devotion. This and this alone is to walk carefully with the pure God (Micah 6 [8]), who is holy and wishes us also to be holy (Lev. 19 [2]).

Paul in 2 Corinthians 3

Those wandering in the same errors do not see that Paul in 2 Corinthians 3 argues against false apostles forcing legalities on the church of Christ (as he makes evident in his other epistles). For against their superstitions, nay, even their impiety, he asserts the glory of the gospel which is more illustrious than legalities. Indeed, in that passage he does not speak of the entire law (37a) but only of that part of law which is abolished. At the same time, he does not command that everything in the law and the prophets should be taken literally; but on the other hand he understands spirit not in any way you please, as is their custom, but rather as the Lord Jesus himself, who is the fulfillment of the law for the justification for all who believe (Rom. 10 [4]).

The Ebionite Mixture of Law and Gospel

Furthermore, they falsely accuse us of the Ebionite heresy.¹⁸ Eusebius writes in this way about the Ebionites in his *Church History*, book 3, chapter 27¹⁹: "They feel that the law must be

18. The Ebionites were Jewish Christians in the early church. The Ebionites rejected Paul as an apostate; they used only the Gospel of Matthew; they saw Jesus as a man only; and they kept the Jewish Sabbath in addition to the Christian Lord's Day. Many of their teachings can be found in the writings of the earlier Qumran sect of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

19. *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.27, in J. P. Migne, ed., *Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Graeca* (Paris, 1857–1887), 20:274–275. (hereafter cited as *PG*). Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series* (New York, 1890–1900), 1:159 (hereafter cited as *PNF2*).

kept, and they do not think that faith alone in Christ is sufficient for salvation (as I have said, they mix together legal things with gospel). Therefore they keep the fleshly observance of the law. Moreover, at the same time they reject all the epistles of the apostle, and they call him an apostle of the law.” (37b) Nor did Irenaeus,²⁰ Tertullian, or Augustine²¹ report anything different. Wherefore our doctrine of the single and eternal covenant of God, and of the abrogation of legalities, is far different from their blasphemy. There is no one who does not already know this.

Deuteronomy, Chapter 5

But what will we say to the words of the Lord in this passage of Moses in Deuteronomy, chapter 5 [2–3]? “The Lord our God made a covenant with us on Horeb; not with our fathers did the Lord enter into this covenant but with us who exist and live at the present time.” Augustine in his commentary on Deuteronomy, chapter 5, question 9,²² explains this text as a synecdoche. He understands these fathers to be those whom God struck down in the desert. (38a) “They,” he says, “who did not enter into the land of the promise do not belong to this covenant, but their sons did belong, I say, if they who were not over twenty years old when God had spoken on the mountain, so that at that time they could not be counted in a census. Nevertheless they could have been nineteen years of age or less all the way to boyhood, in which case they could have seen and heard and retained in memory all those things which were said and done.” Moreover, Johannes Oecolampadius, in his published commentary on Jeremiah, explains it almost in the same way: “Before God, that eternal covenant which is arranged differently according to the diversity of the times is one. And also in relation

20. Irenaeus (d. ca. 200) was bishop of Lyons. He seems to have had some real influence on the development of Bullinger’s covenant theology. But Bullinger mentioned Irenaeus only twice in connection with the covenant in his early writings. This is the second reference. The first is in *De origine erroris, in divorum ac simulachrorum cultu* (Basel, 1529), sig. Bii(v), where he also referred to Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius, and Augustine as fathers who taught the covenant. For Bullinger’s use of the fathers and their influence on the development of his covenant thought, see Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, pp. 19–23.

21. Aurelius Augustine (354–430), bishop of Hippo, had the greatest influence of any church father on Bullinger. Augustine was involved in several doctrinal controversies. His writings against the Donatists and the Pelagians had a particularly important impact upon the theology of the Protestant Reformers.

22. *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII* 5.9 (CSEL 28, 2:374–375).

to the inner human realities, it always has been one and will remain one, not only as it is in eternal predestination. . . . (38b) Notice, however, the great diversity of the covenants. The Lord made a pact with Abraham with words and demanded nothing except obedience from him. But under Moses many strange and dreadful things were added, things known not only to the one leader but things evident to all the people. Then it was fortified with so many circumstantial legalities, all of which return to those ten words of the tablet of the covenant."²³

The Promise of the Land of Canaan

Now the objection is easily disposed of that the land of Canaan, wars and victories, Judaic glory and happiness, are things least suited to the ways of Christians, for whom nothing awaits except the cross and exile, in as much as the Scripture says about them, "All who wish to live piously in Christ will endure persecution" (2 Tim. 3 [12]).

For no one denies that the promise of the land (39a) of Canaan was bound to a specific place; but neither can anyone deny that the same promise or rather a similar promise of earthly things was made equally to all the Gentiles. In fact, Abraham himself, to whom the promise of the land of Canaan was made, did not (as Stephen said in Acts 7 [5]) even put the mark of his foot on the land; but in the meantime, he acquired great wealth, just as his posterity, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, did. For even though they did not take possession of the promised land, they were nevertheless very famous because of their riches. Now I believe that this was done by the Lord as an example for all the Gentiles, from which they might learn that they also would lack nothing if they feared the Lord after the manner of the patriarchs. And you will find many more promises of this type throughout both Testaments (Psalm 37; Matt. 6 [25–34]; Acts 14 [17]; and 17 [26–28]; Heb. 13 [5–6]). (39b) In respect to the happiness of the fathers, however, it is certain that they hardly enjoyed a perfectly good fortune in these

23. Johannes Oecolampadius, *In Hieremiam prophetam commentario libri tres* (Argentinae, 1533), sigs. Rii–Rii(v). As indicated in the text, Bullinger deleted several lines from Oecolampadius. Oecolampadius was not as supportive as Bullinger would have the reader believe. Although the passage quoted by Bullinger seems to support his view of only one covenant, the material preceding and following, as well as the portion deleted, supports a two covenant scheme, old and new, carnal and spiritual, corresponding with law and gospel (Oecolampadius, *In Hieremiam*, sigs. Ri–Riii(v)).

lands. In fact, they entered the kingdom of God by means of the cross and many tribulations.

The Cross, Peace and Victory of the Saints

Everyone knows how many trials Abraham endured in the course of that journey, so I need not call to mind the rest of the details. The patriarch Jacob never enjoyed any good fortune that was not soured by various severe hardships. There is no reason for me to relate any details about Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, and all the other distinguished figures. No single one of them would suffice as an example in enumerating their many hardships, calamities, and labors undertaken for the sake of the Lord. Even the sacred writers themselves have scarcely been able to relate everything in their many books. What about the fact that (40a) the faithful people of Judah endured no less persecutions on account of their piety and faith, sometimes from their own wicked kings, sometimes from foreign tyrants, than the church of Christ itself suffered from the impious and blasphemous Caesars? For as this church has Nero, Domitian, Maxentius, Julian, Decian, Severus, Valerian, and Diocletian, so the ancient church had Pharaoh, Ahab, Joash, Manasseh, Jehoiachim, Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar, and Antiochus. Truly the priests and prophets of the ancient church deserved to be made examples for Christian martyrs. For the Lord even said so in the Gospel of Matthew: “Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom (40b) of heaven. Blessed are you when men shall attack you on account of me. Rejoice and exult, because your reward in heaven is great. For in this way did they persecute the prophets before you” (Matt. 5 [10–12]). On the other hand, there is no doubt that there have always been myriads of saints who have lived piously in Christ, who were never sent into exile or killed for the sake of the faith. Therefore Paul’s statement, “All who wish to live piously in Christ will suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3 [12]), does not refer to a common occurrence, but is a consolation for the afflicted. There are also different kinds of persecution.²⁴ Not only does he who is thrown into prison or hung from a tree endure persecution but also he who (41a) is tested by different adversities and temptations. The latter customarily happens to pious people otherwise

24. Here Bullinger made a marginal reference to Augustine’s *Contra Gaudentium Donistarum Episcopum* 2.13 (CSEL 53:272–274). Gaudentius (d. A.D. 410) was the Donatist Bishop of Brescia. Augustine wrote this work about A.D. 420.

enjoying peace and security of mind. For even the apostle Paul, most often safe from the snares and furies of persecutors and, what is more, revived by the ministrations of the brethren, experienced severe anxieties of the soul. For the soul of a Christian is also affected by another person's distress. Wherefore the apostle said, "Who is weakened and I am not weakened? Who is offended and I am not distressed?" (2 Cor. 11 [29]; see also Rom. 12 [15] and Heb. 13 [3]). Moreover, the most holy prophet Isaiah in those chapters in which he describes the church being gathered together from the whole world, into which church he said that kings also would come, did not teach that the church should in every way and always be exposed to slaughters, so that on this earth it would be without any kind of peace, happiness, and victory (Isa. 49 [1–7]). And Doctor Aurelius (41b) Augustine in his work *The City of God*, book 5, in the final chapters,²⁵ offered pleasant and useful accounts for the reader about the victories and wonderful happiness of certain Christian kings. Likewise in *Against the Manichean Faustus*, book 22, from chapters 74 to 80,²⁶ he discusses war and the right of war in many passages, but we do not intend to consider this matter further. Up to this point, we have wished to explain what the conditions of the covenant are, that this covenant is one and eternal, and for what reasons the nomenclature "old" and "new" was adopted. Now we will include a few remarks about the ceremony and the sacrament of the covenant.

The Sacrament of the Covenant

Circumcision

Those who entered into covenants took either a ram, a heifer, or a she-goat, cut it into two parts, then passed through between the parts, (42a) testifying that if they did not stand firm by the pacts, God then should in the same manner split them in two and do away with them entirely. Indications of this rite are seen in Genesis 15 [10] and Jeremiah 34 [15]. Alluding to this human custom, therefore, God consecrates the covenant with blood and adds an explanation in plain words, saying, "And the uncircumcised male, the foreskin of whose flesh shall

25. *De civitate Dei* 5.24–26 (CSEL 40, 1:260–266; PNF 2:104–107).

26. *Contra Faustum* 22.74–80 (CSEL 25:671–683; PNF 4:300–305). Faustus of Mileve was a Manichaean leader in Carthage. Augustine's treatise against him was an answer to a polemic that Faustus had written against Christianity about A.D. 400.

not have been circumcised, his soul shall be blotted out from his people" (Gen. 17 [14a]). That which must be understood not only concerning the cut-off foreskin, but more so of the entire covenant, is that he who shall have neglected this covenant must be destroyed by an eternal curse. The reason for this follows: "Because he has made my covenant void and broken it" (Gen. 17 [14b]). Moreover, he who has broken it, through contempt of God's covenant and institution, despises the sacrament of God as useless; or, even if he does not (42b) despise the sign of the covenant which he has received, he nevertheless forsakes the covenant itself by faithlessness and moral impurity.

Infants Dying Without the Sign of the Covenant

Wherefore we conclude that infants who are born of faithful parents and who die either before they have begun to live or before they could be inscribed among the people of God with the sacred sign of the covenant cannot be damned with the support of this text. For God is speaking of despisers of the covenant who are adults. Which fact the words themselves demonstrate sufficiently, stating the matter in this way: "And the uncircumcised male on whose flesh the foreskin shall not have been circumcised, his soul shall be banished from his people," etc. We believe, moreover, such infants to be saved by the grace and mercy of God, by whom they are not prejudged as by those who judge them only according to the rites of the church. (43a)

Circumcision also had another mystery. For Paul says, "A testament takes effect only in death; it is not yet valid while the testator is living" (Heb. 9 [17]). God, however, is the testator; therefore it behooved God to die. And since he is immutable and immortal, he assumed the seed of Abraham and, in the assumed flesh, he suffered, shed his blood, and in that way, as I would express it, ratified the testament. Moreover, in order that he might hand down this mystery to the fathers in a figure, he willed that the seed of Abraham itself be circumcised, signifying that the true seed of Abraham, Christ the Lord, would confirm that covenant by his death and blood.

The New Sacraments

For this reason, the Lord Jesus himself, speaking in Matthew's Gospel about the sacrament of the new covenant, said, "This is my blood (43b) which is of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26 [28]). Hence-

forth, it was also necessary for the old sacrament to be changed and the new to be instituted. For after everything was fulfilled by the death of Christ and the covenant itself had been confirmed, certainly those signs which prefigured the future death of Christ had to be changed and, in their place, signs substituted that, with their meaning, signify the completion of the most perfect justification. That is what we attribute to the mystery of Baptism and the Eucharist. For these sacraments, instituted by God, became for the people of the new testament symbols of the covenant and of divine grace already confirmed through Christ. Thereafter, circumcision meant that one must cut off the foreskin of the heart and serve God (44a) in the obedience of faith (Deut. 10 [16]; Jer. 4 [4]). Therefore circumcision was given to those to whom the grace and the covenant of God was first offered, through the assistance and the institution of God who did not scorn being the God of little children and who also first offered himself to us out of sheer grace and said, "I will be your God." Then by that same circumcision God bound the faithful to himself, commanding that they adhere to him in faith and innocence. From all of this it is also evident that the entire covenant was contained in the sacrament of the covenant; in the same manner, the entire essence of the renewed covenant is contained in our sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist. Truly to examine these things fully at the present time would pull us farther away from our purpose. For it already shall have been enough that God indicated in instituting the sacrament of the covenant that he wished to consider (44b) the customs of mortals who, since they exist not only in soul but also in body, are often led by means of visible things and signs into the contemplation of invisible things. Therefore God gave the sacraments, which the ancients called the visible signs of invisible grace. Further, he gave circumcision and the Passover to the ancients, but to us who are his people after Christ suffered, he gave Baptism and the Eucharist. And for the rest, what is visible and invisible in these sacraments and what is their power and efficacy, it has been dealt with elsewhere. Now we shall speak about the records.

The Documents of the Covenant

The final step in making testaments or covenants is the composition of documents, or, if you prefer, records, comprehending and transmitting to posterity the entire essence and testimony of the matter transacted.

But these records (45a) were also chosen as the names of the

covenant or testament. For we refer to the written records of the covenant or testament as the covenant or the testament itself, when in truth they are not the covenant or the testament but only the exposition of the conditions and the testimony of the entire transaction. The Lord did not bother to have any records written for the ancient patriarchs, for they bore the covenant in their hearts, inscribed by the finger of God. But to their posterity God gave what they longed for—the entire true religion received from their fathers, almost as from hand to hand, carved on stone tablets by Moses, which he called the records of the covenant and the testament, undoubtedly with that plan and for that reason which we have already explained. Later, lest anyone might find (45b) anything lacking, he imposed on Moses himself, then on the prophets, and eventually on the apostles of the Lord, the duty to write fitting and complete books about this matter. From the very contents of these books, they have deserved the title “Old” and “New” Testament among all peoples in every age. Undoubtedly this is true also because they explain abundantly how that covenant entered into with Abraham was to be kept by the ancient people and how that covenant led them to life under the hope of the Christ to come through various means, types, and ways in religion. Truly these books teach how the covenant was renewed and consecrated in a new way by Christ, how all the types were fulfilled through him, and how a new people, namely, the multitude of the Gentiles, was called into the unity of faith, (46a) and established in the true religion, and led into eternal life through Christ. These are books of such truth and righteousness that all learned and holy men of all ages have believed that eternal life and the faith of the worshipers of the true God could be firmly established on their teachings. For Isaiah cries out, “If they shall say to you, ‘Consult the sorcerers, the diviners, the soothsayers, those who do incantations,’ should not every people consult its gods about the living as well as the dead? Hasten even more, therefore, to the law and to the testimony” (Isa. 8 [19–20]). Then Christ the Lord says, “They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them; and if they do not listen to them, neither will they believe if someone rose from the dead” (Luke 16 [29, 31]).

Later on, if any dispute arises among the heirs about an inheritance, they immediately consult the records (46b) for themselves and thus they place their confidence in these witnesses, in order that they might do everything according to the rule of the records. In the same way, if any strife arises in the matter of religion about the true or false worship of God, let us consult the

records of the covenant, the books of each Testament. Let us believe them, let us establish everything according to these books. For the two greatest lights of our religion, David in Psalm 19 and Paul in 2 Timothy 3, testify abundantly that all piety and righteousness have been perfectly embraced in these books.

Epilogue

The Antiquity of the Christian Religion

Such are the thoughts, most splendid readers, that I wanted to share with you concerning the one and eternal testament or covenant of God. Truly, those things which belong to this covenant—its conditions, the place and purpose of its sacrament, and what is commanded by its records—have been put together by me by virtue of grace from the Lord. (47a) I have done so partly in order that I might serve the brothers who so often earnestly request such an exposition from us and partly for those whose great depravity requires it. Then too, I have done so partly in order that I might indicate in passing the clarity, simplicity, and antiquity of the Scripture and of our religion, which today is ill-spoken of by many people, as if it were heretical. Indeed, the oldest religion of the Gentiles is idolatry, or the worship of images. It is, in fact, older than great men of fame may otherwise compute. For there are those who in the times of Jupiter, or a little before, believed that the temples were established for the worship of new gods. But the opinion of Herodotus²⁷ in his second book of histories and of Strabo²⁸ in the seventeenth book of his Geography appear to be more probable. These men (47b) asserted that the Egyptians were the first worshipers and the creators of the gods, from whom the rest of the nations accepted idolatry. But to those who diligently compute dates, it is clear that Jupiter is younger than Moses by several centuries. But Moses testified not only that the Jewish people, steeped in idolatry in Egypt according to the example of the Egyptians, set up an image to the god Apis in the desert but also that the zeal for idolatry flourished in the times of the patriarchs. Now the Jewish religion, which I understand to be defined in time by circumcision and laws, is also ancient, seeing that it began partly in the time of Abraham

27. Herodotus, *Histories* 2.37–76, in *Herodotus*, with an English translation by S. D. Godley, 4 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 1:319–363.

28. Strabo, *Geography* 17.1–2, in *The Geography of Strabo*, with an English translation by Horace Leonard Jones, 8 vols., Loeb Classical Library (London, 1932), 8:2–153.

and partly in the time of Moses. But the Christian religion is older by far than such things. For Abraham is declared justified in the sacred Scripture before he was circumcised. (48a) There are also those prior to Abraham—Noah, Enoch, Seth, Abel, Adam—who pleased God through faith without circumcision. It is annoying that in the present day the Turkish and papal religions are counted as examples of ancient religions. But it was not many centuries ago, about the year A.D. 630, that the former issued from its most corrupt and impious founder, Mohammed,²⁹ who blasphemed the truth. And the papal religion, scarcely any older than Islam, obscured the precepts of Christ, the prophetic tradition, and the apostolic simplicity, purity, and truth. While I say nothing here about that faith which, comprised in twelve articles, they confess by mouth together with us, I do speak about the papal dogmas and religious customs which they trust as most certain, ancient, and infallible. (48b) Some examples are masses, images, monasticism, and many other things that were unknown in the primitive holy church of God. For Albert the Great,³⁰ the chief of the scholastic theologians, referred to Gregory,³¹ the first Roman pontiff of that name, who lived around A.D. 600, as the originator of the mass. This same Gregory declared in a certain letter to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles³² (I use Gregory's own words) that antiquity permitted stories to be painted in the venerable churches of the saints for the instruction of ignorant people. I do not know how he understood antiquity, but I do know this, that the famous Lactantius Firmianus,³³ a contemporary of Constantine the Great,³⁴ said in eloquent words, "There is no

29. Mohammed (A.D. 570–632) was the founder of Mohammedanism, or Islam, and the author of the sacred writings of Islam, the Koran.

30. Albert the Great (1193–1280) was the founder of the high scholastic theology of the middle and late thirteenth century. It was Albert, along with his student Thomas Aquinas, who substituted Aristotelian logic and metaphysics for the Platonic and Neoplatonic ideas that had flourished for so long in the Middle Ages.

31. Gregory I, pope from 590 to 604, was probably not the originator of the Gregorian Chant, and he certainly did not create the mass.

32. Serenus, bishop of Marseilles from about 595 to 600, is known only by letters from Gregory I. After Serenus had broken the images in the churches of Marseilles, Gregory wrote to him that the paintings and images in the churches were there to instruct the illiterate. While commending his opposition to idolatry, Gregory deplored his violence. Serenus ignored the pope's admonitions and received a severe rebuke.

33. Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius lived in the late third and early fourth centuries. He was the teacher of Crispus, the son of Constantine.

34. Constantine the Great, emperor from 306 to 337, was the first Christian emperor. He was converted to Christianity in 312 and issued the Edict of Milan, an edict of toleration for Christians, in 313.

doubt that there is no religion at all (49a) wherever there are images.” This is close to the opinion of the Holy Bishop Epiphanius of Salamina³⁵ in Cyprus, on the basis of whose view expositor Dr. Jerome³⁶ declared publicly that human images were placed in the church of Christ against the authority of Scripture and against our religion. And Dr. Jerome, according to the authors Eutropius³⁷ and Prosper of Aquitaine,³⁸ died in the year A.D. 422. How then could Gregory use “antiquity” in defense of painting in the sanctuaries? Even if he could have brought forth the strongest support for such “antiquity,” nevertheless the prophet of the Lord, speaking with irony about images, says, “Should they not teach you?” (Hab. 2 [19]) In fact, Gregory himself assailed the worship of images in that very same letter of his. (49b) Nevertheless, the popes have not only allowed such worship but (49b) have even ordered it. And Benedict,³⁹ abbot of Cassino, whom all monks call “Father,” flourished only a little before the time of Gregory, perhaps sixty years if the supposition of Bede⁴⁰ about the calculation of the times is correct. For Jerome remembered that Paul and Anthony⁴¹ did nothing to defend pontifical monasticism. Now really, if you compare these times with ancient times, you will find that the papal religion is an utterly new thing and in no way ought it to be compared to earlier antiquity. But even though such people prefer this religion above all others, and many things are invented about its antiquity and certitude, we

35. Epiphanius (ca. 320–404) was elected bishop of Constantia, the ancient Salamis, in Cyprus in 367. He was a severe critic of Origen, whose interest in ancient Greek philosophy he saw as the source of many errors.

36. Jerome (d. ca. 420) was one of the greatest of the church fathers and a prolific author. His writings include biblical commentaries, histories, dogmatic and polemical works, and letters. His most lasting work, *The Vulgate*, was his Latin translation of the Bible, which became scripture for the entire West for over a thousand years.

37. It is not possible to identify this Eutropius. He cannot be Eutropius the Roman historian who was undoubtedly dead before 422.

38. Prosper of Aquitaine (d. after 455) was a champion of Augustine’s theology, especially his doctrine of predestination, against the nascent semi-Pelagianism in the area of Marseilles.

39. Benedict of Nursia (fl. 530s and 540s) was the founder of the monastery of Cassino, perhaps in 529, and was also the founder of the Benedictine Order.

40. The Venerable Bede (ca. 672–735) was the first great English scholar. He wrote *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, among other historical works.

41. Bullinger’s reference here is to Jerome’s *Vita pauli*, a biography of his friend Paul of Thebes, whom he considered the first hermit. Jerome wrote the *Vita*, probably in the late 370s, as a celebration of Paul’s one hundredth birthday. The other reference is to Anthony, born in Egypt about 250, who is featured in the *Vita pauli* as a younger man whom Paul met in the desert. Anthony is usually considered the first Christian hermit and the founder of monasticism. For the *Vita pauli*, see *PL* 23:17–28.

glory far more justly in the antiquity of our faith, inasmuch as it is older than the religions of both the Gentiles and the Jews. It has endured from the beginning of the world to (50a) this very day, about 6,733 years. From the birth of Christ up to the present day, 1,534 years are computed, and from the beginning of the world to the birth of our Lord, 5,199 years.⁴² We have proven that the faith of Abraham, Adam, and Christ was the same. But also Eusebius in the first book of his *Church History*, chapter 1,⁴³ asserts the same thing that we do. It will not be annoying to include his words, although we cannot include all of them. The passage is rather long, but for many reasons it deserves to be read diligently.

The Christian or Evangelical Faith, the Oldest of All

Eusebius says, "All those who are written down in the order of generation from Abraham all the way back to the first man were truly Christian in deeds and in religion, if not in name. The name 'Christian' indicates the fact that the one who believes in Christ holds to his (50b) teaching, faith, piety, and justice; devotedly adheres to divine wisdom; and pursues everything that leads to virtue. If these things are indicated by the meaning of the name 'Christian,' and designate this person as a follower of the true religion, then those holy men, of whom we have spoken above, are also acknowledged to have been Christians. Corporal circumcision did not exist with them, nor did the observance of the Sabbath (just as we do not observe it). Neither did they have any scruples about regulations regarding food, or the rest of the practices handed down to their posterity by Moses to be observed typologically and spiritually. Therefore, since there were those men who were religious without all of these observances, of whom we made mention above, who followed the faith of him whom we (51a) now follow, the faith of Christ, who frequently appeared to them and taught them those things which pertain to faith and piety, which we have established earlier, how can anyone doubt that the origin of this people commenced with those men and has been traced downward in time from them? They followed the same God, the author and guide of life, and they persisted in similar religious

42. Bullinger corrected this date in another, somewhat later, publication, where he gave the date of creation as 3969 B.C. (*Epitome temporum et rerum ab orbe condito, ad primum usque annum lothan regis iudae* [Zurich, 1565], fol. 97b).

43. It was chapter 4 of book 1, rather than chapter 1, *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.4 (PG 20, cols. 74–79; PNF2 1:87–88).

observances. And finally, this religion was so far pre-sent and pre-formed in them that they were not even considered strangers to the name itself (which certainly seems to make the only distinction); indeed, not only are they already at that time declared to be 'Christians' but also, with divine eloquence, they are called 'Christi.'"⁴⁴ And after certain other arguments, Eusebius concludes, "The religion of Christians is neither a new nor a foreign one, (51b) nor has it arisen recently. Rather, since we are permitted freely to indicate what is the truth, it was the first religion of all, originating with the very beginning of the world, from the beginning receiving shape and form by the same Christ as God, creator, and teacher." So far have I recounted the words of Saint Eusebius.

Now I ask, therefore, who is ashamed of or regrets the most difficult labors undertaken on behalf of the covenant of God, since it is now evident that from the beginning of the world all the saints have worshiped God in this covenant and have even laid down their lives on behalf of it? Who has not been greatly fortified, even though sweating in the midst of great labors, by the fact that the eternal God has bound himself to us by an eternal oath and has most faithfully kept that eternal covenant with all (52a) his saints from the beginning? For often the saints have been thrown into dangers, often religion itself has been threatened with destruction, and more often it seemed to be defeated and buried, and even God was quite frequently thought to have deserted his own people. But rising up at the right moment, God has always protected the true religion, having defeated and crushed the impious ones. This same God is immutable and eternal. This same God, therefore, even today will not fail those of his own who are bound to him in the eternal covenant, no matter how the world might be seized with madness. To him be the glory!

Psalm 25:10

All the paths of the Lord are grace and faith to those who keep his testament and his covenant!

1534

44. This is a reference to 1 Chron. 16:22 and Ps. 55:15.

Notes

Introduction

1. Ketcham, "James Madison and the Nature of Man," pp. 62–76.
2. Torrance, "Strengths and Weaknesses of the Westminster Theology," p. 48.

Chapter 1: Heinrich Bullinger and the Origins of the Federal Tradition

1. Friedrich, *Trends of Federalism*, p. 6.
2. For example, see Jürgen Moltmann and Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, *Humanity in God* (New York: Friendship Press, 1983).
3. Friedrich, *Trends of Federalism*, p. 7.
4. For a more extensive discussion of ideas of these church fathers, see Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*, pp. 19–23.
5. Oberman, "The Shape of Late Medieval Thought," p. 15. On the nominalist *pactum*, see also Oberman's *Harvest of Medieval Theology* and "Wir sind pettler," pp. 232–252.
6. Heinrich Bullinger, *Anklag und ernstliches ermanen Gottes Allmaechtigen/zuo eyner gemeynenn Eydgnoschafft/das sy sich vonn jren Sünden zuo jmm keere* (Zurich, 1528), sig. Cii(v), Cvi.
7. For an estimate of Bullinger's influence on the Reformed tradition and a complete study of his covenantal thought, see Baker, *Bullinger and the Covenant*.
8. There is no biography of Bullinger in English. Schulthess-Rechberg, *Heinrich Bullinger der Nachfolger Zwinglis*, is the most recent biography. Fritz Blanke's 1942 study of the young Bullinger (*Der junge Bullinger 1504–1531*), which covers his life only up to his move to Zurich, is again available: Blanke and Leuschner, *Heinrich Bullinger: Vater der reformierten Kirche* (1990). Leuschner has added vignettes