



Abstract from Article

FROM TESTAMENT TO COVENANT IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract

The question of testament and covenant, whether old or new, one or two, for the reformers in the first quarter of the sixteenth century concerns the relationship of God and man, man and man. A "testament relationship" will be compared to a "covenant relationship." The question is hermeneutical, soteriological, sacramental, and political, because God touches man with His left and right hand. Word, sacrament and life are interrelated in various ways for the early reformers. Therefore, I will attempt to discern the relationship between their concepts of testament and covenant. The study involves: first, the hermeneutical question of the relation of the books of the Old and New Testament-, secondly, the sacramental or soteriological question of the reality of testament and covenant described in the two books; thirdly, the historical question of the relationship of their biblical and sacramental views to the political (legal and social) realities of their day. Here I will consider only the first two questions. While many reformers not discussed below merit further consideration, I will examine the developments in Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Bucer, up to 1527.

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