

AN EVALUATION OF THE SOTERIOLOGY OF JOHN MURRAY

by

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the Rev. Walter Marshall, my pastor of old from Grahamston Evangelical Church, Falkirk, Scotland. Soon after my conversion, I met Walter. With the heart of Christ he took me under his wing and reared me in the word of God. I was a son to him, and he was a father to me. He patiently bore with all my immaturity and selfishness. Also, he encouraged me to sharpen the gift God had given to me in order to preach and teach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result, I ended up studying at ETCW.

One distinct memory I have of Walter, is that he took me to a church bookshop in Glasgow. There I found my present four volumes of John Murray's *Collected Writings*. Yet the most precious memories are those which are reflected in recounting his life. He taught me to consider myself a mere vessel of the Lord, and to pant only for a knowledge of God that leads to worship, personal sacrifice, and love for others. My prayer is that Walter may know more of the knowledge of God that deepens fellowship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praise must be given to our heavenly Father for the privilege of studying such a great man as John Murray, and for the grace of assiduity imparted to me, and for all the help afforded me. My desire is that this work will be used to glorify our God.

Quite simply, I could not have accomplished my thesis without my wife. For her labour of love supported me throughout my work, and her encouragement kept me going in difficult times. I thank the Lord that she has held a job and looked after our children, all for my sake. I thank God also for my mother-in-law, Cynthia Matthews, who, whilst my wife worked, looked after my children, and so freed me to get on with things. Of course, I cannot forget the guidance, encouragement and wisdom of my tutors, Dr Noel Gibbard (ETCW) and Professor Paul Badham (Lampeter). Special mention must be made of my friend, Pastor Gareth Williams, lecturer at ETCW. He patiently listened to my thoughts, clarifying issues and suggesting stops and balances. Moreover, he was effectively a pastor to me, sympathising with my weaknesses. Another friend must be referred to, Colin Wilson, esteemed former postgraduate student at ETCW. He brought refreshing fellowship, and sympathised with me in my struggle. The busy Dr Eryl Davies (ETCW) was always free to give pastoral and academic wisdom. And Dr Tom Holland (ETCW) taught me not to be afraid of my convictions; he was always willing to listen to my "schemes". Finally, I would like to thank each and every one whom I have not listed. God bless you all.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BDT</i>	<i>Baker's Dictionary of Theology</i>
<i>BOTT</i>	Banner of Truth Trust
<i>CW 1, 2, 3 &amp; 4</i>	<i>Collected Writings of John Murray, vols. 1-4</i>
<i>DET</i>	<i>Dictionary of Evangelical Theology</i>
<i>DJG</i>	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i>
<i>DPL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Paul and his Letters</i>
<i>EDBT</i>	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
<i>EDT</i>	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</i>
<i>ERT</i>	<i>Evangelical Review of Theology</i>
<i>EQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutes of Christian Religion</i>
<i>ISBE, fully revised</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, fully revised</i>
<i>IVP</i>	Inter-varsity Press
<i>KJV</i>	King James Version
<i>NDT</i>	<i>New Dictionary of Theology</i>
<i>NBD</i>	<i>New Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>NBD 2</i>	<i>New Bible Dictionary, new edition</i>
<i>NIDNTT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
<i>OPC</i>	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
<i>Romans 1, 2</i>	<i>Epistle to the Romans, vols. 1 &amp; 2, by John Murray</i>
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
<i>TBT</i>	<i>The Banner of Truth</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WTS</i>	Westminster Theological Seminary

## SUMMARY

John Murray (1898-1975) was professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1937-1966. We argue that Murray's soteriology was indeed a true reflection of his mentor's, John Calvin's, theology. The differences in both men's respective soteriologies were partly attributed to Calvin's *quid-qualis* distinction, within which he sometimes made contradictory statements, but which nevertheless suited his purpose of particularism. Even accepting that Calvin's theology was slightly more Christological than Murray's, both men over emphasised the sovereignty of God, in their zeal to protect salvation from human autonomy. To counterbalance Murray's over reliance upon the divine sovereignty, we saw that two things were necessary: giving weight to the bible's emphasis on the role of faith; and explicating the bible's doctrine of the believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Ironically, in respect of the latter, Murray's understanding of union with Christ as described in his doctrine of definitive sanctification was fundamental. We were with Christ in his death and resurrection, believes Murray. We then argued that Paul locates certain doctrines in the cross and others in the resurrection; and that these doctrines which arise out of historical union with Christ, are then existentially applied when coming to faith.

## ABSTRACT

*An Evaluation of the Soteriology of John Murray*

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A Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

1998 ....

John Murray (1898-1975) was professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1937-1966. Arguably, Murray's soteriology has a greater influence upon the Reformed community today than Calvin's. Developments in modern soteriology entail that Reformed theology modifies, but does not change, its soteriology. To this end, it must interact with Murray's soteriology. This thesis interacts with Murray, evaluating his soteriology.

Some modern scholars claim that the Reformed tradition is not a true reflection of Calvin's soteriology. We argue that Murray's soteriology was indeed a true reflection of Calvin's soteriology. The differences between both men were attributed mainly to Calvin's *quid-qualis* distinction, within which he sometimes made contradictory statements, but which nevertheless suited his purpose of particularism.

Even accepting that Calvin's theology was slightly more Christological than Murray's, both men over emphasised the sovereignty of God, in their zeal to protect salvation from human autonomy. To counterbalance Murray's over reliance upon the divine sovereignty, we saw that two things were necessary: giving weight to the bible's emphasis on the role of faith; and explicating the bible's doctrine of the believer's union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Ironically, in respect of the latter, Murray's understanding of union with Christ as described in his doctrine of definitive sanctification was fundamental. We were with Christ in his death and resurrection, believes Murray. We then argued that Paul locates certain doctrines in the cross and others in the resurrection; and that all these doctrines which arise out of historical union with Christ, are then existentially applied when coming to faith.

Concerning the atonement, Murray's doctrine of substitution needed supplementing, for he provided no basis for arguing that the sinner died upon the cross. Resorting to developing Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification, we concluded that when Christ as our representative died and rose, we died and rose with him. Thus, our "presence" in him in these events is the ground for God's wrath, at the moment of the death of Christ, being removed from us. Consequently, those whom Christ died for are redeemed and reconciled. Moreover, if we guilty ones were present with Christ when he died upon the

cross, then he as our representative must also have been, in some manner, guilty and a sinner- this was Calvin's view. (Both we and Calvin denied that Christ actually sinned or that he could sin.) We stated that this doctrine removed the objection against the Reformed view of substitution, which objection asked, how can God punish an innocent man?

There were two corollaries to our evaluation of Murray. First, if Christ's death was our death, then the realisation of his death (and therefore our death) must also be categorised in the same manner as its redemptive-historical accomplishment. Murray's doctrine of the atonement limited the loci of the atonement to the death of Christ. Whereas, we saw that Christ's resurrection is central to defining certain loci. Moreover, Murray does not perceive the existential nature of the loci of the atonement. Calvin's doctrine of imputation enabled him to argue that propitiation, expiation, redemption and reconciliation are events that are executed in our experience, both definitively and progressively. We agreed with Calvin; but we also said that in order to formulate the latter doctrine more accurately his doctrine of federal headship needed to be complemented by Murray's doctrine of federal headship.

The second corollary is that the designations used to describe the *realisation* of Christ's death and resurrection in the believer's experience must also be applied as designations to Christ's redemptive-historical death and resurrection. Consequently, we reasoned that Christ was called, regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified and glorified in his death and resurrection. Further, because of our union with Christ our federal head in his death and resurrection, *in him* we also were called, regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified, and glorified in his death and resurrection.

Faith is integral to the different blessings that constitute the realisation of the death and resurrection of Christ in our lives. To say, as Murray does, that effectual calling, regeneration and definitive calling precede faith is to incur an error of logic. For this reason entails that we are united to Christ prior to faith, yet are not actually saved until we exercise faith. We concluded that faith must therefore be central to each designated soteric blessing applied to us in our Christian experience. Faith is central because it is Christ working within us to will and to do the Father's good pleasure; faith is the realisation of the believer's union with Christ in his historical death and resurrection. Because faith is Christ working in us, his life, it is the ground of justification. Thus, in distinction to Murray, we agreed with Luther that we are literally justified *in* faith.

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*Section 1:*

*Introductory Matters*

## Introduction

John Murray (1898-1975) professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 1937-1966.

In this thesis, an evaluation will be made of the soteriology of John Murray. An account of his life might seem the logical starting point, but it is preferable, first of all, to establish why we are studying him. An account of his life is reserved for the next chapter.

He provides us with a fundamental principle for evaluating his own soteriology, when he says, 'Definition is basic to the discussion of any topic'.<sup>1</sup> It behoves us to describe what this thesis means by "soteriology" in the phrase "John Murray's soteriology" before the reasons for researching him are stated. Further, it is requisite to describe the theological matrix from which he will be evaluated. Lastly, the rationale will be given.

### THE DEFINITION OF "SOTERIOLOGY" IN THE PHRASE "JOHN MURRAY'S SOTERIOLOGY"

#### Murray's definition of "soteriology"

How does Murray define "soteriology"? In a letter Professor Richard Gaffin sent the curriculum for Systematic Theology at WTS, Philadelphia, during Murray's time there. He is said to teach Christology, soteriology, and soteriology (continued). Christology, here, probably consists of the plan of salvation, the covenant of works, and the person and nature of Christ. Christ's offices, humiliation and exaltation, the *ordo salutis*,<sup>2</sup> vocation and regeneration make up soteriology. Faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, and the means of grace probably constitute soteriology (continued).<sup>3</sup> The doctrines subsumed under the three strands of Christology, soteriology, and soteriology (continued) are the same that constitute Charles Hodge's definition

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<sup>1</sup> CW 4, p.339.

<sup>2</sup> What is meant by *ordo salutis* is salvation in actual possession. [Robert Strimple, Tape, *The Ordo Salutis*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).]

<sup>3</sup> The curriculum for Christology and soteriology (continued) actually reads as follows. 'Anthropology and Christology. Origin, nature and original state of man; covenant of works; the fall; the doctrine of sin; free agency; plan of salvation; covenant of grace; person and natures of Christ....Soteriology (continued) and Eschatology. Faith; justification; adoption; sanctification; the means of grace; state of the soul after death; the second advent; resurrection; judgement.'



of soteriology.<sup>4</sup> Murray used Hodge's *Systematic Theology* as his textbook for teaching systematics.

Did Murray actually adhere to the definition of Christology and soteriology given in the curriculum? In the aforementioned letter, Gaffin says, 'How insistent [Murray] would have been on this division is, I think, difficult to say.' We think Murray would have subsumed what is named above Christology under soteriology, as C. Hodge did.<sup>5</sup> Of the doctrines of the incarnation and hypostatic union, Murray writes:

The particular aspect of the doctrine of the person of Christ with which we are now concerned belongs to the locus of soteriology and presupposes all that falls within the locus of theology proper, namely, the immanent and eternal relations of the Son to the other persons of the Godhead, the Son's essential Deity, and his activities as eternal Son in the economics of creation and providence. We now deal with that phase of the doctrine of Christ's person which is directly related to the economy of salvation and, therefore, with his becoming man for our salvation.<sup>6</sup>

Murray subsumed the doctrine of Christ's person under two loci: theology proper and soteriology. Soteriology is explicated in the last sentence of the quotation as those doctrines that are 'directly related to the economy of salvation'.

Robert Strimple comments of the three strands of Christology, soteriology, and soteriology (continued) found in Westminster's curriculum, 'with the *majority of Reformed theologians*, I think its preferable to give ["soteriology"] a wider reference, and include all three of these major themes under it.' [emphasis ours]<sup>7</sup> This was probably Murray's definition of soteriology.

### "Soteriology" as defined by others

Some Reformed theologians define soteriology as the application of redemption in the life of the elect, otherwise named the *ordo salutis*. Outside the Reformed camp the distinction between Christology and soteriology is regarded as unhelpful, although the connection between both loci is 'generally recognized', says A. E. McGrath.<sup>8</sup> Reformed theology, including Murray's, has

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<sup>4</sup> *Systematic Theology* 2 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993), pp.iii-xi; *Systematic Theology* 3 (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993), pp.iii-viii.

<sup>5</sup> *idem*.

<sup>6</sup> *CW* 2, p.132.

<sup>7</sup> Tape, *Introduction: Application of Redemption* 1 (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

<sup>8</sup> *Christian Theology* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1995), p.270.

always maintained the correlation of these loci. As Murray says, 'The work of Christ can never be properly conceived apart from correct views of his person....But we...cannot arrive at a "correct conception of Christ's work merely by drawing logical conclusions from a theory concerning his person" '.<sup>9</sup>

### **What is meant by "soteriology" in the phrase "John Murray's soteriology"**

In this thesis the aim will not be to cover all the various loci that Murray's subsumes under his definition of soteriology. Our own definition of soteriology in the phrase "John Murray's soteriology" equates to the structure given in his book *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (p.7). His enumeration follows.

1. The Accomplishment of Redemption
  - A. The Necessity of the Atonement
  - B. The Nature of the Atonement<sup>10</sup>
  - C. The Perfection of the Atonement
  - D. The Extent of the Atonement
  - E. Conclusion.
2. The Application of Redemption
  - A. The Order of Application
  - B. The Effectual Calling
  - C. Regeneration
  - D. Faith and Repentance
  - E. The Assurance of Faith
  - F. Justification
  - G. Adoption
  - H. Sanctification
  - I. Perseverance
  - J. Union with Christ
  - K. Glorification

We have amended Murray's specifications, producing this list:

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<sup>9</sup> CW 4, p.345.

## Section 1: Introductory Matters

### Introduction

### Chapter 1: The Life of John Murray

### Chapter 2: An Evaluation of Murray's Theological Method, with Special Reference to Calvin's Theological Method

### Chapter 3: Union with Christ

## Section 2: The Accomplishment of Salvation

### Chapter 4: The Necessity of the Atonement

### Chapter 5: The Obedience of Christ

### Chapter 6: Satisfaction, Expiation, Propitiation and the Perfection of the Atonement

### Chapter 7: Reconciliation

### Chapter 8: Redemption

### Chapter 9: Limited Atonement

## Section 3: The Application of Salvation

### Chapter 10: Effectual Calling

### Chapter 11: Regeneration

### Chapter 12: Faith, Repentance and Assurance

### Chapter 13: Justification by Faith 1

### Chapter 14: Justification by Faith 2

### Chapter 15: Adoption

### Chapter 16: Sanctification

### Chapter 17: Perseverance

### Conclusion.

There is not only the need to describe and evaluate the individual loci that constitute Murray's soteriology, it is also incumbent upon us to give a wider perspective on his theology. Chapters 1-3 will facilitate this process. His section on the order of salvation will be examined in the chapter evaluating his methodology. The chapter Union with Christ is given an extremely unorthodox

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<sup>10</sup> This chapter includes the obedience of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, propitiation, reconciliation and redemption.

position; we include it in the introductory section, and, therefore, before the doctrine of the atonement, because it is central to understanding Murray's methodology and overall soteriology.

The second section, the accomplishment of salvation, is concerned with doctrines that Murray says are exclusive to the redemptive-historical events of Christ's life and death. The topics of obedience of Christ, redemption and reconciliation are afforded separate chapters so that their relevance for this thesis are more readily seen. "Satisfaction" is added because it is a subsection that Murray briefly touches upon outside of his *Redemption Accomplished*. Further, his chapter on the perfection of the atonement is appended to the chapter on propitiation, etc., for we fully agree with what he says of the perfection of the atonement.

In the third section, redemption applied, we have put the doctrine of glorification under sanctification. We did this for two reasons. First, in Murray's *Collected Writings* volume 2, he categorises glorification under sanctification. Secondly, we are almost in full agreement with Murray's doctrine of glorification, so that to set it apart as a separate chapter would have been a gratuity. Also, we have split the doctrine of justification by faith into two chapters. This is because, firstly, Murray has so much to say on the subject, and, secondly, the response to be made is also extensive. Breaking up the subject into two chapters makes it more digestible. Justification by Faith 1 is purely a précis of Murray's doctrine of justification by faith, whilst Justification by Faith 2 focuses upon an evaluation of his view.

### **Christology, and Christ's threefold office of prophet, priest and king**

There are some traditional elements of theology that will not enter the main body of this thesis, such as Christology, and Christ's threefold office of prophet, priest and king. Christ's atoning work has traditionally been considered as part of his priestly activity. Properly speaking, as I. Howard Marshall says, the work of Christ extends from eternity to eternity and, therefore, his work is not easy to reduce to a manageable compass.<sup>11</sup> In an attempt to make this thesis of a manageable compass, we have chosen not to spend too much time on what is traditionally outlined as the three offices of Christ, or Murray's Christology.<sup>12</sup> His soteriological writings outnumber his Christological writings by nearly 4 to 1.<sup>13</sup> But the most basic reason for

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<sup>11</sup> *The Work of Christ* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1994), p.9.

<sup>12</sup> Of course, Murray's doctrine of the atonement will be examined in this thesis.

<sup>13</sup> We have calculated that there are, at the very least, around 700 pages available on Murray's soteriology, which include his lecture notes, and around 160 pages, at the very most, on his Christology, which also include his lecture notes.

excluding Christology and the three-offices is because we agree with nearly everything Murray says of them.

## THE THEOLOGICAL MATRIX TO BE ADOPTED IN THIS THESIS

The evaluation of Murray's soteriology will be executed within a Calvinistic framework. He himself was a Calvinist. Therefore, the meaning of "Calvinist" will be defined, and because of the association of the term "evangelical" with "Calvinist", "evangelical" will also be defined.

### "Evangelical"

"Evangelical" is a wide term of which Calvinism is a branch. In the use of "evangelicalism" in this thesis, what is denoted is not its legitimate meaning as either a broad or narrow organic movement,<sup>14</sup> but a conceptual unity of theological and spiritual thought. As such, it has five basic tenets, says George Marsden, '1) the Reformation doctrine of the final authority of Scripture; 2) the real, historical character of God's saving work recorded in Scripture; 3) eternal salvation only through personal trust in Christ; 4) the importance of evangelism and missions; and 5) the importance of a spiritually transformed life.'<sup>15</sup>

### "Calvinism"/ "Reformed"

It is not only those within the Bezan-Puritan tradition who would claim to be Calvinists, for there are at least two other "theologies" that would also claim this title (which the aforementioned tradition says are diametrically opposed to what it believes concerning Calvin), namely, the neo-Calvin group<sup>16</sup> and Barthianism. Murray emanates from the Puritan tradition, and because, historically speaking, it has had sole possession of the title "Calvinism"- at least up to the early twentieth century- his theology will be labelled "Calvinistic". As was intimated, this thesis has elected to evaluate his theology from that same Calvinistic perspective or tradition. (It is

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<sup>14</sup> George Marsden, *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, editor: G. Marsden, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1984), p.ix. See, *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1995), p.2.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, pp.ix-x.

<sup>16</sup> By the "neo-Calvin group" we mean those scholars who are not necessarily Arminian in their theology, but who reinterpret Calvin's soteriology, attributing to him, so some Reformed scholars say, certain Arminian tendencies. This group would include scholars like A. E. McGrath, R. T. Kendall, Michael A. Eaton, A. C. Clifford, Ronald S. Wallace, and Tony Lane, amongst others.

inevitable that a paradigm be adopted to evaluate him from; it is recognised that it is impossible to avoid presuppositions in scientific research.)<sup>17</sup>

Donald Macleod remarks that Calvinism seeks to expound the whole counsel of God's word as revealed in scripture. He adds that the doctrine of the sovereignty of God underlies the whole of its teaching, just like granite that upholds the other strata but only surfaces now and then. Therefore, it is a caricature of Calvinism to confine it to the five points that are traditionally aligned to its doctrine of the sovereignty of God, namely, total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. Other doctrines are equally, if not more, important to Calvinism, such as 'The authority of Scripture, the deity of Christ, gratuitous justification, objective atonement, the person and work of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>18</sup>

## A RATIONALE FOR THIS THESIS

Why choose to research John Murray's soteriology? There are five reasons.

### Historical consideration

Murray's lifestyle and writings blended to help a Reformed cause in the USA and UK gain its bearings after the influx of Liberal and Barthian theologies into mainstream Christendom. Thus, Murray's theology and life are central to the progress of Reformed theology, and as such are integral to ecclesiastical history of the twentieth century.

### Tradition

Of Christ's death, he writes, 'Christ as the crucified and risen Redeemer [is] the sum and substance of [the Gospel] message'.<sup>19</sup> He quotes B. B. Warfield, '“not only is the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ embodied in Christianity as an essential element of the system, but in a very real sense it constitutes Christianity.”'<sup>20</sup> At the very least, modern exegetes should be

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<sup>17</sup> Moises Silva, Tape, *General Hermeneutics: Preunderstanding*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1984); Vern Poythress, *Science and Hermeneutics*, Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation 6, editor: M. Silva, (Leicester, Apollos Books, 1988), pp.75-79.

<sup>18</sup> "Misunderstandings of Calvinism", *TBT* 55, (1967), p.9. For Murray, the "five points" are the crystallisation of Calvinism. ["The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes III," *The Presbyterian Guardian* 1 (1935), p.163.]

<sup>19</sup> *CW* 1 p.133.

<sup>20</sup> "The Confessional Statement of the United Presbyterian Church", *Christianity Today* 2:9 (January 1932), p.14.

asking what the church has said throughout the ages on any given biblical text.<sup>21</sup> Michael Samson warns the church that it neglects traditional models of the atonement at its own peril.<sup>22</sup>

Not only are Murray's life and teachings evidence that traditional theology can retain a place in society and, moreover, grow within that society, it is also true that very few recent evangelical scholars have crystallised traditional teaching on soteriology as well as Murray.

### Modern progress in biblical studies

The mushroom in Reformed exegesis,<sup>23</sup> biblical theology,<sup>24</sup> and epistemology<sup>25</sup> in the latter part of this century has resulted in enough areas of debate to sufficiently raise question as to the *precision* of much of Reformed systematics. Doctrines like the sovereignty of God, the decrees of God, *tulip*,<sup>26</sup> and other Reformed distinctives, are not being questioned. Nevertheless, this thesis will reveal how Murray's *ordo salutis* is invalid, and also, therefore, the particular enumeration he has in his sections named Redemption Accomplished and Redemption Applied.

### Calvin and the resurgence in Calvin studies

It has been vigorously asserted by some that traditional Calvinism is not the true "son" of Calvin. It is said that neo-orthodoxy was largely behind the claim for the discontinuity between the Reformers and the period of orthodoxy.<sup>27</sup> Present day neo-Calvin scholars also contest the legitimacy of a truly "Calvin-istic" Puritan tradition. Was Murray faithful to Calvin? In order to answer this, we will have to compare and contrast Murray's and Calvin's respective soteriologies. The appropriateness of this venture is heightened when we consider the present resurgence in Calvin studies.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>21</sup> R. Letham, *Work of Christ*, p.18. See, Moises Silva, Tape, *General Hermeneutics: Problem of Language, Context, Rules of Thumb* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> "Editorial Matters", *Anvil* 11:3 (1994), p.193. See, A. E. McGrath, "The Importance of Tradition for Modern Evangelicalism", *Doing Theology for the People of God*, editor: D. Lewis, (Leicester, Apollos, 1996), pp.159-173.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., Gerald Bray, "Whatever happened to the Authority of Scripture?", *Anglican Evangelical Crisis*, editor: M. Tinker, (Ross-Shire, Christian Focus Publications, 1995), pp.62-63.

<sup>24</sup> Richard Gaffin, *Resurrection & Redemption* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1978). Cf., John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1987), p.207.

<sup>25</sup> John Frame, *Knowledge of God*, pp.264-266.

<sup>26</sup> An acrostic for total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saint.

<sup>27</sup> W. Robert Godfrey, "Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: a Question of Praxis," *Scripture and Truth*, editors: D. Carson & J. Woodbridge, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1992), p.225; M. Horton, *Calvin and the Law-Gospel Hermeneutic* (Internet, 1995).

<sup>28</sup> Horton, *Calvin and the Law*.

### Murray's influence<sup>29</sup>

For us, the main reason for evaluating Murray is that he presently has a huge influence upon Reformed theology- which is part of the wider contemporary theological scene- in the USA and UK. Over the years, we have found that some Reformed students and scholars are more likely to be dependent upon Murray for their soteriology than upon Calvin or any other theologian. Having read and listened to Richard Gaffin and Robert Strimple, both of whom are lecturers at WTS, we found that they rely very heavily upon John Murray. This is especially true of Strimple. Arguably the main reason for the popularity of Murray's soteriology is his precise *ordo salutis*. Anthony Hoekema writes, 'At one extreme is the position of John Murray, who believes that we can draw a definite order of salvation from Scripture....A mediating position on the question of the order of salvation is that of Louis Berkhof....At the other extreme from Murray's position is that of G. C. Berkouwer.'<sup>30</sup>

If we would seek to advance the precision of Reformed soteriology, Murray's soteriology has to be evaluated. Some recent Reformed books on soteriology possibly make too large a step, and concentrate on modern developments, and do not really interact with the mindset that most ordinary Reformed people probably have. For example, Sinclair Ferguson, former WTS lecturer, has written a book called *The Holy Spirit*. It is almost exclusively concerned with the Spirit's role in modern eschatology. It is a superb piece of scholarship, but it runs the risk of leaving behind the ordinary Reformed reader. We hope that this thesis will go some way to introducing modern Reformed readers to the need of developing and, especially, questioning their own traditional *ordos*.

### The aim of the thesis

The question this thesis will seek to answer is, what is the value of Murray's soteriology? Specifically, there will be three areas that flow from this. First, Murray's and Calvin's respective soteriologies will be compared and contrasted in order to determine whether recent Reformed scholarship is truly "Calvin-istic". Secondly, is Murray right to put certain doctrines under Redemption Accomplished, and then to assign different doctrines to Redemption Applied? This entails scrutinising his *ordo salutis*. So the first area is concerned with Murray's relation to Calvin; the second pertains to the accuracy of Murray's own soteriology. The third field is an

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<sup>29</sup> For more details of Murray's influence, see the chapter, *The Life of John Murray*.

<sup>30</sup> *Saved by Grace* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1994), pp.11-12.



example of how Murray's own soteriology can be developed to provide an alternative for soteriology to the traditional *ordo*. This section will be a development of Richard Gaffin's book *Resurrection and Redemption*. It is, to a considerable degree, a development of Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification. We want to take Gaffin's thesis further, in order to demonstrate that Reformed soteriology is relevant.

### Provisos

The foundation or starting point of our evaluation of Murray will be to compare him to Calvin, using this as a platform to develop our evaluation of Murray. This is to say that our thesis is not merely an exercise in comparing and contrasting Murray and Calvin.

We will step outside of Murray's theology to compare and contrast him to Calvin. Yet, the thesis will not examine every nuance of Calvin's soteriology, for Murray is the main subject of evaluation and not Calvin.

It may become evident to the reader that we have not developed certain modern soteriological trends, and others we have neglected altogether. We could have compared Murray to more modern findings in soteriology, say, for example, the development of the new exodus motif, with its thorough use of the Old Testament. But, we are not pursuing this line of evaluation, simply because we want to evaluate him on his own grounds or words, highlighting both strengths and weaknesses, and developing *his own* theology. This is to say that the main reason for not incorporating some modern trends, and for not developing and realising the potential of others for every loci we examine, is that in order to convince Reformed readers of the need to adjust the precision of their own soteriologies, we do not want to wander too far from traditional arguments and methods, and from recent developments of Murray's own soteriology. Modern findings, therefore, will be picked up and laid down merely to serve the purpose of exposing certain fallacies in Murray's own reasoning. In short, the main tool to be used to expose his *ordo* is his own theology, and the main tool to be used in seeking to improve the precision of Reformed soteriology is his own soteriology. In this context, we will use non-Calvinistic theologies only when it is thought they will profit the thesis.

Although the ideal would be to plough through the voluminous Reformed tradition, it would take a lifetime, and is therefore unrealistic for this thesis. Most of the time, therefore, it will be

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presumed that Murray's soteriology is the same as his forefathers. We will apprise the reader where we think Murray significantly diverges from the Reformed tradition.

Having justified the thesis, there is another necessary step. Essential to understanding any man's system of thought is a comprehension of the milieu in which he existed, and an understanding of his life. Of other theologians Murray writes, 'But history conditioned their work...and it is only because they occupied a certain place in history that they were able to contribute so significantly to the superstructure which we call theology.'<sup>31</sup> In approaching Murray's soteriology, a few salient aspects of his life, as well as a consideration of the environments he participated in, will be noted. This brings us to the next chapter, which is a brief account of the life of John Murray.

## Chapter 1: The Life of John Murray

To begin with in this chapter, the major influences in Murray's life will be examined. Then we will describe the influence he had on others.

### THE MAIN INFLUENCES IN MURRAY'S LIFE AND THEOLOGY

The main influences in Murray's life and theology were his father Alexander Murray, Geerhardus Vos, and John Calvin.<sup>32</sup> We will begin with a brief description of Scottish Church history, creating a background to Murray's upbringing.

#### A sketch of the decline of Calvinism in Scotland

Scottish history from the twelfth century until the nineteenth century can be construed, in one sense, as church history.<sup>33</sup> Central to Scottish religion from the time 1555 onward was the Calvinistic belief of predestination and election embodied in the *WCF*.<sup>34</sup> This conviction lasted until around 1870-1880.<sup>35</sup>

In 1712, Parliament passed the Patronage Act, which legislated that wealthy landowners could introduce ministers of their own choice, but the landowners had to patronise them. By many Calvinistic evangelicals, this was seen as a curtailment of the inherent liberty of the church of Christ to appoint her own ministers. This led to the "Disruption" of 1843, when over 450 ministers resigned from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland.

However, in the 1860's there was a palpable decline of Calvinism, particularly in the south.<sup>36</sup> By 1892, the turn from Calvinism was almost complete.

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<sup>31</sup> *CW* 4, p.5.

<sup>32</sup> There were other major influences in his life, namely B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) and Charles Hodge (1797-1878). [Geoffrey Thomas, "Memories and Reflections", *TBT* 143-144 (1975), pp.78-79.]

<sup>33</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh, Scottish Academic Press, 1985), pp.220-228.

<sup>34</sup> The *WCF* was ratified by the Scottish Parliament in 1643. The *Westminster Standards* is the collective name given to documents made by the Westminster Assembly and then assumed by the Church of Scotland in 1648. The writings are the *WCF*, the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for the Public Worship of God.

<sup>35</sup> Olive and Sydney Checkland, *Industry and Ethos: Scotland 1832-1914*, 2nd edition, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1989), p.118.

<sup>36</sup> K. R. Ross, "Free Church of Scotland, 1843-1900", *Dictionary of Scottish Church History*, editor: Nigel M. de S. Cameron, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1993), p.337.

The Liberal majority of the Free Church wanted to unite with the like-minded United Presbyterian Church. The Declaratory Act was passed in 1892 that cleared the way for union with the United Presbyterian Church. Doctrinally speaking, the Act's aim was ' "to remove difficulties and scruples which have been felt by some in reference to the declaration of belief required from persons who receive license or are admitted to office in this Church" ' and allow ' "diversity of opinion...on such points in the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Reformed Faith" '. The Church reserved the right to determine what those points were.<sup>37</sup>

Liberal Christianity tried to gain a foothold in the north. The end result was that two Highland ministers, Donald Macfarlane and Donald Macdonald, left the Free Church in 1893 to form the Free Presbyterian Church. It was committed to the theology of the old Free Church. By 1910 none of the *major* Scottish Presbyterian churches were bound strictly to the *WCF*.

### Murray's Father

It was the eighteenth century when the Calvinistic gospel began to take root in Creich, Murray's parish. Consequently, generations were nurtured from the *WCF*. In 1811, the Church of Scotland tried to impose a "Moderate"<sup>38</sup> minister upon the parish, but this merely confirmed the people in their Calvinism.

The years 1898-1923 were formative in John Murray's life. The main instrument in forming his character and theology was his own father, Alexander. Murray writes of his father's memory, ' "under God I owe none what I owe to my father." ' <sup>39</sup> Lawrence Eyres asked Murray who had influenced him most in his theology, Murray replied: his father.<sup>40</sup>

Alexander Murray was born in 1853. Both of John's parents espoused the prevailing Calvinistic doctrine. His father was a very pious man, and was ordained as an elder in Creich Free Church at

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<sup>37</sup> A. Morrison, "The Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland", *Scottish Church History*, p.339. [See, *History of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland 1893-1970* (Inverness, Publications Committee, Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, n.d.), pp.370-372; A. L. Drummond & J. Bulloch, *The Church in Late Victorian Scotland 1874-1900* (Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew's Press, 1978), pp.1-39, 263-270.]

<sup>38</sup> At that time, the term "Moderate" meant two things: Moderate trends; and Moderate ministers: those who were satisfied with the patronage system.

<sup>39</sup> *CW* 3, p.82. See, Sinclair Ferguson, "John Murray", *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, editor: W. Elwell, (Michigan, Baker, 1993), p.168.

<sup>40</sup> "Reflections on Professor John Murray", *Pressing Toward the Mark*, editors: C. G. Dennison and R. C. Gamble, (Philadelphia, The Committee for the Historian of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986), p.440.

the age of twenty-seven. John's parents left the Free Church in 1895, for the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The *WCF* was central to the life of Alexander Murray, and in his hands it became fundamental to John's life. Every day John was surrounded by Christian influence. In his home, the day would start and finish with prayer and worship led by his father. From an early age, John would have been encouraged to memorise the *Shorter Catechism*. The Psalms were also an important part of his spiritual "staple diet". He was baptised in 1899, as well as brought up, in the then newly-formed Free Presbyterian Church, at Bonar Bridge. From that pulpit, only teaching compatible with the *WCF* sounded forth.

*Conversion.* When he was around six years of age, John Murray's minister, the Reverend Ewan MacQueen, when visiting Badbea, would often have a few affectionate words with him concerning spiritual matters. In later years, Murray spoke of those occasions as being attended by the first movements of spiritual feelings. He was not able to put a precise date on the inception of spiritual life in himself, though his wife, Valerie, remembered him saying that he had known Christ since his childhood.

*Piety.* Murray saw the Christian ethic enacted in the way his parents married piety and hard work. The fear of the LORD constrained the Highland folks to "do all to the glory of God". Murray loved nothing more than to give himself to rigorous work on the croft at Badbea, even whilst he was a lecturer. His father was known as a man of equity, who would always pay his fellow workers a fair day's wage. In later years, when acting as Moderator of the OPC's General Assembly, it was noted of Murray that he never made a distinction between persons: the less educated were to have equal say with those who were more educated; the more educated were rebuked for sniggering at the common man's speech.

### **Geerhardus Vos (1881-1949)**

As a student at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1924-1927, he learned, especially from his lecturer in Biblical Theology, Geerhardus Vos, to meticulously exegete scripture in the original languages. Sinclair Ferguson believes that the 'profound influence of Murray's 'Princeton mentor, Geerhardus Vos...is everywhere evident' in Murray's work.<sup>41</sup> Murray says that Vos was '

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<sup>41</sup> "John Murray", *Scottish Church History*, p.612.

"...the most penetrating exegete it has been my privilege to know"'.<sup>42</sup> Even though Murray used Vos' *Biblical Theology* as a textbook when he taught Biblical Theology for a brief period, it must be understood that '...the biblical theological method was part and parcel of [Murray's] thinking from the very beginning.'<sup>43</sup>

### John Calvin (1509-1564)

We do not know exactly when Murray started to be affected by the writings of John Calvin, nevertheless, as Dr Norman Shepherd writes, 'The model for his work [as a theologian] was John Calvin'.<sup>44</sup> To Murray, Calvin's *Institutes* gave the Protestant church its systematic arrangement on doctrine and apologetics. This was so, firstly because of Calvin's biblico-theological method in contradistinction to the scholastic tradition. He was also the supreme exegete of the Reformation; his secret was that he stuck firmly to the scriptural text. His piety was also essential:

...respecting Calvin as theologian and expositor...[he] united in an eminent degree...unsurpassed in the history of the church since the apostolic age, piety and learning. Any theologian is unfitted for his task unless he knows the power of the redemption of which the Holy Scripture is the revelation....Theology that does not promote encounter with the living God, and encounter with him as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the unity that belongs to them in the mystery of the Trinity and in the particularity of relationship which each person sustains to us in the economy of salvation, is not Christian theology.<sup>45</sup>

Now for a record of Murray's influence.

## MURRAY'S INFLUENCE WITHIN HIS OWN CIRCLES

### Student

Murray showed great erudition. He was a very intelligent child. Around twelve years of age, having just attended the local school at Bonar Bridge, he went to Dornoch Academy, which was for more able children. He excelled in his studies, and found himself, at eighteen years of age, teaching in Dornoch Academy. In the autumn of 1919, he entered the University of Glasgow to do a Master of Arts course in Logic, Moral Philosophy, Mathematics, Latin and English Literature. He received his degree on June 20, 1923. Feeling called to the ministry, he was

<sup>42</sup> CW 3, p.29. Cf., "John Murray- Faithful and True", *Reformation Today* 83 (Nov-Dec, 1976), p.10.

<sup>43</sup> "Reflections," p.441.

<sup>44</sup> "Memories and Reflections", *TBT* 143-144 (1975), p.93.

accepted as a theological student and candidate for the ministry of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He began in autumn, 1923. He acquitted himself so well, that it was arranged for him to attend Princeton Theological Seminary where he would receive a more extensive scholarship.<sup>46</sup>

As the Modernist-Reformed controversy began to surface in the Presbyterian Church of America, Gresham Machen (1881-1937), lecturer at Princeton Theological Seminary, stood as an apologist for the Reformed position. Machen felt the strain greatly. It was the support and correspondence of Murray that led him to write, ' "I do feel that the service of real students like John Murray makes our life at Princeton worth while" '.<sup>47</sup>

### WTS and the OPC

*Beginnings.* Unhappy with the onslaught of Liberalism within the Presbyterian Church of the USA (PCUSA) and within Princeton Theological Seminary, some conservative members of the faculty of the Seminary, led by Gresham Machen, resigned to form WTS in 1929.<sup>48</sup> The Seminary was created in order to preserve a distinctly Calvinistic and Presbyterian theology.

Machen and the others were members of PCUSA when they formed WTS. That was about to change, however. During March 1935, Murray provided Machen with a paper on "The Decline of Creed Subscription in the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland." This suggests that Murray was aware of the essentially identical nature of the decline of the *WCF* in both Scotland and the USA.

<sup>49</sup> Because of this decline, many Reformed ministers left the PCUSA to form the OPC on June 11, 1936. Machen was its first Moderator.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *CW* 1, p.311.

<sup>46</sup> His attendance as a student at Princeton was also marked with outstanding scholarship. His Greek tutor, Dr Gresham Machen, reputedly commented that Murray's paper on New Testament Textual Criticism was ' "one of the finest...he had ever received." ' [*CW* 3, p.23.]

<sup>47</sup> *CW* 3, p.30.

<sup>48</sup> R. Godfrey, "J. Gresham Machen and Old School Presbyterianism", *Chongshin Theological Journal* 2:2 (Aug., 1997), pp.11-14.

<sup>49</sup> David W. Hall, Review article, *WTJ* 54:2 (1992), p.390.

<sup>50</sup> Ned B. Stonehouse, *J Gresham Machen* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1987), pp.335-500; Clair Davis, *Tape, Separate From Unbelief*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1980); D. G. Hart, "Christianity and Liberalism in a Postliberal Age," *WTJ* 56 (1994), pp.329-344; W. Stanford Reid, "J Gresham Machen", *The Princeton Theology*, pp.104-106; Richard Lovelace, "Evangelical Revivals and the Presbyterian Tradition", *WTJ* 42:1 (1979), pp.144-145.

At WTS's inception, Machen was struggling to find someone to teach Systematic Theology, which was, he thought, the crown of theology.<sup>51</sup> He called upon Murray's services, saying, ' "we could not do without you without very serious loss and peril to the institution we serve." ' <sup>52</sup> After leaving Princeton, Murray went on to teach in WTS from September 1930, till his retirement in January 1, 1967. William White, Jr, said, ' "Murray and Van Til, with their strong personalities, really formed the poles around which the world of Westminster was to turn for over forty years." ' <sup>53</sup>

*Clashes.* The newly born groups of the OPC and WTS had, we might say, problems at birth. Following Machen, Murray attacked Fundamentalists,<sup>54</sup> because, he believed, they undermined the Reformed Faith as embodied in the *WCF*.<sup>55</sup> Tension originally arose between these two groups because hitherto, as Ned Stonehouse says, 'the difference between the Reformed Faith and current fundamentalism failed to come to full disclosure and understanding' within the Independent Board of Foreign Missions and the movement, around the Seminary, which opposed Modernism.<sup>56</sup>

Murray wrote a series of articles in December 1935, named "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes". Murray comments:

There are certain brands of thought and belief prevalent within the Protestant Churches which we have much reason to fear have made serious inroads upon the orthodoxy of many in the Presbyterian Churches. Two of these types of thought because of their pervasiveness...are "Arminianism" and "Modern Dispensationalism."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>51</sup> "Westminster Theological Seminary: Its purpose and Plan," *Studying the New Testament Today* 1, editor: J. H. Skilton, (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974), p.165. Murray was employed by Princeton Theological Seminary to teach there for one year (1929-1930). Murray assisted C. W. Hodge. [David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary* 2 (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1996), p.394.]

<sup>52</sup> *CW* 3, p.42.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>54</sup> J. I. Packer traces the origins of the term "Fundamentalism" back to the banding together of evangelical scholars who fought for the retention of the fundamental doctrines of historic Christianity, against the encroachment of Liberal Christianity. [*The Word of God and Fundamentalism* (London, Church Book Room Press, 1960), p.24.]

<sup>55</sup> Marsden says, 'Yet the strong stand against Dispensationalism had an important effect upon the character of the new denomination. The OPC was to be explicitly Reformed and to tolerate no doctrines which are considered inconsistent with the standards.' ["Perspective on the Division of 1937," *Toward the Mark*, p.304.]

<sup>56</sup> J Gresham Machen, p.458.

<sup>57</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes II", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 1 (1935), p.143.



The *WCF* was framed to refute Arminianism. James Arminius' (1560-1609) disciples in 1610 produced a paper known as the "Remonstrance" or "The Five Arminian Articles."<sup>58</sup> The root of the difference between Arminianism and Calvinism lies in the doctrine of total depravity. Arminians believe that in the last analysis salvation is due to the autonomy of the will to choose freely. "Total depravity" or "original sin" is the doctrine that the human nature in all its faculties and propensities has been corrupted by sin (*WCF* 6:2-4; 9:3).<sup>59</sup> The antidote to sin is God's irresistible grace. The Arminian accepts that man cannot be saved apart from God's grace. Further, the Arminian explanation of the fact that only some men believe is that the grace residing in every sinner gives all men the ability to believe. This view entails that salvation ultimately lies in the sovereign hand of man, counters Murray. The Calvinist asserts that man has no good in him. God predestines sinners to salvation, and by his special and irresistible grace draws them into salvation by imparting to them both the ability to believe and faith (*WCF* 10:1-2).<sup>60</sup>

In spring 1936, Murray wrote two articles against Dispensationalism because it taught that there were some dispensations in God's salvific activity that were not actual administrations of grace. This, Murray thought, was against the *WCF*, which says that grace was administered from the moment of the fall, to continue until Christ's coming. Dispensationalism jeopardised the unity of the covenant of grace.<sup>61</sup> For Murray, the *WCF* 7:1-2 teaches that the covenant of grace becomes 'operative as a result of the fall'. The same covenant of life and salvation, which anticipates Christ, is offered and secured in the Mosaic covenant. The old and new covenants (testaments) are merely dispensations of the same covenant of grace. There is a greater fullness of grace in the new covenant.<sup>62</sup>

Marsden writes, 'the true test of unity of the new denomination came with the question of adopting the constitution.'<sup>63</sup> Two issues were raised in relation to it. The first was concerned with whether the Church should adopt the 1903 amendments to the *WCF*. The Fundamentalists proposed the amendments. Murray responded by writing the article, "Shall We Include the Revision of 1903 in Our Creed?", in September 1936. In the article he repudiates the idea of accepting the 1903 amendments of the *WCF* because of their Arminian character. For example,

<sup>58</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes III", pp.163-164.

<sup>59</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes V", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2 (1936), pp.27-28.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*, pp.27-29.

<sup>61</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes VII: Modern Dispensationalism," *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2, pp.77-79.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, pp.78-79.

<sup>63</sup> Marsden, "Perspective", p.309.

the new chapter on the love of God (XXV) included the phrase "in the Gospel God declares His love for the world". Murray believed that this was a statement denoting universal salvation.<sup>64</sup>

The second issue was whether the Church should adopt a conscience clause, in addition to the *WCF*, which would state that Fundamentalists had a right to hold premillennial views, and which would also state that these views did not conflict with the *WCF*. Machen refused, believing that the *WCF* already allowed such a stance, and that to insert the clause would be an unnecessary addition to received tradition.

At the second General Assembly in September 1936, the Fundamentalists, in trying to promote a fully "surrendered life", called for abstinence from alcoholic beverage. Murray strongly opposed this call, for it added another standard to Christian holiness, and thereby weakened the sufficiency of God's word.

In November 1936, fearing a take-over by the "machine" led by Machen, both McIntire and Buswell successfully proposed a different President to Machen for the Independent Board of Foreign Missions.<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the Board was influenced by a strong premillennial voice. But because there were some on the Board who were not Presbyterian, the non-premillennialists who were Presbyterian found occasion to leave the Board. In November 1936, Buswell was appointed Moderator of the new denomination; he was elected by C. van Til, for he wished the restoration of harmony within the denomination.

Soon to follow was the death of Gresham Machen on 1 January 1937. His mantle fell upon Westminster's staff.<sup>66</sup>

Unfortunately, in April, a faculty member of Westminster and two members of the board of trustees resigned because they felt their premillennial beliefs were being put at risk.

Matters finally came to a head at the third General Assembly in 1937. It decided not to support the Independent Board, and also rejected pleas for the denomination to adopt an abstention

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<sup>64</sup> "Shall we Include the Revision of 1903 in our Creed", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2 (1936), pp.249-251.

<sup>65</sup> Marsden, "Perspective", p.308.

<sup>66</sup> John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1995), p.24.

policy. Consequently, a minority of members, who were happy with Fundamentalism, left the denomination to form "The Bible Presbyterian Church".<sup>67</sup>

This brings us to another clash. In a large measure, the forties and fifties were characterised by attempts by evangelicals to be ecumenical in order to have encouragement in the propagation of the gospel and the Christian ethic.

Murray thought that the Lord's commandment that his disciples be one must be expressed in visible union.<sup>68</sup> It was in this "ecumenical" climate in the 1940's that a movement, or more precisely a mood, arose within evangelicalism. The movement was embodied in the National Association of Evangelicals. It was a reaction to neo-fundamentalism- the "fundamentalism" Murray wrote against- and an alternative movement to that at Westminster. The movement was named neo-evangelicalism. The OPC refused to join with the NAE because it would not consider ecclesiastical union except the reciprocating body adhered to a strict Presbyterian polity; whereas, neo-evangelicalism was a broad-church movement, emphasising the broad fundamentals of historic Christianity.<sup>69</sup>

A dispute arose between a neo-evangelical minister of the OPC, Gordon Clark, and Cornelius van Til. D. G. Hart says that the dispute was a reflection of 'the growing tensions between Reformed Confessionalism and American evangelicalism.'<sup>70</sup> The debate between Gordon Clark and van Til concentrated on the doctrine of God's incomprehensibility. What van Til challenged was Clark's 'intellectualistic view of man, an apology that acceded to the primacy of the intellect.'<sup>71</sup> Clark said that God understood propositions in exactly the same way as man does; van Til said that this was a denial of the Creator-creature distinction.<sup>72</sup>

On this matter, Murray presented a minority report upholding the complainant's, Professor van Til's, contention. The complaint was denied. However, the report, and the part Murray played in

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<sup>67</sup> Much to our surprise, maybe, Murray executed all this opposition whilst still a member of the Free Presbyterian Church in Scotland! He was eventually ordained as a minister of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, on May 28, 1937.

<sup>68</sup> "That They All May be One," *The Presbyterian Guardian* XIX: 3 (1950), pp.45-46; *CW* 1, pp.270-271.

<sup>69</sup> D. G. Hart, "J. Gresham Machen, the Reformed Tradition and the Transformation of Culture", *EQ* 58:4 (1996), p.306.

<sup>70</sup> "The Legacy of Gresham Machen and the Identity of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church", *WTJ* 53 (1991), p.221.

<sup>71</sup> Greg Bahnsen, Tape, *Van Tillian Apologetics 2* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1994).

<sup>72</sup> Clair Davis, Tape, *Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1980).

supplying another report to the Fifteenth General Assembly in 1948, influenced the larger outcome.<sup>73</sup> Clark eventually left the OPC as an ordained minister because of the pressure against him.<sup>74</sup> In the latter report, Murray checked an imbalance in van Til's argument. He said that our knowledge is analogical to God's. Many Clarkians jumped upon this, arguing that van Til was saying that it was only an analogy of God that we know, and not God himself. Murray clarified the issue, by stating it is true that our knowledge is analogical of God's, but it is not an analogy of God we know, but God himself.<sup>75</sup>

*"In house" labours.* Murray was deeply involved, on other levels, in the establishment and maturation of the OPC. He played an important role in the revision of the OPC's Form of Government, and helped formulate its first big addition. The overtures made by his presbytery- to which he contributed substantially- to the Eighth General Assembly (1941), on the work of an evangelist and on the topic of OPC ministers pastoring non-OPC churches, led to the establishing, in the Form of Government, of chapter XVIII, "Of the Work of the Evangelist", and chapter XIX, "Of Ministers Laboring in Other Churches". From 1948-1956, he sat on the Committee on Revisions of the Form of Government. Murray was greatly influential as a member of committees for precision in the text and proof texts of the *WCF*, from 1940 till 1956- the year in which the OPC finally adopted its version of the *WCF*. The OPC had decided not to go ahead with its plans for producing Sunday school materials. Murray took up the cause of the production of Sabbath school material. Consequently, the Twenty-second General Assembly (1955) launched the curriculum for the Great Commissions Sunday school. Murray's influence was also felt in his local church where he taught teenagers in Sunday School.

*The pastor-evangelist.* Murray also preached, and gave pastoral advice and counselling. Murray's presence was appreciated as Moderator of the General Assembly of the OPC, as was his pastoral efforts in Bloor Street, an OPC church.

Paul Wooley says:

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<sup>73</sup> *The Incomprehensibility of God: Report to the 15th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1948*, pp.2-29.

<sup>74</sup> *CW* 3, p.124; Michael A. Hakkenberg, "The Battle over the Ordination of Gordon H. Clark, 1943-1948," *Toward the Mark*, pp.329-350; Clair Davis, *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*; Cornelius Van Til, *In Defense of the Faith, Vol I: The Doctrine of Scripture* (Christian Foundation, 1967), pp.63-72.

<sup>75</sup> See, *Theology Proper*, pp.5-9.

John Murray loved people. He was fully aware of our common sinfulness. His prayers always opened with a confession of our sinful estate. But they led on into thankfulness for the gracious gifts of God to his creatures and for his provision of salvation. For most of his years without children of his own, he expressed his love by his affection for the children of his colleagues.<sup>76</sup>

Murray was the chairman of the Committee for the Propagation of the Reformed Faith in New England, and for ten years was secretary of the Committee of Local Evangelism.<sup>77</sup> Wooley records that Murray's indefatigable work for the spread of the gospel bore fruit most especially in the renewal of gospel preaching in Maine, USA.<sup>78</sup> We get the impression that the whole of his career as a teacher was something of a blip in his desire to pastor a church. It was with great joy that in the last two years of his life he took pastoral oversight of Ardgay Free Church of Scotland.<sup>79</sup>

### The Presbyterian Reformed Church

Sherman Isbell writes:

Two congregations in the Province of Ontario, Canada, formed the Presbyterian Reformed Church on November 17, 1965. Each congregation had been established by Scottish and Irish Presbyterians about eighty years before. The creation of the presbytery took place largely at the instigation of John Murray...who had a long relationship with the two congregations.<sup>80</sup>

Isbell adds, 'Murray composed the proposals leading to the union, and also the constitution which served as the basis of union. One of the addresses, which he delivered to the parties, was entitled "The Biblical Basis for Ecclesiastical Union," which is printed in volume one of the *Collected Writings of John Murray*.'<sup>81</sup>

### Committees

Help was derived from his participation in various committees: Committee on Foreign Missions; Committee on Local Evangelism; a committee appointed by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod to make a paper on the Inspiration of Scriptures, and one to look at Eschatology. He wrote for

<sup>76</sup> Dedication to Murray in *The New Testament Student and Theology* 3, editor: John H. Skilton, (Grand Rapids, Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976), p.viii.

<sup>77</sup> S. Ferguson, "John Murray", *Evangelical Theologians*, p.169.

<sup>78</sup> *New Testament Student* 3, p.x.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.170.

<sup>80</sup> *A History of the Presbyterian Reformed Church* (Internet, 1996).

<sup>81</sup> *idem*.

Synod committees unto summer, 1970. Various committees often sought his advice on difficult issues, such as Christian education.

### ***WTJ***

The recovery of Calvinism in America, although minimal, was due in part to the guardianship of the Reformed tradition by WTS and the OPC.

Murray was the main founding editor of the *WTJ*, established in 1938. In its own analysis, it sought to counter the anti-Reformed influence at Princeton and to re-assert old Princetonian theology. This was a major innovation as seen in the context of the erasure of Reformed theology in the USA and the eruption of neo-orthodoxy. Moises Silva writes that the *WTJ* gave 'an immediate role of leadership in theological thought.'<sup>82</sup>

Wooley comments:

Murray was one of the editors of the two editors of The Westminster Theological Seminary for the first fifteen years of its existence. In that capacity it was he who was the creative figure. He knew what articles needed to be written and who were the best people to write them. He was concerned about the impact of the *Journal* and scrutinized its text with meticulous care. He was not above the ordinary task of reading proof [sic].<sup>83</sup>

Arguably, *WTJ* is the leading Reformed theological journal available today.

### **Britain**

The wider influence of Murray is very conspicuous in two particular areas: Reformed preaching in Britain; and his published writings. On returning to Britain after his retirement, Murray engaged in an extensive speaking ministry. This took him to many churches, and also to Inter-Varsity assemblies.<sup>84</sup> In 1952, Murray preached a sermon, "Some Necessary Emphases in Preaching", highlighting the lack of a ministry of judgement in Reformed preaching. Rev. J. Marcellus Kik, a trustee of Westminster Seminary, shared his burden. Whilst visiting England in 1961, Kik discussed the subject with the Rev. Iain Murray. The outcome was that on returning to the States, Kik proposed to John Murray that a minister's conference should be started in order to

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<sup>82</sup> "A Half Century of Reformed Scholarship," *WTJ* 50 (1988), p.248.

<sup>83</sup> *New Testament Student* 3, p.ix.

<sup>84</sup> Ferguson, "John Murray", *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, editor: W. Elwell, (Michigan, Baker, 1993), p.170.

encourage a renewal of Reformed preaching. The first conference was held in Leicester in 1962. Murray preached at the Conference, and at future conferences. Iain Murray says, 'Murray's attendance at Leicester was of crucial importance in the establishment of a conference which was to have increasing influence.'<sup>85</sup>

In 1957, John Murray's influence in Britain was contributive to the establishment of the BOTT, an organisation devoted to the extension of Reformed literature. He became a regular advisor to it, advising as to choice of books and theological issues. In 1971, he became a trustee. Interest in the publications of the BOTT has grown remarkably since its inception.

### Writings

*His writings in general.* Undoubtedly, Murray's greatest influence is through the medium of his writings. He has approximately 230 published writings. Paul Wooley underscores the value of the many pamphlets and articles Murray wrote, simply because they met the needs of the day.<sup>86</sup> His popular book called *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* continues to sell profusely. It was said of it that it 'is a book greatly worth having. And that stands not only for the preacher and teacher, but also for the man in the pew. For while it is scholarly and doctrinal, it is marked by clarity of thought and expression from first to last.'<sup>87</sup> His *magnum opus* was his two-volumed commentary on the epistle to the Romans. Here are some comments on its worth. 'In a category of its own', writes Iain Murray. Paul Wooley, former colleague of Murray at Westminster, comments, ' "one of the greatest works of scholarship of all the Christian period." ' William Hendriksen, the well known Reformed exegete, concludes concerning Murray's *Romans* volume 1, ' "This is exegesis of the highest rank." '<sup>88</sup>

*Biblical Theology.* Murray attempted to draw the church back to a theology totally governed by *redemptive* history. John Frame highlights Murray as someone who correctly understood the importance of history and tradition, but who conscientiously avoided constructing a theology from history. His theology was firmly rooted in an exegesis of scripture.<sup>89</sup> Murray's genius was that he sought, in his own way, to return to *redemption* history, and from it create a competent ethic, but not at the expense of the inspiration of scripture or of tradition. His teaching on

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<sup>85</sup> CW 3, p.134.

<sup>86</sup> *New Testament Student* 3, p.vii.

<sup>87</sup> G. N. M. Collins, Book review *EQ* 28:3 (July-Sept., 1956), p.177.

<sup>88</sup> CW 3, pp.135-136.

<sup>89</sup> "Reflections of *Sola Scriptura*", *WTJ* 59 (1997), pp.276-277.

Biblical Theology is a step toward recovering the Reformation emphasis.<sup>90</sup> He was the only Reformed theologian of his time to have 'devoted a separate study' to develop an 'elaborated conception of biblical theology' and its relationship to Systematic Theology, says Richard Gaffin.

<sup>91</sup> Sinclair Ferguson writes, 'Murray represents a transition in the method of Reformed systematics, highlighting the role of biblical theology and demonstrating its applications rather than producing a comprehensive treatise. This new emphasis is evident both in the amount of exegetical work in which he engaged as he forged doctrine and in his understanding of the nature and task of systematic theology.'<sup>92</sup> Murray's monograph, *The Covenant of Grace*, was a biblico-theological study. It was the proverbial "light years" ahead of its time. Ferguson comments, 'In view of the present-day interest in the scriptural concept of covenant, it may be difficult for the coming generation of students to appreciate the degree to which this slim monograph proved to be a significant landmark. In its own way it set a new standard for the use of biblical theology in systematic theology.'<sup>93</sup>

That Murray's efforts have availed is seen in the following comments. Mark Noll says that the OPC has done well to persevere, even though it was, and still is, a tiny body when compared to Old Princeton. The OPC has also held faithfully to confessional Calvinism.<sup>94</sup> D. G. Hart magnifies this, commenting that the current crisis in 'America's largest Protestant denominations and their related numerical decline can be traced to the controversies of the 1920's and 1930's when mainline churches chose cultural clout over theological conviction.'<sup>95</sup>

This chapter has given us something of a background to understand Murray's soteriology. The next chapter will outline and evaluate some doctrines of Murray with the aim that this will elucidate his soteriology.

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<sup>90</sup> Richard Gaffin, "Systematic and Biblical Theology", *The New Testament Student of Theology* 3, editor: John H. Skilton, (Grand Rapids, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1976), p.44.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid.*, pp.39-42, 44-45.

<sup>92</sup> "John Murray", *Evangelical Theologians*, p.171.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*, p.174.

<sup>94</sup> "The Spirit of Old Princeton and the OPC," *Toward the Mark*, pp.244-246.

<sup>95</sup> Review article, *WTJ* 55 (1993), p.341.



## Chapter 2: An Evaluation of Murray's Theological Method, with Special Reference to Calvin's Theological Method

Can we really say that either Murray or Calvin had a specific theological method? Possibly "method" is not the best word. It can be said with safety, however, that Calvin definitely did work within a particular framework. The same can be said of Murray. There are broad theological concepts that undergird and condition both Calvin's and Murray's respective soteriologies, and we will determine them. By the end, we will have a picture of the respective boundaries that Murray and Calvin operated within.

### THE BASIC COMPLAINT

#### The root problem: federalism

It is said that Calvin was not a systematist. His teaching was uncluttered with the 'scholastic federal Calvinism' of the Reformed tradition. Calvin was not so much interested in a system but merely in relating the biblical teaching on a given subject, without seeking to make the bible's theology a coherent whole.<sup>96</sup> The Reformed tradition has over rationalised scripture by breaking it down into components. This is particularly evident in the Reformed law-grace distinction. Reformed theology understood the covenant with Adam as a covenant of works rather than as an obligation of love. This method, it is said, is an example of the nature-grace division that was prevalent before the Reformation. This natural world, it is said, is deemed as evil, according to the Reformed position. Whereas the realm of grace is reserved for the elect. Only the church therefore can be interpreted in terms of Christ.<sup>97</sup> The epitome of a scholastic federalism is the *WCF*. It recast the Reformation notion of covenant into one of "contract"; contract entails legalism, a "works" principle. The Reformed contract policy refuses to focus upon God's grace for all men, all creation, and instead has moved to what we should do if we should remain in union with God. The objections to a Reformed view of the covenant are based upon the basic presuppositions of existential theology. Consequently, the Adam narrative is interpreted as saga or myth.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Campbell-Jack, *Common Grace*, pp.197-198.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, pp.15-16.

<sup>98</sup> David B. McWilliams, "The Covenant Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Recent Criticism", *WTJ* 53 (1991), pp.111-113.

## Expressions of the problem

*The fundamental paradigm.* Calvin is said not to make such a sharp dichotomy between the divine and the human realms. A. E. McGrath thinks that throughout Calvin's theology there is the formula *distinctio sed non separatio* ("distinguished but not separated"). McGrath concludes, 'Calvin displays a pervasive tendency to distinguish radically between the human and divine realms- yet insists upon their unity.' Christ's incarnation is an expression of the formula just mentioned: *he* is God; *he* is man; and thus there is the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man. McGrath adds other doctrines:

...the relation between the word of God and the words of human beings in preaching; between the sign and the thing signified in the eucharist; between the believer and Christ in justification, where a real communion of persons exists, yet not in fusion of being; between the secular and the spiritual power. Wherever God and humanity come into conjunction, the incarnation paradigm illuminate their relation.<sup>99</sup>

*Common grace.* Calvin did not have, properly speaking, a doctrine of common grace, says W. C. Campbell Campbell-Jack [*sic*]. To Calvin, there was not a list of blessings given to mankind that formed a substratum upon which redemptive blessings were given to the elect. Rather, Campbell-Jack argues, all blessings are given to the end of fulfilling God's purpose of redemption in Christ Jesus. Calvin divides his *Institutes* into knowledge of God the Creator and knowledge of God the Redeemer. But, the knowledge of the Creator is saving knowledge, the knowledge of the Creator-God which is a component of saving faith, that is, is a prerequisite for faith in the Mediator. All blessings are encompassed within the purposes of God in Christ Jesus.<sup>100</sup>

*Predestination.* Calvin's Christological model brings out the difference between him and the Reformed tradition, says McGrath. Calvin 'made the redemption of man in Christ the starting point for his discussions of more rarified matters such as election and reprobation.'<sup>101</sup> Whereas the Reformed tradition started its theology "in eternity" and the eternal decree.<sup>102</sup> This was because it was detrimentally affected by its the usage of Aristotelian metaphysics.<sup>103</sup> Thus, says McGrath, 'the *Centraldogma* [*sic*] of Reformed Orthodoxy is indisputably that of predestination'.

<sup>99</sup> *A Life of John Calvin* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990), p.149.

<sup>100</sup> *The Doctrine of Common Grace in Dutch-American Neo-Calvinis* (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1992), pp.195-206.

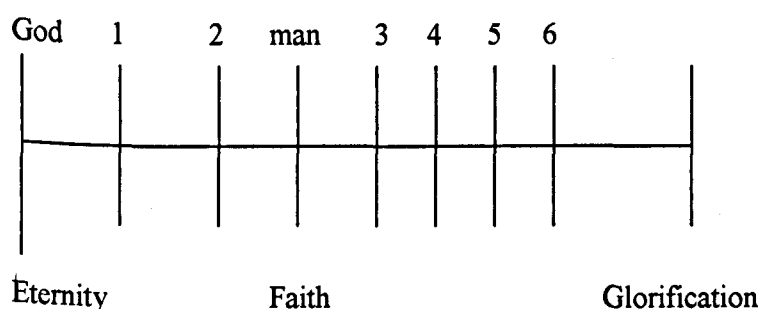
<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>102</sup> Murray comments that theology must begin with the plan of salvation in eternity. [*CW* 2, p123.] God in his sovereignty predestined the salvation of the elect in union with Christ, and this salvation is realised in time in the form of their salvation. [*RA*, pp.170-171.]

He then adds that this practice 'inevitably resulted in justification being assigned a low priority in the *ordo salutis*.' <sup>104</sup>

*Limited atonement.* R. T. Kendall has argued that Calvinism's preoccupation with particularism has resulted in it reading back into Calvin's theology the doctrine of limited atonement, whereas Calvin himself did not believe in limiting God's grace, but extended it to all men. <sup>105</sup>

*The ordo salutis.* It is said that Reformed theology utilised Aristotelian cause and effect procedure; and that the consequence of this was that redemption history was depreciated, subordinated to the eternity. <sup>106</sup> G. C. Berkouwer says that the Reformed faith used this method in order to guard the doctrine of God's sovereignty from views that minimised sin. <sup>107</sup> The crystallisation of the cause and effect method was the *ordo salutis*, adds Berkouwer. Here is a diagram of Murray's *ordo*.



For Murray, salvation is decreed by God in eternity. When God decides to execute the decree of salvation in an individual's life, *he* calls the sinner through his word (1). This leads to *God* regenerating the sinner (2). This gives rise to the act of *man*: faith. Because of faith in Christ, the sinner is justified (3), then adopted (4). Throughout the process of his life, he is sanctified (5), and perseveres (6). The culmination of his salvation is glorification.

Berkouwer objects to such *ordos*, because their emphasis upon the faith of man and man's activity is such that it is akin to a kind of co-operation or synergism: God's grace works its part, resulting

<sup>103</sup> "The Article by which the Church Stands or Falls", *EQ* 58:3 (July, 1986), p.209.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*, p.208-209.

<sup>105</sup> *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1997), pp.13-14.

<sup>106</sup> R. Gaffin, "Systematic and Biblical Theology", p.44; J. I. Packer, Tape, *English Puritan Theology* 8 (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1982).

<sup>107</sup> *Faith and Justification* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1963), p.27. Cf., A. Hoekema, *Saved By Grace* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1989), pp.13-14.

in faith; it *then* takes over, leading to a series of logical or chronological events. From faith onward, he asks of the *ordo*, where is God's grace? Berkouwer is well aware that Reformed theology says that each locus in the *ordo* is to be attributed to the grace of God. Nevertheless, the linear progression of the *ordo* in effect leads to Reformed theology undermining its own basic tenet.<sup>108</sup>

## **"THE ROOT PROBLEM" EVALUATED**

Williams correctly rights, 'The existential discontent with federalism is the fruition of a basic antagonism to a fundamental element of Reformed theology, namely, *particularism*.' [emphasis his]<sup>109</sup> This will now be demonstrated. To begin with, we will compare Murray's idea of the Adamic administration to Calvin's.

### **The Adamic administration, the covenant and the law**

*The Adamic administration.* The Adamic administration has frequently been called a "covenant of works", says Murray. If it is going to be called a covenant, then it should be called the "covenant of life".<sup>110</sup> However, it is preferable not to name it as a covenant. "Covenant of works" does not account for the element of grace that is evident in the administration. The inference of Genesis 3:22-24 is that if Adam had obeyed God he would have received the grace of eternal life. That is, God's promise arose out of his faithfulness and not his justice. The administration was not one of equity- "Do this and you shall live" (Lev.18:5; Rom.10:5; Gal.3:12). On the grounds of strict justice or equity, Adam's obedience, if it were to have happened, would not have secured him eternal life, but merely 'justification and life as long as he perfectly obeyed'; if he were to have been obedient, he would not have "merited" eternal life. The blessing that Adam would have received far outweighed his own supposed obedience- this is grace.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> For a similar view, see S. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Leicester, IVP, 1996), p.99.

<sup>109</sup> "Covenant Theology", p.115.

<sup>110</sup> *CW* 4, pp.261-262.

<sup>111</sup> *CW* 2, pp.55-56. The notion of a covenant of works is not evident in the early Reformed creeds such as the French Confession (1559), the Scottish Confession (1560), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Thirty Nine Articles (1562), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and the Second Helvetic (1566). [*CW* 4, pp.217-218.]

A covenant must be designated as such by the term *berith*. Murray does not think Genesis 12:1-3 refers to God's covenant with Abraham because *berith* is not used.<sup>112</sup> And because of the absence in Genesis 2 of *berith*, Murray does not think that Adam was in covenant with God. The administration is not denominated by the term covenant, according to Murray. Hosea 6:7 can be construed in a way which makes it incompatible as a basis for the construction of a covenant of works. Scripture only uses the term covenant (when referring to divine covenants) to denote God's administration to men within the framework of redemption, Murray continues..

Finally, 'Covenant in Scripture denotes the oath-bound confirmation of promise and involves a security which the Adamic economy did not bestow.'<sup>113</sup> Thus, Murray concludes that all of God's dealings with men are solidaric, but not covenantal.<sup>114</sup> Murray states that Adam is merely the type of Christ, from which a parallel between his sin and Christ's obedience is clearly implied.  
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Murray's thinking on the Adamic administration is demonstrated by himself to be nigh identical to Calvin's.<sup>116</sup> It is clear that Murray thought that the Adamic administration was a dispensation of grace. He even rejects the notion that faithfulness to God's commands would have merited eternal life. According to Murray, the first creedal use of a covenant of works comes in 1615 (The Irish Articles of Religion, article 21), and later crystallised in the *WCF* 7:1-2. Moreover, by the time of the *Confession*, the notion of an indebted God is replaced by 'the gracious character of what was still called the Covenant of Works'.<sup>117</sup>

Moving on from the Adamic administration, we will focus upon the concept of covenant.

*The covenant.* Murray says, from the era of the Reformation in the 16th century and throughout the development in covenant theology, the concept of a covenant as being a compact or an agreement has prevailed. However, the essence of scriptural covenants is not pact or agreement, but fidelity or commitment. Covenants between humans are related in terms of solemn engagement rather than contract (Gn.26:28-29; Gn.31:44). Covenants between men and God are devised in the context of commitment by the people of God to God (Jos.24:25; 2 Kg.11:17; 23:3;

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<sup>112</sup> *Covenant of Grace*, pp.16-20.

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, pp.47-49.

<sup>114</sup> *Romans* 1, p.180.

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.*, p.188.

<sup>116</sup> *CW* 4, pp.218-219.

Ezr.10:3). The 'word covenant is used with reference to God's creative and providential ordinances' (Jer.33:20, 25; Gn.8:22). Highlighted on those occasions is the divine monergism and fidelity. The post-diluvian Noahic (Gen.9:9-7), the Abrahamic (Gen.15:8-18; 17:17-19; 22:16-18), the Mosaic (Ex.2:24; 6:7; 19:5; 24:8), the Davidic (2 Sam.7:12-17; cf., Ps.89: 34; 2 Sam.23:5), and the new (Mat.26:28; Mk.14:24; Lk.22:20; 1 Cor.11:25; 2 Cor.3:6; Gal.3:15, 17; Heb.8:6; 9:16-17) covenants all emphasise the divine monergism: it is God who creates the covenant, promising and fulfilling redemption. The condition of being in covenant with God is to obey his commandments. That is, obedience is not to be construed in terms of a contract, but as reciprocation.<sup>118</sup>

Murray continues, the basic idea of the old covenant is carried over into the new covenant. The new covenant is the fulfilment of the of the covenant made with Abraham (Lk.1:72; Gal.3:15ff). Christ's blood is the blood of the new covenant (Mt.26:28; Mk.14:24; Lk.22:20; 1 Cor.11:25). Thus, the new covenant is 'the sum-total of grace, blessing, truth, and relationship comprised in that redemption which His blood has secured.' The new covenant blood finds an allusion in the blood of the old covenant, the Mosaic, (Ex.24:6-8; cf., Heb.9:18).<sup>119</sup>

Paul expressly refers to the new covenant in 2 Corinthians 3:6 (cf., 1 Cor.11:25), writes Murray. In 2 Corinthians 3, the new covenant is described as the ministration of the Spirit of life (vv6, 8), of righteousness (v9), and of liberty (v17). Most characteristically, it is the ministry of transfiguration into the image of the Lord himself.<sup>120</sup>

According to Murray, in Hebrews, the writer compares the new covenant to the Mosaic covenant. The new has a more excellent ministry (8:6), 'in respect of the access to God secured and the fellowship maintained.' The new covenant brings to full realisation the old covenant promise. 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.' (8:10; cf., Gn.15:8-18). The new covenant has better promises (8:6). 'We found that bonded and oath-bound promise constitutes the essence of the covenant conception.' This is to say:

The mediator of the new covenant is none other than God's own Son, the effulgence of the Father's glory and the express image of His substance, the heir of all things. He is its surety also. And because there can be no higher mediator

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*, pp.221-222.

<sup>118</sup> *The Covenant of Grace* (London, Tyndale Press, 1956), pp.10-30.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid.*, pp.27-28.

<sup>120</sup> *ibid.*, p.28.

or surety than the Lord of glory, since there can be no sacrifice more transcendent in its efficacy and finality than the sacrifice of Him who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot unto God, this covenant cannot give place to another. Grace and truth, promise and fulfilment, have in this covenant received their *pleroma*....

The gracious nature of the covenants is taken, by Murray, to the extent that he is very approving of the law. He says that the law is not abrogated by the new covenant but is more effectively fulfilled within us (8:10). The new covenant dispenses the forgiveness of sins (8:12). It also universalises knowledge so that all will know God (8:11).<sup>121</sup>

Now we are in a position to state Calvin's doctrine of the covenant.

To him, the saints of the old covenant participated in the same covenant as us. They shared in a 'common salvation through the grace of the same Mediator.'<sup>122</sup> There was one covenant with two administrations. The Jews were not to aspire to temporal blessing but to the hope of immortality. The covenant itself was founded upon the grace of God and not their own merits. They also 'knew and had' Christ the Mediator.<sup>123</sup> The Jews were therefore 'parties to the Gospel covenant', and knew the way of justification by faith.<sup>124</sup>

All of the differences between the two covenants belong not to their substances but to their administrations.<sup>125</sup> The old gave a foretaste of the heavenly inheritance under earthly blessings but the new 'leads our minds directly to meditate upon it'.<sup>126</sup> The old was full of types, which were the shadow without the substance- Christ. The new brings to us Christ himself.<sup>127</sup> Thirdly, the law given in the old covenant was on stone; the law imparted in the new is written on hearts of flesh. 'The Old Testament is literal, because promulgated without the efficacy of the Spirit: the New Spiritual, because the Lord has engraven it on the heart....The Old is deadly because it can do nothing but involve the whole human race in a curse....the former is the ministry of condemnation, because it charges the whole sons of Adam with transgression....This must be

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<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, pp.28-29, 32.

<sup>122</sup> *Inst.* 2:10:1.

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.*, 2:10:2.

<sup>124</sup> *ibid.*, 2:10:4.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*, 2:11:1.

<sup>126</sup> *idem.*

<sup>127</sup> *ibid.*, 2:11:4.

referred to the Ceremonial Law.’ Finally, the old was a dispensation of fear and bondage; the new brings freedom and confidence (Rm.8:15).<sup>128</sup>

In this summary of Calvin’s understanding of the covenant, there is nothing that really distinguishes him from Murray. Both believe that there is one covenant with two dispensations. Both believe that the salvation in the old was through faith in the Messiah- justification by faith. Both believe that the new is a greater expression of the blessing of the old, is the fulness of revelation in Christ Jesus.

Also, Murray studiously avoids the use of “contract” in order to deny any element of a works-principle. Yet, neither Calvin nor Murray reject the idea that there was a works-principle in operation within the sphere of the old covenant. More particularly, Murray has cogently reasoned that this was the theology of the Reformed tradition. The main debate over the covenant of grace that existed in early Reformed theology, thinks Murray, was whether the covenant of grace, which was expressed in the old covenant, was conditional. Reformed covenant theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were agreed that the covenant of grace was the application of grace toward the elect, and that faith and repentance were also graciously imparted by the Spirit. However, the issue was whether in this covenant *with the elect* faith and repentance particularly, but also obedience, were to be construed as conditions for the fulfilment of the covenant, or as blessings arising from the covenant.<sup>129</sup> He himself states that the covenant of grace is unconditional.

The next category to be examined is that of the law.

*The law.* In Murray’s understanding of the negative import of “law”, as it refers to the Mosaic dispensation, he works from the basis that the Mosaic covenant is essentially good. He himself summarises the permanency of law. Paul says that the law is not to be annulled (3:31). The law is holy and just a good (Rm.7:12). In his inner man, he delights after the law of God and with his mind serves it (7:16, 22, 25). The law is fulfilled in those who walk after the Spirit (8:4). God commands us to love him by obeying his commandments (13:9-10; 1 Cor.9:21; cf., Jm.1:25; 2:8, 10-12; 4:11).<sup>130</sup> We could also refer the reader to Murray’s view that the law of God is written of

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<sup>128</sup> *ibid.*, 2:11:7-9.

<sup>129</sup> *CW* 4, pp.223-234.

<sup>130</sup> Murray, “ ‘Law’ . Part II: ‘In the New Testament’ ”, *NBD*, pp.722-723. Most of these texts will be taken up again in Sanctification.



the hearts of believers.<sup>131</sup> The main theological argument that Murray uses is that of the continuity of the covenants: all the Old Testament covenants were covenants of grace. Therefore, when he tackles Paul's references to the law as having a negative connotation, Murray does not seem to go all the way and say the Mosaic *dispensation* was one of slavery and condemnation. Rather, what Paul is emphasising, says Murray, is the abuse of the Mosaic dispensation.

Murray comments:

In order to understand the force of the clause in [6:14] it is necessary to state what law *can* do and what it *cannot* do, and it is in light of what it cannot do that the meaning of "under grace" will become apparent. (1) Law commands and demands. (2) Law pronounces approval and blessing upon conformity to its demands (cf. 7:10; Gal.3:12). (3) Law pronounces condemnation upon every infraction of its demands (cf. Gal.3:10). (4) Law exposes and convicts of sin (cf. 7:7, 14; Heb.4:12). (5) Law excites and incites sin to more aggravated transgressions (cf. 7:8, 8, 11, 13). What law *cannot* do is implicit in these limits of its potency. (1) Law can do nothing to justify the person who has violated it. (2) Law can do nothing to relieve the bondage of sin; it accentuates and confirms that bondage. [emphasis his]<sup>132</sup>

For Calvin, the Law was the 'whole system of religion delivered by the hand of Moses.' Moses was appointed to continue the blessing promised to Abraham. The ceremonies, for example,

<sup>131</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.88-89.

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.*, p.229. The following is a summary of the various uses of the law in the New Testament, according to Murray. Frequently *nomos* expresses the Old Testament as a whole (cf., Rm.2:17-27; Mt.5:18; Lk.16:17; Jh.8:17; 10:34; 15:25). It also denotes a part of the Old Testament (cf., Mt.5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Lk.16:16; Acts 13:15; Rm.3:21b). Further, it also distinguishes the Pentateuch from the rest of the Old Testament (cf., Lk.24:44). Sometimes it is uncertain whether "law of Moses" refers merely to the Pentateuch or to the Old Testament (cf., Jh.1:45; Acts 28:23).

There are instances where *nomos* denominates the Mosaic administration dispensed at Sinai (cf., Rm.5:13, 20; Gal.3:17, 19, 21a). "Under the law" means to be under the Mosaic economy (1 Cor.9:20; Gal.3:23; 4:4-5, 21; cf., Eph.2:15; "of the law" in Rm.4:16).

Often *nomos* designates the law of God as the expression of God's will (e.g., Rm.3:20; 4:15; 7:2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 22; 8:3, 4, 7; 13:8, 10; 1 Cor.15:56; Gal.3:13; 1 Tim.1:8; Jm.1:25; 4:11).

Those who do not have the specially revealed law, do have the requirements of the law written on their hearts (Rm.2:12-15). It is the same law that is in view.

*Nomos* is used in a depreciatory manner to indicate a person who looks to the law in order to be justified. The phrase "under law" has this sense (Rm.6:14-15; Gal.5:18). This meaning is not to be confused with the same phrase as is used to denote the Mosaic dispensation. "Of law" also has this depreciatory significance (Rm.4:14; Gal.3:18; Phil.3:9), as does "of works of law" (Rm.3:20; Gal.2:16; 3:2, 5, 10).

"Law" is sometimes used to mean an operating or governing principle. For example, Paul refers to "the law of faith (Rom.3:27), which is contrasted with the law of works. The same idea is the best interpretation of "law" in Romans 8:21, 23, 25b; 8:2. ["Law: In the New Testament", *NBD*, pp.721-722.]

were types and shadows of a corresponding reality- salvation in Christ Jesus. In this way the ceremonies were truly evangelical.<sup>133</sup>

The moral law was also evangelical. The moral law was, narrowly speaking, the ten commandments.<sup>134</sup> The ten commandments were injunctions.<sup>135</sup> The moral law is then extended by Calvin to include all injunctions and threatenings belonging to the Mosaic covenant.

<sup>136</sup> Although the moral law is wholesome, its aim was not to bring salvation, but to lead the sinner to despair over his inability to maintain the law. The law would then come with the force of its threats, and drive the sinner to see the need of a perfect righteousness outside of himself, which was foreshadowed in the ceremonial law.<sup>137</sup>

The ceremonial law was abrogated in Christ's coming. That is, its use was abrogated but not its effect- it pointed toward Christ (cf., Col.2:13-14; Eph.2:14). Christ broke down the middle partition of the ceremonial ordinances, and thus reconciled both Jews and Gentiles to God (Eph.2:14).<sup>138</sup> The moral law was abrogated *in relation to the believer*. Because Christ has fulfilled the believer's obligation to fulfil the moral law the threat of condemnation which arises from the moral law no longer applies to the believer. However, the law is still in force today. The law in itself was not abrogated (Mt.5:17). Its injunctions are applicable to believers and unbelievers, whilst its threats are pertinent to unbelievers who seek to earn justification by works.<sup>139</sup>

Once more it is difficult to discern where Murray might diverge from Calvin, since for Calvin the law is viewed extremely positively, being abrogated for the believer in its moral threat and its ceremonial use- in Redemption, Justification by Faith and Sanctification, we will further our discussion of the law.

More specifically for our purposes, the interrelationship between the law and the covenant of grace reveal that, according to Murray and Calvin, they both were primarily instruments to lead the elect to Christ.

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<sup>133</sup> *Inst.* 2:7:1.

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7:2.

<sup>135</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7:17.

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7:15, 17.

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7:1-17.

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, 2:7:16.

<sup>139</sup> *idem.*

### Calvin: the systematician?

It was commented earlier that some scholars believe that the Reformed predilection for systematizing theology was a result of the influence of rational thought, and a step away from Calvin. However, this is far from accurate.

The difference between Murray- a representative of the Reformed tradition- and Calvin is not one of theology. The Puritans and the Reformed tradition did not rationalise Calvin's theology, as some say, says Richard Muller.<sup>140</sup> This will be shown in the thesis itself. Murray's theology should be compatible with Calvin's, since Murray is from within the Puritan tradition.

Neither is the difference one of overall methodology. A. E. McGrath says:

Calvin's *Institutio* thus established the *structure*, as well as greatly influencing, the *substance*, of the future of systematic theology of the Reformed church, in that the framework which he established was found to meet the needs of the new era of confessional theology which was opening up in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The rise of the scholastic method within Reformed Orthodoxy so soon after the publication of the 1559 *Institutio* may well reflect the highly systematised and structured theology bequeathed to his successors by Calvin....Of all the many influences which served to keep the theology of Reformed Orthodoxy more or less in line with that of Calvin, the *Institutio* was by far the most powerful.<sup>141</sup>

(McGrath would think that Reformed theology is more to the "less" side of Calvin; we take the opposite view to him.)

By "methodology", McGrath has in mind the structure of Calvin's writings, not the theological framework that he puts his theology within. Yet, McGrath has said enough to show that far from having an aversion to order and system, Calvin laid the ground for Reformed systematics.

### "THE PARTICULAR EXPRESSIONS" EVALUATED

<sup>140</sup> *Post Reformed Dogmatics* 1 (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1987), pp.13-52. Cf., Richard Lints, *Fabric of Theology*, p.171.

<sup>141</sup> "Reformation to Enlightenment", *The Science of Theology* 1, editor: P. Avis, (Basingstoke, Marshall Pickering, 1986), pp.144-145.

## God's incomprehensibility

The importance of evaluating Calvin's doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God is evident from these comments: 'Calvin lays great stress upon the incomprehensible will of God'; <sup>142</sup> '...God, according to John Calvin, was in the final analysis absolute (unrelated) being. This was Calvin's foundational premise; and working from this hypothesis to a consideration of the kind of knowledge available to man, Calvin correctly concluded that God is hidden from man and unknowable in his essence....' <sup>143</sup>

Edward A. Dowey Jr. [*The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1952)] <sup>144</sup> says that central to Calvin's epistemology is the formula *non quis sit apud se, sed qualis erga nos* (*Inst.*1:10:2; cf., 1:2:2). What is meant by the phrase *non quis sit apud se*? Dowey believes it means that we cannot know God as he is in himself. <sup>145</sup> Murray does not think Calvin means this. In the *Institutes* 3:2:6, Calvin says, '*Neque enim scire, quis in se sit, tantum nostra refert, sed qualis esse nobis velit*' ('For it does not concern us so much to know who he is in himself as what he wills to be to us'). Calvin is not denying that we can know God in himself. Calvin is most likely saying that we cannot know God as he is immediately and exhaustively known to himself (*apud se*), but we can know *him* through revelation (*id se*). <sup>146</sup> Calvin uses the word *incomprehensibilis* in a double sense. In *Institutes* 1:13:1, he refers to the immensity and spirituality of God. In contrast, "incomprehensible" in Romans 11:33-34 (cf., *Inst.*1:16:9; 1:12:2) denotes the unrevealed will of God. Calvin is not teaching that God's will transcends comprehensive understanding on our part, but that is cut-off, shut away, from our understanding in both its comprehensive and apprehensive modes. <sup>147</sup> The divine essence is also in this sense incomprehensible (*Inst.*1:5:1; 1:5:9; 1:10:2; 1:11:3).

The position that says that Calvin taught the same doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God as the WCF is wrong. It means by "incomprehensibility" that which transcends comprehensive

<sup>142</sup> Van Til, *Common Grace* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1954), p.65.

<sup>143</sup> Kenneth Samuel Kantzer, *John Calvin's Theory of the Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Ph.d thesis, 1950), p.517.

<sup>144</sup> *CW* 3, p.382.

<sup>145</sup> *idem*.

<sup>146</sup> *Theology Proper*, pp.3-5.

<sup>147</sup> Murray says that the Latin term *comprehendo* carries with it two concepts: "to contain" (a metaphysical idea); and, "to understand" (an epistemological idea). The first corresponds to what is called God's immensity: creation cannot contain God (1 Kg.8:7). The latter means that God can be understood. The epistemological angles has two aspects: "to apprehend" (intelligent); and "to comprehend" (comprehensive). God is only cognitively or intellectually *apprehended* in revelation, but his unrevealed

understanding. Calvin did not say that God is inapprehensible; it is his divine essence and secret counsel that are inapprehensible, or cut-off.<sup>148</sup> To Calvin, God is inapprehensible in his divine essence in respect of his immanent being, 'the secret counsel respects His works and government of the world. The former is intrinsic to Himself, the latter is extrinsic to Himself.' Calvin teaches that God has given us a revelation respecting his essence. We know of God's spirituality, immensity, and also that his being is simple and indivisible (*Inst.* 1:13:1; 1:13:2, 22). 'The inapprehensibility affirmed is rather that of drawing a sharp line of distinction between the divine essence and the secret counsel, on the one hand, and the mysteries which God has so clearly revealed to us in His Word, on the other.'<sup>149</sup>

We are not fully convinced of Murray's understanding of Calvin's doctrine of God's incomprehensibility. There is overwhelming evidence that Calvin thought that the knowledge of God that the believer receives is analogical.<sup>150</sup> Indeed, Murray also believes this to be Calvin's

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council is inapprehensible. [Report to the 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church concerning the doctrine of the Incomprehensibility of God, Minutes, Appendix (1948), p.2.]

<sup>148</sup> *Incomprehensibility of God*, pp.3-4.

<sup>149</sup> *ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>150</sup> *Genesis* 1, translator: J. King, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1988), pp.60, 249; *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses* 1, translator: C. W. Bingham, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1857), pp.410-411; *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses* 2, translator: C. W. Bingham, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1858), p.132; *Commentaries on the Last Four Books of Moses* 3, translator: C. W. Bingham, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1859), pp.381-382; *Sermons on Job*, translator: Arthur Golding, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1993), pp.158-159, 201, 218, 671, 706-707; *Commentaries on the Book of Psalms* 2, translator: J. Anderson, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1846), pp.95, 239; *Commentaries on the Book of Psalms* 3, translator: J. Anderson, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1846), pp.141-143, 482-482; *Commentaries on the Book of Psalms* 4, translator: J. Anderson, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1846), pp.145, 314; *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* 1, translator: W. Pringle, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1850), p.200; *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations* 3, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1853), pp.141-142; *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations* 5, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1847), p.92; *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* 1, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation Society, 1848), pp.108-109; *The Minor Prophets* 1, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1986), pp.134, 401; *The Minor Prophets* 2, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1986), pp.61, 136-139, 440-441; *The Gospel according to St. John* 1-10, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: T. H. L. Parker, (Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, 1972), pp. 25, 212-213; *The Gospel according to St. John* 11-21, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: T. H. L. Parker, (Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, 1972), pp.78, 137, 234, 260; *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: R. Mackenzie, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979), pp.31-32, 259-260; *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians & Colossians*, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: T. H. L. Parker, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1965), pp.247-248; *Hebrews & I & II Peter*, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: W. B. Johnston, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979), pp.6-9; *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, translator: J. Owen, (Edinburgh, The Calvin Translation Society, 1855), pp.54, 164, 206; *Inst.* 1:10:2; 14:8; 17:1-2; 18:3-4; 2:8:5; 12:4; 2:15:3; 3:2:6-7, 20, 43; 24:17.

logic. *Contra* Dowey, Murray maintained that Calvin taught that regenerate man comes to know God himself, and not an analogy of him. We disagree with Murray. Kantzer seems to criticise Calvin for teaching what we know of God is merely an analogy of him.<sup>151</sup> We need to trace out Calvin's argument to prove our point.

To Calvin, the essence or *ousia* belongs to each in the trinity without division, whereas there are three personages:

[Christ's] likeness is not only veiled and concealed, but is an express image which represents God Himself, just as a coin bears the image of the die-stamp from which it is struck. Indeed the apostle goes even further and says that the substance of the Father is in some way engraven on Christ. The word *υποστασις* which along with others I have translated as substance, denotes (in my opinion) not the *esse* or the essence of the Father, but the person...whatever is peculiar to the Father is also expressed in Christ, so that he who knows Him also knows whatever is in the Father. The orthodox fathers also take *hypostasis* in this sense, as being threefold in God, the *ουσια* being one. Hilary throughout takes the Latin word *substantia* as equivalent to person. Furthermore, although it is not the apostle's purpose here to discuss the nature of Christ in Himself, but His nature as He reveals it to us....<sup>152</sup>

Each person possesses majesty. It is the expression of divinity. God's majesty and divinity are the revelation of himself, in his essence. He cannot reveal his essence, yet, as Murray says, Calvin believes that the bible predicates God's spirituality, immensity, simplicity and indivisibility. The essence of God is proved from his majesty or divinity, 'As, then, God is known by His powers, and His works are witnesses of His eternal divinity (Rom.1:20), so Christ's divine essence is rightly proved from Christ's majesty, which He possessed equally with the Father before He humbled Himself. His divine majesty was covered by the veil of his flesh.'

<sup>153</sup> The majesty of the Father and the Son is their attributes, which include 'eternity, power, wisdom, goodness, truth, righteousness, and mercy.'<sup>154</sup> As B. B. Warfield sums up, '[Calvin] is only refusing to speculate on what God is apart from His attributes....'<sup>155</sup>

<sup>151</sup> *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, pp.183-190.

<sup>152</sup> *Hebrews*, pp.8-9. See, p.7; *John 11-21*, p.260.

<sup>153</sup> *Galatians*, etc., pp.247-248.

<sup>154</sup> *Romans*, pp.31-32.

<sup>155</sup> *Calvin and Augustine*, editor: Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1956), p.153.

It is not Calvin's doctrine of the essence of God that we are questioning, but his doctrine of God's majesty. The essence of God is who he is in himself. His majesty is an accommodation to us, because of our creatureliness. Thus, his majesty is not truly God as he is in himself:

"That I am in the Father, and the Father in me." I do not refer to these words to Christ's divine essence, but to the mode of revelation. For Christ, so far as His secret divinity is concerned, is no better known to us than is the Father. But he is said to be the express image of God, because in Him God has entirely revealed Himself, inasmuch as His infinite goodness, wisdom and power appear in Him substantially. And yet the ancients are not at fault when they take it as a testimony for defending Christ's divinity. But as Christ does not simply declare what He is in Himself, but what we should acknowledge Him to be, it records His power rather than His essence. Therefore, the Father is said to be in Christ because in Him full divinity dwells and displays its power.<sup>156</sup>

Calvin takes things a step further. The majesty of God, as the revelation of his essence, is also described as "God as he is in himself." But, this is merely in relation to his creatures. Moreover, when his majesty is thus described, it refers to his undisclosed majesty in heaven. That is, the majesty that Christ displayed on earth was only an accommodation to our sinfulness, and *not* to our creatureliness. The true majesty is seen in heaven, for then will our sin be removed.<sup>157</sup>

The hiddenness of the majesty of God is also seen in the doctrine of Christ incarnate. The flesh of the incarnate Son of God acted as a veil over his divinity.<sup>158</sup> '[Christ] was not known as the Son of God from His outward physical form, but by giving luminous proofs of His divine power, so that the majesty of the Father shone forth in Him as in a living and express image.'<sup>159</sup> We might say that the "secret" Son of God revealed himself only on occasions. His transfiguration was the most conspicuous revelation of his divine nature. Yet, there is also a sense in which the Son of God revealed his majesty continually. Christ's majesty, as the only begotten Son, belongs to him not only because he is the eternal Word, but also because the Father's image was 'engraved' in his human nature, 'so as to form His members to the resemblance of it.' In other words, Christ revealed the beauty of holiness in his flesh. It is into this image that his brothers are being transformed.<sup>160</sup> In sum, there is a conspicuous and infrequent revelation of Christ's

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<sup>156</sup> *John 11-21*, p.78.

<sup>157</sup> *A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark & Luke 3. James & Jude*, Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance, translator: A. W. Morrison, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1972), p.198.

<sup>158</sup> *idem*.

<sup>159</sup> *John 11-21*, p.234.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*, p.149.

own majesty by himself, and an inconspicuous and constant revelation of his own majesty by himself. Thus, the secret majesty of Christ is revealed in two major forms: through purely divine interventions; and through the human level of holiness.

In summary, there are three levels to Calvin's concept of accommodation. (1) the majesty of God accommodates the hidden God to us, because we, as creatures, would not perceive him otherwise. (2) the majesty of God as revealed on earth is an accommodation, for our sinfulness keeps us from truly perceiving it. (3) the Son as he is called God's image is this only as he reveals himself to us. Therefore, the Son in the mode of revelation is an accommodation. We can never truly penetrate into the mystery of the immanent relations of the Godhead, in other words.

To come to the centre of the issue: Calvin says that even in the revelation of the majesty of God, God is not truly apprehended. Now, we are sure he did not mean this, but this, it would seem, is the extension of his system. In this way, he is more in accord with Karl Barth than Murray. It is Barth who says that God is hidden *in* his revelation.<sup>161</sup> To Murray, our knowledge of God is analogical, but God is not an analogy. This is fine. However, Calvin says that the God who reveals himself *is* an analogy. The conclusion we reach, therefore, is that the implication of Calvin's teaching is that we do not really come to know God.

The doctrine of accommodation or God's otherness is evident in another respect in Calvin's doctrine of God. In his commentary on Romans, Murray merely mentions in passing, and that in a footnote, that Calvin just happens not to believe that God actually has such an emotion as wrath.<sup>162</sup> Calvin says, 'The word *wrath*, referring to God in human terms as usual in scripture, means the vengeance of God; for when he punishes, he has, according to our way of thinking, the appearance of anger. The word, therefore, implies no emotion in God, but has reference only to the feelings of the sinner who is punished.'<sup>163</sup> Certainly, by, in effect, by-passing Calvin's theology at this point, Murray has incurred his most mysterious oversight. Yet, why does Murray merely mention the matter briefly in a footnote? He does so because elsewhere Calvin clearly teaches that God has anger, and needs to be propitiated. What is happening in Calvin's thought, then? What is happening is that we are seeing the fruits of his theological system. In the perfect

<sup>161</sup> Trevor Hart, "The Word, the Words and the Witness: Proclamation as Divine and Human Reality in the Theology of Karl Barth", *Tyndale Bulletin* 46:1 (1995), pp.95-99.

<sup>162</sup> *Romans* 1, p.35.

<sup>163</sup> *Romans*, p.30.



or divine realm, God has no emotions, he is always "simple". But to our eye, the realm of variegation, the human realm, God accommodates himself to our ignorance and confusion.

Concerning the doctrine of God, variegation is evident elsewhere, in Calvin. He writes:

And it is a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture, that God repents of evil; not that he really changes his purpose, for God is in himself immutable, and is said to turn from his purpose, when he remits to man the punishment he has previously threatened. Whatever proceeds from God's mouth ought to be regarded as an inviolable decree; and yet God often threatens us conditionally, and though the condition be not express it is nevertheless to be understood: but when he is pacified to us and relaxes the punishment, which was in a manner already decreed according to the external word, he is then said to repent. And we know, that as we do not apprehend God such as he is, he is therefore described in such a way as we can comprehend, according to the measure of our infirmity. Hence God often puts on the character of men, as though he were like them....<sup>164</sup>

Again:

God, we know, is subject to no passions; and we know that no change takes place in him. What then do these expressions mean, by which he appears to be changeable? Doubtless he accommodates himself to our ignorance, whenever he puts on a character foreign to himself... But if the will of God be one, it does not hence follow that he does not accommodate himself to men, and put on a character foreign to himself....<sup>165</sup>

Once more:

The repentance which is here ascribed to God does not properly belong to him, but has reference to our understanding of him. For since we cannot comprehend him as he is, it is necessary that, for our sake, he should, in a certain sense, transform himself. That repentance cannot take place in God, easily appears from this single consideration, that nothing happens which is by him unexpected or unforeseen. The same reasoning, and remark, applies to what follows, that God was affected with grief. Certainly God is not sorrowful or sad; but remains for ever like himself in his celestial and happy repose: yet, because it could not otherwise be known how great is God's hatred and detestation of sin, therefore the Spirit accommodates himself to our capacity.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> *Minor Prophets* 2, p.61.

<sup>165</sup> *Minor Prophets* 1, p.401.

<sup>166</sup> *Genesis* 1, p.249.

Admittedly, Calvin is referring to the “emotions” of God. Nevertheless, the similarity in language and concept with his doctrine of God’s incomprehensibility make us think that Calvin’s rejection of the doctrine of the emotions of God is probably another form of his doctrine of God’s incomprehensibility.

In his doctrine of God’s incomprehensibility, Calvin is operating from the Thomistic distinction of the *quid* of a thing, and its *qualis*, says Warfield, *quid* refers to a thing’s real nature, and *qualis* to the expression of the reality- real thing.<sup>167</sup>

To sum up, we agree with Kantzer that the incomprehensibility of God is the most fundamental doctrine of Calvin’s theology. This is just to say that it is the revelation of God that is the most basic doctrine of Calvin’s theology. And, in its various expressions or doctrines, the revelation of God is inevitably expressed by Calvin in this *quid* and *qualis* manner, between the reality of a thing and its expression. Further, it is crucial to understand that the *quiddity* of a thing is always the truth or reality, the controlling principle.

Another instance of the hidden-revealed contrast is Calvin’s doctrine of the will of God. This, as you would expect, is a natural extension of the previous discussion, because both relate to knowledge and revelation.

### The will of God

There are distinct similarities between Calvin’s doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God and his doctrine of the will of God. The will of God is one and undivided, and so is his essence. Moreover, it is because God is one and undivided that the decree is one and undivided.<sup>168</sup> God belongs to the other or eternal realm. The will of God is his eternal decree. God is cut-off from all created reality and is therefore secret in his being. The eternal decree is God’s secret will.<sup>169</sup> The essence of God is evident in the works of the majesty of God. The decretive will of God is evident in the works of providence and the scriptures.<sup>170</sup> Evil angels and men, ‘as far as they themselves are concerned’, do that which is not according to God’s will. Yet, ‘while they act against the will of God, his will is accomplished in them.’<sup>171</sup> Our own sinfulness creates dullness

<sup>167</sup> Calvin and Augustine, p.152.

<sup>168</sup> *Eternal Predestination of God*, translator: J. K. S. Reid, (London, James Clarke, 1961), pp.182-185.

<sup>169</sup> John 11-21, p.139.

<sup>170</sup> Inst.1:16-18.

<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, 1:18:3.

within us so that we interpret God's will as manifold (Eph.3:10). Are 'we, therefore, to dream of some variation in God, as if he either changed his counsel, or disagreed with himself?' The will of God is not at variance with itself; it is 'one and undivided'. We 'cannot comprehend how, though after a different manner, he wills and wills not the very same thing.'<sup>172</sup> *This is to say that God has decreed whatever comes to pass; there is nothing that has come to pass or will come to pass that has not been foreordained by God, in eternity.*<sup>173</sup> The majesty of God revealed to us is only an accommodation to us of his naked majesty. We will see God's naked majesty only when all sin has been removed. Even in the revelation of the decree of God, God is still hidden to us. We will only truly comprehend his will when our sinfulness has been fully removed. Calvin writes:

That God's secrets are not to be searched. True it is that they are not to be searched, saving so farre forth as he maketh us privie to them, and then they are no more secrets. As how: Ye see howe S. Paule calleth the Gospell a wonderful secret which hath bene hidden in God, yea in somuch as Angels have bene ravished and amazed at it, and highly honoured in it. And yet neverthesse the same is in an easie doctrine to us. For there God uttereth his wil unto us, yea and (as ye would say) so forecheaweth our foode, as there is nothing for us to doo but to swallow it down: he boweth unto our rudenesse, and sheweth himselfe exceding homely. We see then the Gospell is in it selfe so high a wisdom, as wee [of ourselves] can never atteyne unto it, seing that the Angels comprehend it not: and yet not withstanding it is such a doctrine as ought to be known unto us...for somuch as God hath applied himselfe unto us. But there are other secretes which are hid from us, and whereunto God giveth us no leave to attaine to as yet. True it is that at the last day, we shall know all things....But yet for all that, they canot see the registers of heaven, to know whither they be written there or no. It is enough for them that God hath given them a good copie of their election to looke upon in our Lord Jesus Christ'.<sup>174</sup>

Although the secret will of God is rooted in his divine and secret being, it has more of an affinity with the majesty of God. The key is the sinfulness of man. Just as the naked majesty of God will be made known in heaven once our sin is removed, so the naked will of God will be revealed in heaven once our sin is removed.

Our interpretation of Calvin is consolidated when we understand that, to him, God's majesty revealed in Christ on earth is the same majesty or revelation found in his word:

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<sup>172</sup> *ibid.*, 1:18:3.

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.*, 1:16-18.

<sup>174</sup> *Job*, p.201.

Besides, God, as I have already said, ceases not daily to stimulate and urge us; he multiplies prophecies and similitudes; that is, he in various ways accommodates himself to us; for by similitudes he means all forms of teaching. And doubtless we see that God in a manner transforms himself in his word, for he speaks not according to his own majesty, but as he sees to be suitable to our capacities and weakness; for the Scriptures set before us various representations, which show to us the face of God. Since God then thus accommodates himself to our rudeness....<sup>175</sup>

### God's will towards the elect

Although God loves the whole of his creation,<sup>176</sup> and provides for it, his providence terminates especially upon the church:

Lastly, the design of God is to show that He takes care of the whole human race, but is especially vigilant in governing the Church, which he favours with closer inspection. Moreover, we must add, that although the paternal favour and beneficence, as well as the judicial severity of God, is often conspicuous in the whole course of his Providence....<sup>177</sup>

God's care for all created reality other than man is primarily incidental; his real concern is man himself.<sup>178</sup> Even towards mankind, however, God's care has an incidental quality. God's care towards the non-elect is to the end of fulfilling his purposes for the elect. Quoting Augustine, he writes, ' "The rest of mortal men who are not of [the elect], but rather taken out of the common mass and made vessels of wrath, are born for the use of the elect." ' <sup>179</sup>

To Calvin, the whole will of God is geared towards the elect. Thus, everything that God ordains is to the end that his purpose for the elect will be fulfilled. In other words, God's will is an "elective" will. When this will operates in the human plain, we see it in different ways. This is to refer us back to what was said before: our knowledge of God's will as sinful creatures is that it is variegated. In reality, the opposite is true, according to Calvin. To sinful man, even regenerate man, God's will is expressed towards both the elect and non-elect. This is variegation. However, in reality, his will is one in essence and purpose- it is only for the elect.

For example, Calvin taught that God wills (the efficacious decretive will) the salvation of every man. Calvin interprets God's will in Ezekiel 18:23 and 20:44 in the sense that in the offer of the

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<sup>175</sup> *Minor Prophets* 1, pp.440-441.

<sup>176</sup> *Matthew* 3, pp.106-109.

<sup>177</sup> *Inst.* 1:17:1-2.

<sup>178</sup> *Eternal Predestination*, p.163.

gospel to *all kinds of men* God's kindness is displayed. However, God does not merely "reach out" in kindness to all kinds of men, he also saves them. Thus, in Ezekiel 18:23 and 20:44, God not only calls but saves. The inherent power of God's will, its elective nature, is brought out in this comment:

When, [Augustine] says, our Lord complains that, for all His willingness to gather the children of Jerusalem, they would not have it, was the will of God overpowered by weak men, so that the Almighty was unable to do what He willed? Where then will be that omnipotence by which He did whatsoever pleased Him in heaven and on earth? Who will be so impiously foolish as to say that God cannot convert to good the evil wills of men when and where and in whatever cases He will? But when He does so, He does it in mercy, and when not, in judgement. But the difficulty is, I admit, not yet solved. Yet I have extorted this from Pighius, that no one unless deprived of sense and judgement can believe that salvation is ordained in the secret counsel of God equally for all.

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The above quotation reveals the "dual" nature of God's will: that it is "incidentally" concerned with the non-elect, but because it is always efficacious, it is therefore always "for" the elect. The *quiddity* of the will of God is that it is for the elect; its expression or *qualis* is that it is variegated.

Murray disagrees with Calvin's emphasis on the "simple" will of God. Calvin does not think that God has two wills. God, rather, has one will, which is decretive, but it is also revealed. Calvin's comments on Ezekiel 18:23 and 20:44 [*Commentary on Ezekiel*] state that God decretively wills (*velle*) all men to be saved. Murray responds, 'in regard to sin, God *decretively* wills what he *preceptively* does not will.' [emphasis his] Calvin does not resolve this contradiction by merely stating that the will of God is simple.<sup>181</sup> Murray's problem with Calvin's view is that it is not a sufficient response to the nature of the contradiction that inheres in his doctrine of God's will. For, to trace out Murray, Calvin's position *amounts to saying* that God decretively, efficaciously, wills the salvation of the reprobate, and yet, on the other hand does not. This is an inherent contradiction. An appeal to the "variegated" nature of our perception of God's will, and the "pure" essence of God's will as simple, is not accurate enough, therefore, says Murray.

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<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*, p.107.  
<sup>180</sup> *ibid.*, p.109.

So far, there has been almost an exact symmetry between the being of God and his revelation, and the decree of God and its revelation, according to Calvin. Almost, because the essence of God does not properly correspond to the eternal decree. There is one more instance of correspondence between God's self-revelation and the eternal decree. The will of God is decretive, it is efficacious. That is, it is toward the elect. The revelation of Christ, and his accumulated righteousness, was not for his own account, but 'in order that He might enrich believers with the gift conferred upon Himself.'<sup>182</sup> The whole of Christ's existence, in other words, was toward the church. Calvin is consistent; for if the majesty of God in his word or will is the same majesty revealed in Christ, then both Christ and the will of God are "vehicles" for the same entity: the Father's majesty. Moreover, this implies that, in a mysterious way, the will of God and Christ *are the same* in a certain respect. Thus, it is not a big jump to conclude that if the will of God is decretive, then Christ is "decretive" man: his life, death and resurrection were for the church alone. This being so has obvious implications for Calvin's doctrine of the extent of the atonement, though we will wait to develop them in the chapter Limited Atonement.

For McGrath to say that justification by faith was set a low position in the *ordo* is inexcusable. In terms of the underlying methodology, and in terms of the source of grace, the Reformed *system* does give priority to predestination; however, the theology constructed upon this method is a reflection of the priorities of scripture. To say that Reformed theology set a low premium upon justification by faith is sheer desperation, flying in the face of Reformed writings.

McGrath is so anxious to "expose" the Reformed tradition that he resorts to groundless conclusions. However, he was closer when he said that there was a Christological model underlying Calvin's system. But once more, McGrath loosely establishes his claims. Murray has established that Calvin believed that the scriptures are inerrant and infallible,<sup>183</sup> and, more importantly, he determined that Calvin believed in a doctrine of the decree of God that was nigh identical to that taught by both Dordt and the Westminster Assembly.<sup>184</sup> Thus, McGrath's use of 'rarified' in relation to Calvin's doctrine of predestination is wrong. Election, predestination, and reprobation were *so* rarified to Calvin that they are three of the few subjects to which Calvin devoted an individual book- *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*! Moreover, there are

<sup>181</sup> CW 4, pp.202-204.

<sup>182</sup> Romans, p.117.

<sup>183</sup> CW 4, pp.158-190.

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*, pp.191-215.

many plain statements by Calvin making it clear that the source of our salvation 'flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy' in 'eternal election.'<sup>185</sup>

To conclude this discussion on Calvin's doctrine of the will of God, we will refer to A. C. Clifford. He believes that the key to understanding Calvin's doctrine of the extent of the atonement is his conception of the will of God.<sup>186</sup> This is not strictly accurate, for as we saw, probably the most fundamental doctrine of Calvin's was his incomprehensibility of God, especially as we consider its inherent *quid-qualis* distinction, and its pervasiveness. Hans Boersma's is possibly right to comment, 'Without denying the reality and sincerity of God's revealed will, Calvin used the notion of *accomodatio* to dispose of certain difficulties.'<sup>187</sup>

### Common grace

Murray was deeply indebted to H. Kuiper's understanding of common grace. Murray defines common grace as any non-saving blessing given to creation. Murray cites Kuiper, who classifies three manifestations of God's grace which fall short of salvation. First, the grace of God touching all of God's creatures. Second, grace which is given merely to men. Third, grace given to all those living in the covenant sphere.<sup>188</sup> Murray believes that common grace 'serves the purpose of special or saving grace, and saving grace has as its specific end the glorification of the whole body of God's elect, which in turn has its ultimate end in the glory of God's name.'<sup>189</sup>

Campbell-Jack criticises Kuiper's doctrine of common grace.<sup>190</sup> Campbell-Jack is only partly correct in his evaluation of Calvin. Calvin's doctrine of common grace is also governed by his *quid-qualis* distinction. In fact, this is what we discussed earlier. We said that God has only one will, according to Calvin. It is this one will that is expressed in blessing toward the non-elect. This is the *qualis* of God's blessing, its expression. However, its *quiddity* is that the blessings given to creation are the expression of God's will toward his elect. Because of this, we can say that there was a sense in which Calvin's doctrine of God's common goodness to all creatures was indeed a substratum for his goodness toward the elect. Nevertheless, it stands that in his description of common grace, Calvin does begin with the concept of saving knowledge, albeit knowledge of God the Creator.

<sup>185</sup> *Inst.* 3:21:1. Cf., 3:21:5-7.

<sup>186</sup> *Calvinus* (Charenton, Reformed Publishing, 1996), p.11.

<sup>187</sup> "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement", *EQ* 64:4 (1992), p.350.

<sup>188</sup> *CW* 2, pp.96-97.

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*, p.113.

This brings us to the next example of the hidden-revealed distinction discovered in his doctrine of election.

### **Election and assurance**

God's election of some unto eternal life is hidden, '[God] yet regards [the elect] as His own in His secret counsels...For in itself the predestination of God is hidden; and it is manifested to us in Christ alone.'<sup>191</sup> The elects' election is made visible to them only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the mirror of their election. However, even our knowledge of our election can take bumps at times. That is, although we have true faith, our faith is often mixed with doubt and weakness. We can be unsure of our election at times.<sup>192</sup> Thus, our knowledge of election can be mixed or variegated.

It is commonly observed that Calvin's doctrine of the election of the godly is reserved until after, or is part of, his discussion of salvation in Christ. Calvin has two reasons for this. First, it fits his method of discussing the saving knowledge of God the Creator, then the knowledge of God the Redeemer. The election of the saints conforms specifically to the knowledge of the Redeemer. Second, Calvin's doctrine of the election of the saints is at the core of his doctrine of assurance of faith. It is natural for him to put it after faith *per se*, therefore. To Calvin, assurance of faith, the assurance of our being eternally loved and elected in Christ, is found in the knowledge of Christ, as he meets with us in the scriptures.

Yet, Murray's doctrine of election, arguably, suffers from removing the Christ of election from the assurance of faith. That is, Calvin works from the existential moment of crisis in a believer's experience in order to obtain assurance of election. But assurance and election are two different categories to Murray: the former is existential; the latter belongs to eternity.

The visible-invisible division is also evident in Calvin's doctrine of regeneration.

### **Regeneration**

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<sup>190</sup> *ibid.*, pp.197ff..

<sup>191</sup> *John 11-21*, p.139.

<sup>192</sup> *Inst.*3:2:4, 7, 11, 17-21.



Regeneration, to Calvin, is something that is perspectival. The first aspect or perspective is the divine one: God by his Spirit indwelling the believer creates faith within him. This divine work is unknown to us, secret. If this work is secret to us, then it is not perceivable by our consciousnesses. It is a work upon our minds, and is a renewal. The second perspective is that by faith we beget the seed of life. That is, in faith we are united with Christ, and he gives to us the gift of newness of life by his Spirit, again. The second perspective is *our own* perception of the *one* work of regeneration.<sup>193</sup> We will see in the chapter dealing with the doctrine of assurance that Calvin never trusted the human level in relation to assurance. The human level is the arena of confusion; that is why Calvin roots his doctrine of assurance in the divine or invisible realm, in the secret witness of the divine Spirit.

Murray also believes in two works of renewal, as Calvin. But Murray calls the internal work regeneration, and the external work sanctification. Because he does not begin with Calvin's *quid-qualis* distinction, Murray does not make the mistake of saying that "regeneration" can mean both secret or internal renewal and sanctification proper.

This brings us to the last doctrine we want to examine in Calvin's invisible-visible distinction.

### **The invisible and visible church**

Another way of referring to the visible and invisible church is to say the hidden and revealed church.

It will be to our advantage if we also describe Murray's view on the visibility and invisibility of the church. He does not like the designation "the invisible" church. The New Testament never *defines* the church as an entity that is invisible to the eye, he reasons.<sup>194</sup> He allows for a use of "invisible", inasmuch that, in theological terms only, God knows those who are his.<sup>195</sup> To Murray's mind, we can use the terms visible and invisible only if we are referring to *perspectives* of viewing a church that is the company of the elect. The true church, according to Murray, has people mixed with it who are non-elect. In other words, the terms visible and invisible as traditionally understood are not denominations of the *nature* of the church. Thus, Murray

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<sup>193</sup> See, Regeneration.  
<sup>194</sup> *CW* 1, pp.231-236.  
<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, p.231.

concludes, in opposition to the *WCF* (25:2), that the ‘church as visible may not be *defined* in terms of mere profession.’ [emphasis his] <sup>196</sup>

We disagree with him and agree with the *WCF*. Moreover, it follows Calvin. He strongly underscores the continuity of the covenants: the church in the Old and New Testaments is the same. <sup>197</sup> It is this that causes Calvin to consider that those who are brought into the presence of God in the New Testament era as *confessing* members *are* the church. “Visible”, to Calvin, corresponds to the church on earth as its members see it, and “invisible” to the church in heaven and on earth as God sees it, according to his eternal decree. <sup>198</sup>

This difference of opinion between Calvin and Murray has distinct knock-on effects. It is not just that Calvin thinks that the reprobate can also go by the name of the church, they *are* also brought into the covenant community, <sup>199</sup> and as such *have experienced deliverance*, in some fashion, from Satan and the world. Moreover, they receive the word of God and the blessings of the sacraments. <sup>200</sup> Calvin can therefore refer to an “adoption” of the visible church, <sup>201</sup> and the “redeemed” of the visible church. <sup>202</sup> The reason why Calvin can refer to the adoption and redemption of *all* within the visible church is because he considers the visible church to have been corporately delivered. God’s covenant was made with Abraham and his seed. The New Testament covenant is made with all those who *profess* to be the seed of Christ. <sup>203</sup> The true or invisible church, on the other hand, is that which has been forgiven of its sins and received the regenerating Spirit. <sup>204</sup> The visible church is the corporate church, according to Calvin. To retain true salvation, and not merely a superficial inclusion into the covenant, Calvin refers to the salvation of the elect, the invisible church, in individual terms. Individuation is obvious in the visible church, in that the sinner “believes” and repents. Yet, even the one who repents can fall away. <sup>205</sup> Murray has no *such* corporate dimension to his soteriology.

<sup>196</sup> *CW* 4, p.262. See *Christian Baptism* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1990), pp.31-44.

<sup>197</sup> *Inst.* 2:10.

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*, 4:1:7.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*, 4:1:20.

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*, 4:1:7.

<sup>201</sup> *Genesis* 2, p.45.

<sup>202</sup> See Perseverance.

<sup>203</sup> *Genesis* 2, p.45.

<sup>204</sup> *Inst.* 4:1:2-4.

<sup>205</sup> *Hebrews*, p.74.

The words of Timothy George are most appropriate, 'The two poles of Calvin's ecclesiology, divine election and the local congregation, are held in the closest possible connection, frequently in the same sentence....Only when we realize that Calvin never relaxed the visible/invisible tension can we understand his diverse characterizations of the church.'<sup>206</sup>

### Conclusion

Calvin's theological method was not Christological (at least not as defined by McGrath); rather, it was theocentric, working within a framework wherein the divine sovereignty took control and had priority, and wherein humanness and human perception of God and his salvation was liable to taint and corruption. Thus, Calvin's method was essentially the same as the Reformed traditions and, derivatively, as Murray's. The Reformed tradition is accused of utilising pre-Reformation logic; yet, without a doubt, Calvin resorted to pre-Reformation logic in his use of Aquinas!

It is possibly the case that the *quid-qualis* distinction can be extended to the whole of Calvin's theology, and not merely the categories we have cited. So that instead of McGrath's balancing act between the human and divine realms, there is in Calvin the prioritising of the divine realm, which expresses itself in the human. This would certainly explain Calvin's conception of the covenant and law. For him, both doctrines are "elect determined"- as we said before.

One last area of examination- the *ordo salutis*.

### The *ordo salutis*

If Calvin's theology is essentially the same as the Reformed traditions', it would seem reasonable to suggest that Calvin may have held an *ordo salutis*. In fact, the particular claim that Calvin never had an *ordo salutis* is quite ridiculous. All evangelical theology is a coherent belief-system. Or are we to say that justification by faith sits arbitrarily by repentance? By arguing against a traditional *ordo* Berkouwer is proposing his own.<sup>207</sup>

Calvin had an *ordo salutis*- *contra* Berkouwer.<sup>208</sup> For example, Calvin's says that our union with Christ begins and *is completed* when we are effectually called by the gospel.<sup>209</sup> But we have

<sup>206</sup> *Theology of the Reformers* (Leicester, IVP, 1988), p.237.

<sup>207</sup> See, Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Leicester, IVP, 1996), p.100.

<sup>208</sup> *Faith and Justification*, pp.25-35. Cf., A. Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, p.446.

<sup>209</sup> *Inst.*3:14:6.

earlier commented on Calvin's doctrine of renewal that he viewed regeneration as one work with two distinct stages.

Was there any difference between Murray and Calvin? Yes. We have already mentioned some, but now we want to accentuate the differences. Yet, it is only now possible to do so, since we have established that the overall theology and the theological method of Calvin and Murray are both high identical. However, our comparison of both men will be part of a wider section evaluating their respective systems.

## AN EVALUATION OF MURRAY'S AND CALVIN'S RESPECTIVE SYSTEMS

The difference between Murray and Calvin stated

Both Murray and Calvin gave priority to the divine sovereignty. However, McGrath was correct to argue that the main difference between the Reformed tradition and Calvin was his emphasis upon a Christ-centred theology. But McGrath, *et al*, have taken this a step too far and have denied particularism in Calvin. After the theology of *quid-qualis*, Calvin conceives of Christ. Christ's incarnation was only for the elect.<sup>210</sup> Thus, he was "the elects' man". In coming into a sinful world, and in seeking to destroy the curse, sin, Satan and death, Christ became man. His life is conceived of, by Calvin, as a life of sacrifice- see next chapter and The Obedience of Christ. It is in the "flesh" of sacrifice that Christ's divine nature is manifested. Thus, once more, the emphasis is upon the divine: the divine Son according to the flesh procures redemption for the elect.

It is this which is the true "Christological model" belonging to Calvin. It was commented before that in the area of common grace Murray placed redemptive grace upon common grace, whereas Calvin interpreted common grace within the matrix of the salvation of the elect. Also, it was detected that Calvin's doctrine of eternal election was rooted in the person of Christ as he meets with us in the present, and from this meeting we are assured of our eternal election in Christ Jesus. *In short, Calvin is more "particularistic" than Murray, et al, because he is more Christ-centred.*

Yet, in operating from the *quid-qualis* distinction, Calvin incurs many problems. There is almost a docetic tendency in Calvin's writings, something Murray avoids. That is, Calvin tends to allow

the divine element to absorb the human. The monadistic nature of Calvin's theology (the all encompassing emphasis upon the divine sovereignty) seems to overwhelm any distinction between the human and the divine. Thus, Calvin did not really believe in a wrath of God; he plays down the human part in assurance- see Faith, etc.. But even although Murray's doctrine of common grace could be more Christological, it does preserve a healthy contrast between the divine and the human, and this is something that many modern scholars have not given the Reformed tradition credit for.

### *The ordo salutis*

Calvin's *Institutes* are to be interpreted through the lens of the person of Christ as he now exists as the conquering Redeemer. History is, to Calvin, like "spokes" that lead to the "hub" of the risen Son. Thus, in Calvin's *Institutes*, the Old Testament is constantly drawn upon as legitimate source of teaching about Christ, and ultimate salvation is, according to Calvin, to be found in the deliverance of the saints upon the last day, as Christ's victory is consummated.

The complaint against the Reformed method is that it removes Christ from the centre of history and, consequently, of salvation. Aristotelian logic is seen to be at the heart of matters. It is true that some Reformed works have been to some extent conspicuously influenced by Aristotle. This was because up until the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century, scientific research was dominated by Aristotelian methodology, language and argumentation. Yet, Reformed scholarship merely utilised Aristotelian categories but did not commit itself to an Aristotelian ethos.<sup>211</sup> We ourselves have already discovered that Calvin used Thomistic categories.

However, the difference between Calvin and Murray can be partly expressed in that Calvin did not have a linear *ordo*, but a perspectival one. The linear *ordo* of Murray exaggerates more the sequence of divine grace, but tends to obviate the centrality of Christ, as Berkouwer says.<sup>212</sup> However, to totally reject the idea of cause and effect is reckless. Berkouwer asserts that Romans

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<sup>210</sup> *Inst.* 2:12:2-4.

<sup>211</sup> Carl Trueman, *The Claims of Truth* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1998), pp.35-37, 43. Carl Trueman notes that the Reformed tradition is called "scholastic". This term is used pejoratively by some scholars to convey that the Reformed tradition was negatively influenced by the philosophical premises of both medieval and Renaissance scholarship. Early sixteenth century Reformed scholars commonly used scholastic theologians. However, the presence of some scholastic traits in these scholars hardly warrants the claim that they wholly endorsed and utilised scholastic methodology. Ironically, 'truly rationalistic theology arose with Reformed ranks only as the traditional scholastic and Aristotelian frameworks of Reformed Orthodoxy were shed in favour of approaches which were indebted to Enlightenment ideas.' [*Claims of Truth*, pp.31-33, 93.]

8:28-30 and 1 Corinthians 6:11 do not furnish evidence for an *ordo salutis*.<sup>213</sup> Murray establishes that salvation is foreordained in eternity and executed in time.<sup>214</sup> He says in reply to Berkouwer, 'One is at a loss to understand how the fixedness of the decree could be a devaluation of God's election or how the historical realization of what had been decreed should be prejudicial to the immutability of the decree.'<sup>215</sup> Murray also comments that Romans 8:28-30 and its context furnish evidence for stages, and that in 1 Corinthians 6:11 Paul has no intentions of arraying a set of steps.<sup>216</sup> Yet, stages is one thing, but a set of Perkinsian links in a chain of salvation is another matter.<sup>217</sup>

If the Reformed tradition was influenced by Aristotle's cause and effect method, it was only because it was utilised to accommodate the scriptural doctrine that salvation originated in God, was achieved by God, is applied by God, and will be consummated by God.<sup>218</sup>

Yet, to our mind, Calvin's *ordo* fares not much better than Murray's. For although outwardly it is more perspectival- the *quid-qualis* distinction- than linear, it effectively creates the same linear pattern: salvation begins in union with Christ which is expressed in regeneration, comes to fruition in faith; faith leads to our justification; and then the process of regeneration is resumed in sanctification, and consummated in the resurrection of the body from the dead. This is why we hesitate to put the Reformed tradition into the mould of Aristotle.

Further, Calvin's emphasis upon the *quiddity* of a thing, is probably an expression of the historical context in which he wrote. Calvin sought to protect the church from the "humanising" influences of Roman Catholicism, Socinianism and Anabaptists. D. F. Wells detects a certain

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<sup>212</sup> For the same view, see Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, p.98.

<sup>213</sup> *Faith and Justification*, p.31.

<sup>214</sup> *The Sovereignty of God* (Philadelphia, Great Commission Publications, 1965), p.20-23; *Romans* 1, pp.313-321.

<sup>215</sup> *Faith and Justification*, p.327.

<sup>216</sup> *CW* 4, p.292.

<sup>217</sup> Cf., Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, pp.98-99.

<sup>218</sup> Inasmuch as Murray heavily relied upon tradition, it is possible, though not at all clear, that he was indirectly effected by Aristotelian methodology. Take John Owen- someone who no doubt influenced Murray's theology. Owen probably argued against the view of eternal justification.<sup>218</sup> Every effect is preceded by a cause. Acts of piety arise from men who are inevitably bound by time. Thus, our 'faith, obedience, piety, and charity' are temporary acts. The temporal nature of our piety excludes it from being the cause or condition of our salvation. On the contrary, our piety is the effect of the eternal, and therefore non-temporal, decree. [*Works of John Owen* 10 (London, BOTT, 1967), p.64.] Trueman believes that this reasoning 'is based upon Aristotelian concepts', paralleling Aquinas' argument that eternal life's cause 'cannot lie within the power of the creature but must reside in God alone.' [*Claims of Truth*, p.124.]

suspicion inherent to Reformation theology, 'The Reformers were always conscious of the ease with which people slip into ways of thinking or behaving that need to be reformed afresh, and so they were always suspicious of the human enterprise, not least in religious aspects. They maintained a deep reserve about the self, about the reliability of human reasoning...about human feelings and perceptions.'<sup>219</sup> Wells is comparing the Reformers with the Reformed tradition. Thus, he says:

...evangelical theology is constitutionally disinclined to deal with the issues raised by contextualization. This is so because as a theology it is, *for soteriological reasons*, constructed to reinforce the *discontinuity* between God and man. *The sola gratia, sola fide motifs are structurally central* because there is an epistemological disjunction between God and human nature which is the outgrowth of the disjunction between nature and grace. This in turn becomes part of a world sharply distinguished into natural and supernatural. It is a world view that easily accommodates a high Christology...and articulates in terms of an intrusion of an other-worldly reality into the space-time world...[Evangelicalism] sees its object as knowing the absolute, transcendent God, and this is often pursued in defiance of the world that is shifting, changing, and relative. Consequently, Christ is often divorced from culture. Theology is seen to yield a kind of universal, transcendent knowledge that encompasses all cultures but is localized in none particular. [emphasis ours]<sup>220</sup>

Wells does not merely say that there is a disjunction made between nature and grace in Reformed theology, he also thinks that this problem is soteriological in nature; specifically, it is the doctrine of God's sovereignty as it is foundational to salvation that needs revision. Wells does need to administer some caution, however. A disjunction between nature and grace is far from unbiblical, since scripture does say that this world is under the dominion of Satan, and that grace abounds in spite of sin. As was said before, this was a strength in Murray's theology. Moreover, the notion of a transcendent theology is inescapable for any theologian, for presumably each theologian considers something of what he believes to be applicable to any culture, and thus to be "supra-cultural". *It is not the Reformed view of a disjunction between grace and nature that should be critiqued, but what should be highlighted is that Reformed theology has on occasion over emphasised the divine sovereignty, and consequently depreciated, in proportion, the sphere of humanness.*

<sup>219</sup> *No Place for Truth* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994), p.145.

<sup>220</sup> "An American Theology: the Painful Transition from *Theoria* to *Praxis*", *Evangelicalism and Modern America*, editor: G. Marsden, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1984), pp.84-85. R. Letham believes that because of the Enlightenment and the influence of Kant's dualistic world view, the church has found itself dealing with issues such as the deity of Christ and the inspiration of scripture. Consequently, a docetic tendency has emerged. [*Work of Christ*, p.118.]

## Systematics and Biblical theology

Calvin did not operate within the traditional divide between Biblical Theology and systematics. Reformed systematics is said to subordinated redemption-history to a system of brute facts.<sup>221</sup> In particular the Princeton tradition, influenced by Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, is said to have turned the bible into a compendium of facts. Did Murray consider the bible as a lump of facts waiting to be shaped?

Two factors need mentioning before an answer is given. First, Murray's definition of Biblical Theology. Richard Gaffin summarises Murray's teaching on Biblical Theology. (1) central to special revelation is its historical character, which precludes 'any tension or discontinuity between revelation and history.' (2) Biblical Theology is concerned with the revelatory process that gave rise to the bible, and of which it is a part. Biblical Theology focuses upon the historical progress of special revelation with 'its historical diversity and multiformity.' (3) special revelation in history was an organic process: the 'movement of the revelation process is from what is germinal and provisional to what is complete and final.' Gaffin adds that Biblical Theology is conceived of by Murray as dealing with revelation as a process in history, and that Systematic Theology concentrates on special revelation as a finished product. Murray also maintains that Systematic Theology rests upon Biblical Theology: the exegeses that make up the topical approach of Systematic Theology are regulated by the historical matrix that they record and are a part of; the greatest care must be taken to avoid a de-historicizing approach to systematic theology, therefore. The bible's unity means that 'the analogy of Scripture is the analogy of parts in a historically unfolding and differentiating organism.'<sup>222</sup>

Systematic Theology presents the sum total of revelation, both general and special, in a topical manner, says Murray. The principal medium of Systematic Theology is the scriptures. Both Exegetical and Biblical Theologies are contributory to Systematics. Biblical Theology is 'regulative of exegesis':<sup>223</sup> the text must be interpreted within its epochal environment. In turn, Biblical Theology provides the material with which Systematic Theology works. 'Systematic theology', writes Murray, 'is not itself revelation nor is it an addendum to revelation that is to be placed alongside of Scripture.'<sup>224</sup>

<sup>221</sup> Cf., John Frame, *Knowledge of God*, pp.77-79.

<sup>222</sup> "Systematic and Biblical Theology", pp.39-42, 44-45.

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*, p.5.



The second factor is Murray's understanding of tradition. Fundamental to his epistemology was the doctrine of scripture. The *principium* of all theology is the fully inerrant and infallible word of God, believed Murray. Infallibility cannot be proved. It is one thing to defend the scripture from accusations of error and contradiction, however, we cannot *prove* certain truths. How could we prove the expiatory nature of Christ's death? Our only recourse in finding a warrant for the doctrine of the infallibility of scripture is the 'witness of Scripture to itself, to its own origin, character, and authority.'<sup>225</sup>

It was the interaction of the *principium* of scripture and of tradition that really shaped Murray's epistemology.

Systematic Theology is inextricably bound to historical theology, in his mind. Systematic Theology is an organic discipline: it is the accumulation over the centuries of doctrine, which has been systematised; its ultimate source is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, through his Spirit, causes the church to grow organically and corporately.<sup>226</sup> To Murray, the *WCF* is the epitome of the theology of the Reformation.<sup>227</sup> Throughout history the Holy Spirit was increasing the church's understanding of scripture, the precipitate was the *WCF*.<sup>228</sup> The Westminster divines sought to present the system of truth which inheres in scripture, 'A necessary feature of any adequate creedal exhibition of the Christian Faith is coherent and systematic presentation...[the divines] regarded it as their task to exhibit in orderly, logical and systematic fashion the system of truth they found God had deposited in the holy Scripture.'<sup>229</sup>

Therefore, to dispute the need of creeds is to fail to understand that they arose due to heresy; and because there is heresy today, then there is need of creedal confession.<sup>230</sup> To reject the *Standards* is to reject the system of truth of the scriptures which it portrays; 'it really undermines the supreme and final authority, the Word of God itself.'<sup>231</sup>

<sup>225</sup> *CW* 1, p.10.

<sup>226</sup> *CW* 4, pp.5-7.

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*, p.242.

<sup>228</sup> *CW* 1, p.312. Cf., "The Calling of the Westminster Assembly", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 11:2 (1942), p.26. Tradition is 'the process of passing on and handing down.' [A. E. McGrath, "Importance of Tradition", p.160.]

<sup>229</sup> *idem.*

<sup>230</sup> *CW* 4, p.242.

<sup>231</sup> "The Proposed Doctrinal Basis of Union", *Christianity Today* 2:10 (1932), p.10.

Effectively, therefore, Systematic Theology and tradition were almost, if not, identical, to Murray. Moreover, to his mind, there was the closest possible relationship between tradition and scripture.

Having stated both factors, we will proceed to answer the question from which they arose. There is a distinct linear progression from exegesis to Biblical Theology to systematics in Murray's thought. This is perfectly valid. However, his *use* of his own system is too literalistic. That is, redemption-history as a category is *sometimes* left behind in Biblical Theology; for, according to him, Systematic Theology is the development of *the system of truth* to be composed *from* scripture, and which is then laid upon Biblical Theology.

Richard Gaffin, to our mind, makes a similar critique of Murray as our own, but from a slightly different perspective.

A major weakness of Murray's soteriology, thinks Gaffin, is that Murray did not utilise Pauline hermeneutical principles.<sup>232</sup> This stems, believes Gaffin, from a deficient definition of Biblical Theology. He contends that Biblical Theology conveys two things: a genetic or historical method- in essence, this is what Murray advocated- and, the broad methodological principles that are to be found in the bible itself. It is this latter aspect that Murray failed to grasp.<sup>233</sup> Therefore, even although he is something of a pioneer in Reformed Biblical Theology, he misses a vital element of its methodology.<sup>234</sup>

For Gaffin, the New Testament, more specifically, the Pauline letters, provide their own principles for constructing theology. Briefly put, we are with Paul in a common interpretative venture; therefore, Paul and we seek to understand Christ's death. However, we are dependent upon the hermeneutical principles that Paul himself used in order to understand his theology and for the construction of our own.<sup>235</sup>

Paul's concern is the *historia-salutis* or *heilsgeschichte*, the interpretation of the history of salvation. Therefore, to him, eschatology is soteriology. And the central and interpretative event

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<sup>232</sup> Murray is a central figure in Gaffin's critique.

<sup>233</sup> "Systematic and Biblical Theology", p.46.

<sup>234</sup> Packer was earlier cited as someone who rejects the Perkinsian method, yet Packer himself is criticised for not properly adopting the redemptive-historical approach to scripture. [R. Lints, *The Fabric of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993), p.273.]

of salvation history is the resurrection. The resurrection is therefore 'the pivotal factor in the whole of the apostle's soteriological teaching.' No longer, then, is the soteriology of Paul to be constructed in terms of the *ordo salutis*, but in terms of the *historia salutis*.<sup>236</sup>

Reformed systematics is distinctively Pauline. Paul's main interest is said to be in the area of the application of salvation to the individual sinner. Forensic justification by faith, in particular, is judged as central to soteriology. Consequently, soteriology has been constructed in terms of the *ordo salutis* (the sinner's experience of salvation).<sup>237</sup> Also, the accomplishment of salvation is built almost exclusively around Jesus' death; his resurrection having merely apologetical value.<sup>238</sup> No one more pronouncedly fails to see the connection between the resurrection and the cross for salvation than John Murray, writes Gaffin. 'This virtual equation of the accomplishment of redemption with atonement which characterizes traditional Reformed dogmatics is nowhere made more clear or expressed more programmatically than in the opening sentence of John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*: "The accomplishment of redemption is concerned with what has been generally called the Atonement" (p.13...)'.<sup>239</sup>

Paul's resurrection soteriology implies that an exploration be made of the 'traditional dogmatic conception of the *ordo salutis*.' The grounds for this comparison are two-fold. Firstly, because we stand in a common interpretative venture with Paul, 'there is no objection in principle to viewing his writings as containing dogma in the proper sense of the word. Reference to the letters of Paul is to the history of dogma...so that, where the textual data permits, a Pauline structure may be compared with a later dogmatic structure.' Secondly, the central elements to a Reformed *ordo salutis* (calling, faith, justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification), which are derived from Paul, have a different content and relation to one another than he himself would teach. Therefore, 'at the very least [traditional Reformed soteriology] should be apprised of these differences, especially when it cites Paul for support.' A re-evaluation is needed, therefore of the Reformed exegesis of Romans 8:29f, which is used as the foundation for its *ordo salutis*.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.12-29, 136-137.

<sup>236</sup> *ibid.*, pp.13-29, 135-137.

<sup>237</sup> The term *ordo salutis* has the basic meaning of the reception of salvation. It has also been developed along the lines of chronological or logic steps, Murray's system being an example.

<sup>238</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, p.11.

<sup>239</sup> *ibid.*, pp.11-12.

<sup>240</sup> *ibid.*, pp.136-137.

Gaffin concludes by offering up three differences between Reformed and Pauline soteriology. (1) the Reformed *ordo salutis* results in a de-eschatologisation of soteriology: eschatology 'enters the *ordo salutis* only as glorification, standing at a more or less isolated distance in the future is discussed within the locus on "last things." ' (This is Murray's position.) Eschatology is, rather, to be comprehended as the new creation age that was inaugurated by Christ's death, and is now experienced by believers in solidarity with his resurrection, and which will be consummated at his second coming. 'As Romans 8:30 reflects, the present as well as the future of the believer is conceived of eschatologically.' <sup>241</sup>

(2) Gaffin cites Murray as one of those who insist that justification, adoption, and sanctification are separate acts. Gaffin reasons that Paul does not view them as distinct acts, but as particular aspects of a single act: resurrection in union with Christ. Gaffin goes on to say:

The significant difference here is not simply that Paul does not have the problem that faces the traditional *ordo salutis* in having, by its very structure, to establish the pattern of priorities (temporal? logical? causal?) which obtains among these acts. Even more basic and crucial is the fact that the latter is confronted with the insoluble difficulty of trying to explain how these acts are related to the act of being joined *existentially* to Christ. If at the point of inception this union is prior (and therefore involves the possession in the inner man of all that Christ is as resurrected), what need is there for the other acts? Conversely, if the other acts are in some sense prior, is not union improperly subordinated and its biblical significance severely attenuated, to say the least? [emphasis his] <sup>242</sup>

We should not completely deny an *ordo salutis*, thinks Gaffin- by *ordo* he means the believer's experience of salvation. In fact, 'the only question for the Pauline *ordo* concerns the point at which and the conditions under which incorporation with the life giving Spirit takes place.' The 'point' is existential union with Christ in his resurrection, and the 'conditions' are "being without Christ", etc., (Eph.2:3ff). <sup>243</sup>

(3) Paul does not describe the initiation of salvation as 'regeneration or new birth understood as "a communication of a new principle of life" ', because salvation initiated involves the instrumentality of faith (Eph.2:1ff). <sup>244</sup> This is a position Murray does not take.

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<sup>241</sup> *ibid.*, pp.137-138.  
<sup>242</sup> *ibid.*, pp.138-139.  
<sup>243</sup> *ibid.*, p.139.  
<sup>244</sup> *ibid.*, p.140.

Possibly Gaffin is a bit too hard on Murray. In his exegesis of Romans 6, Murray does seek to implement the theology of the resurrection (see the chapter Union with Christ). Indeed, Gaffin's exegesis of Romans 6 is heavily dependent on Murray's. W. Robert Godfrey writes, '[Murray's] influence can be strongly seen in the work of later Westminster scholars Meridith G. Kline and Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.' <sup>245</sup> Moreover, Murray is well aware of the epochal and covenantal nature of soteriology. The "already"/ "not yet" divide, which is based upon the divide between the present age and the age to come, is appreciated by him. And although Reformed soteriology concentrates upon the Pauline theology and the centrality of justification by faith, Gaffin himself does not wonder from this structure- Gaffin does deny, however, that justification by faith is *the* central doctrine of Pauline theology. Murray, for example, understood Paul to be the scholar *par excellence* of the New Testament, an apostle who, more than any other, unfolded the covenantal promise-fulfilment nature inherent to the Old-New distinction. So, we are not all that convinced that Gaffin appreciates that Murray was one of the pioneers of Reformed Biblical Theology. Of necessity, Murray's soteriology, in certain respects, will fall behind modern findings. In fact, in the thesis itself, we will see that Murray takes criticism from fellow lecturers for his doctrines of justification by faith and definitive sanctification. The latter was most definitely an expression of an integrated Biblical Theology and systematics method. Moreover, Murray was so willing to make his own mind up, that W. Robert Godfrey concludes that the danger of the approach of 'the vital biblical character of Reformed theology as Murray presented it...was to leave the impression that exegetical theology presents the biblical truth and historical theology simply presents a variety of betrayals of that truth. Students could too easily miss the important contribution of historical theology as it clarified tolerable differences within Reformed confessional theology.' <sup>246</sup>

The picture emerging is of the scholar John Murray who was at the cutting-edge of developing a theology more appreciative of the broad principles, themes and motifs within the record of redemption history, but whose theology was firmly set within the boundaries of tradition, to the extent that sometimes he effectively began the construction of a given doctrine not from redemption-history but from the history of tradition.

<sup>245</sup> "The Westminster School", *Reformed Theology in America*, editor: D. F. Wells, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1985), p.95.

<sup>246</sup> "The Westminster School", *Reformed Theology in America*, editor: D. F. Wells, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1985), p.95.

## Murray and the use of the Old Testament in the New

Possibly the aim of Gaffin's own doctoral thesis was not to resolve from where Paul derived his hermeneutic. Gaffin's book *Resurrection and Redemption* does not discuss the Old Testament origins of Paul's hermeneutic. The old covenant is developed and enhanced in the new, said Murray. He proudly bases his whole theology upon the *continuation* of both covenants. But when Murray's commentary on Romans is closely scrutinised, it is evident that he has not properly assimilated many major motifs found in the Old Testament. In his commentary, Murray's use of the Old Testament is almost exclusively determined by overt citations and obvious allusions to the Old Testament. Thus, his exegesis of Romans is "open cast"; it is an "on-the-surface" exposition. Only on occasions- those just mentioned- does he probe an "Old Testament vein". Yet, there is a multitude of allusions to the Old Testament, in Paul, that Murray has failed to perceive. And if Pauline theology is eschatology, it is certainly also a recapitulation of the old covenant.

To our mind, a clear example of the failure to utilise the old covenant is brought out in Murray's description of the covenant of grace.

Notice the linear progression from Noah unto the new covenant. In Murray's description of the new covenant, there is very little recognition of the previous covenants, how they have confluenced in the new. His argument is more or less to say that the old covenant, the general covenant, is fulfilled and enhanced in the new. In this manner, "the old covenant" covenants are silently deposited and left behind. On the same point, Gaffin said that Reformed systematics was preoccupied with Pauline theology. The terminus of the covenants is the new covenant. It is supremely encapsulated in Paul- so Murray. To Murray, the river of the biblical covenants deposited its load in the basin of Pauline thought. And- to draw out Murray- we are effectively left with Paul and his exegesis of Christ.

The linear thought in Murray's view of the covenant is also seen in that the old covenant' covenants are reduced to a series of common denominators, which are designed to express the divine monergism. How the various covenants influence one another is very rarely drawn out by Murray. For us, the picture the new covenant gives us is not *merely* that of a river which has started from a trickle in a mountain, growing in volume as it proceeds, eventually ending in the sea of the new covenant. We are also given the picture of a number of rivers, the old covenant'

covenants, confluencing to make one great sea: the new covenant- which includes Pauline thought.

It is the perception of Old Testament theology within the New that will greatly aid us when it comes to evaluating Murray's soteriology. This will be no more critical than in our evaluation of Murray's doctrine of justification by faith.

The same issue is evident in Murray's notion of the law.

Grace plays too strong a part in Murray's understanding of the old covenant.<sup>247</sup> He believed that any reference to the Mosaic law in a negative way was merely a reference to abuse of the Mosaic dispensation. There are problems with this interpretation. Let us take Galatians 4 as an example. O. Palmer Robertson believes that in 4:25, Hagar equates to Mt. Sinai and the earthly city of Jerusalem. All three denote the abuse of the Mosaic covenant, that is, they represent legalism.<sup>248</sup> Yet we should observe that, in 4:24, both Hagar and Sarah represents two *covenants*. The implication is that the whole Mosaic covenant is that which holds men in bondage. Moo thinks that a view like Murray's and Robertson's arises from 'the desire to avoid attributing to Paul an overly negative evaluation of the OT economy'.<sup>249</sup> Thus, from one perspective the torah, the law, is perceived disapprovingly, by Paul.

But this understanding of the Old Testament law and the position of Israel within the old covenant arose out of Murray's desire to avoid the notion of salvation by works. That is to say, that he strenuously sought to demonstrate that the old covenant was not conditional upon faith. Upon this basis, Murray reasons that the law-reward inheritance of the Adamic administration disqualifies it from being a covenant proper.

In Murray's understanding of God's relation to Adam, Murray is operating from the platform that a covenant is a dispensation of grace and therefore excludes the element of conditionality. That is essentially why he rejects the idea of an Adamic covenant. To him, Adam had to "do" in order to "get". Whilst, the old covenant was a status of having without doing.

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<sup>247</sup> Cf., Meredith Kline, *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Grand Rapids, 1968), p.10. Cited by O. Palmer Robertson, "Current Reformed Thinking on the Nature of the Divine Covenants", *WTJ* (Internet).

<sup>248</sup> *Christ of the Covenants*, p.181.

*Tupos* ("type") in Romans 5:14, says Gaffin, is a device which indicates a 'function of the structure of promise and fulfillment.'<sup>250</sup> We did record that Murray saw the Adamic administration as a part of promise and fulfillment. Gaffin correctly concludes, in our opinion, that the Adamic administration was a covenant. If "in Christ" is covenantal, says Gaffin, then to be "in Adam" is a covenant relationship. In other words, adds Gaffin, 'you can't pull apart the covenantal references to Christ and the corporate or representative dimension'.<sup>251</sup>

Further, the term covenant does not need to be evident in order for there to exist an enacted covenant. The Davidic covenant was not originally given the name "covenant" (2 Sam.7:1ff). The term only appears in 2 Samuel 23:5; Psalm 89:3.

Murray does not believe in a pre-diluvian covenant, for the term covenant is not evident. Genesis 6:18 says וְהָקַמְתִּי אִתִּי בְרִית ( "I will establish my covenant"). The exact same phrase is used in Genesis 9:11 *after* the covenant has been established with Noah. Even although Genesis 6:18 says that God will establish his covenant with Noah, Murray completely ignores this and concentrates on the formal inauguration of the Noahic covenant in Genesis 9:8-17. He thereby designates the covenant "the post-diluvian covenant."<sup>252</sup> O Palmer Robertson does not hesitate to derive the *nature* of the Noahic covenant from Genesis 6:17-22; 8:20-22.<sup>253</sup>

According to Murray, Genesis 15:18 refers to the establishment of the Abrahamic covenant, but in Genesis 12 because again there is no reference to "covenant", no covenant was made at that point with Abram.<sup>254</sup> Yet, in 17:7 it says וְהָקַמְתִּי אִתִּי בְרִית. In our estimate, the promises of God may hold the key to unlocking this exegetical tension. We do not think it is adequate to argue that in Genesis 6:18 וְהָקַמְתִּי אִתִּי בְרִית means that at some point in the future God will make his covenant, whereas in Genesis 17:7 the phrase refers to God merely reaffirming his covenant with Abraham. Abraham was a believer back in Genesis 12:3. According to this same text, he received the promises of God. Yet, according to Murray's logic, all this happened without him being in covenant with God. We are not convinced that God's promises and his covenants are two different entities. How is it possible for God to give promises of *certain, unconditional*

<sup>249</sup> "Legalism in Paul", p.87.

<sup>250</sup> Tape, *Christ and the Covenant: Exegetical Basis (Rom.5:12-19)* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1994).

<sup>251</sup> *idem.*

<sup>252</sup> *ibid.*, pp.12-16.

<sup>253</sup> *Christ of the Covenants*, p.110.

<sup>254</sup> *Covenant of Grace*, pp.16-20.



blessing without being in covenant with those to whom he gives the promises? Murray himself said that soteric blessings are covenant blessings. O Palmer Robertson writes, that only after the events of Genesis 12 did God 'formally institute his covenant bond with the patriarch'.<sup>255</sup>

Murray himself says that all God's dealings with His people, and their reciprocal response, are to be seen as covenant activities, 'redemptive revelation [is] covenant revelation and that the religion or piety which was the fruit or goal of this covenant revelation [is] covenant religion or piety....Soteriology is covenant soteriology and eschatology is covenant eschatology.'<sup>256</sup> How is this possible? For, at the moment of time described by Genesis 12 Abram was not in covenant! Soteriology is only covenant-soteriology when all soteric blessings are said to come from an already established covenant relationship.

Bringing ourselves back to Calvin, he appreciated more the interaction between both covenants; and as we saw earlier this was evidenced by the fact that derived his doctrine of the redeemed of the visible church from the Old Testament in particular.

## CONCLUSION

It is not proper to contrast Calvin's theological method to Murray's. From the perspective of Biblical Theology, both men were seen to adhere to a federal theology that was almost identical. The federal theology of both was an evidence of particularism.

Particularism, that is, the control of divine sovereignty, was also noticable in Calvin's theology *per se*. Needless to say, it was also the control in Murray's theology.

Nevertheless, there are two differences between Calvin and Murray. First, Calvin works with a *quid-qualis* distinction which enables him to more fruitfully carry over old covenant theology into the new. Yet, negatively speaking, this *quid-qualis* distinction leads Calvin into contradictory theological statements, something which the more consistent system of Murray's avoids.

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<sup>255</sup> Christ of the Covenants, p.30.  
<sup>256</sup> Covenant of Grace, p.5.

The consistency between Calvin and Murray was also evident in that each man had his own *ordo salutis*. Yet, the existence of a linear *ordo salutis* in both men's theologies was evidence that both scholars had *over emphasised* the divine sovereignty, that is, particularism.

There is however a distinct difference in each man's *construction* of theology. Calvin works more from a Christo-centric position, in which the risen Christ is the basic hermeneutic of the whole scripture. Whilst Murray, who was influenced by tradition and his own definition of Biblical and Systematic theologies, derived his theology mainly from Paul; yet Murray was not always so aware of Paul's own principles of interpretation. But, having said, it is also the case that Calvin himself was not fully understanding of such principles.

The next step, it might be thought, would be to give an alternative system within which to frame our soteriology. We are not sure we are competent to do this. Further, the aim of this thesis is to concentrate on soteriology and not methodology. Yet, therein may be a lead. Wells said that the problem with the Reformed method was soteriological. Maybe this is over simplistic. Certainly we will show that Murray's soteriology is deficient in relation to his expressions of the role of humanness in salvation. It would seem more accurate to say that whatever "method" one uses, it must be one that takes into account the full witness of scripture, with its multiformity of doctrines. If this is correct, then a purely soteriological model would itself be too narrow. No, all we can hope to do in relation to methodology is expose certain negative consequences for Murray's soteriology which arise from his method.

## Chapter 3: Union with Christ

In his career, Murray assigned at least two different positions to the doctrine of union with Christ. In his *Redemption Accomplished*, it comes after the doctrine of perseverance. In addition, Robert Strimple records how in Murray's class lectures, Murray put union with Christ after the doctrine of effectual calling.<sup>257</sup> That this chapter is found before the section on the accomplishment of salvation is therefore innovative- to say the least. The structure of his doctrine of union with Christ found in his *Redemption Accomplished* is a traditional Systematic Theology layout. There are expositions of the doctrine, however, that are derived from a Biblical Theology perspective, and in accommodating them it is preferable if the chapter on union with Christ is put at the beginning of our evaluation of Murray. Moreover, his doctrine of union with Christ is wider than that given in his *Redemption Accomplished*, interacting with accomplishment of redemption.

### STATEMENT<sup>258</sup>

#### BASIC TEACHING FOUND IN *REDEMPTION ACCOMPLISHED*

##### Fundamental nature of union

For Murray, union with Christ is the most fundamental doctrine in soteriology. 'It is not simply a step in the application of redemption';<sup>259</sup> it is that aspect of the application of redemption which underlies all the others, 'all that has been secured and procured for [the saints] in the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption, all of which they become the actual partakers in the application of redemption, and all that by God's grace they will become in the state of consummated bliss is embraced within the compass of union and communion with Christ.'<sup>260</sup> The New Testament phrase "in Christ" expresses the idea of union with Christ. Union with Christ 'is effected in effectual calling' (1 Cor.1:9).<sup>261</sup> Also, union denotes fellowship, and thus communion with

<sup>257</sup> Tape, *Union With Christ* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

<sup>258</sup> From now on, the format of each chapter will be to firstly state Murray's position on a particular doctrine, this will be headed "Statement". The second section will be an evaluation of Murray's theology, and will be called "Comment".

<sup>259</sup> RA, p.161.

<sup>260</sup> *ibid.*, p.170.

<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*, p.87.

Christ. It is only through faith that this *fellowship* and *communion* is possible. Christ communicates to his people and they reciprocate this love.<sup>262</sup>

Union with Christ permeates the whole process of the application of salvation. The inception of salvation, its application to the sinner, is in union with Christ; the sinner is recreated in Christ (Eph.2:10). Not only is salvation initiated in union with Christ, but its progress (sanctification) is due to union with Christ (Rom.6:4; 1 Cor.1:4-5; cf., 1 Cor.6:15-17). Death is also in Christ (1 Thes.4.14, 16). Thus showing that the union is not dissolved even in death. It is in Christ that believers will be resurrected (1 Cor.15:22; Rom.8:17).<sup>263</sup>

### Nature of union

The nature of this union is two-fold: spiritual and mystical. ' "Spiritual" in the New Testament refers to that which is of the Holy Spirit.' Also, "spiritual" denotes the bond of union with Christ is the Holy Spirit (1 Cor.12:13; cf., 1 Cor.6:17, 19; Rom.8:9-11; <sup>264</sup> 1 Jh.3:24; 4:13). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ, and is Christ dwelling in us (Rom.8:9; 2 Cor.3:18; 1 Pet.1:11). The Spirit produces and maintains a spiritual state of mind. "Spiritual" also marks a spiritual relationship.

Murray describes what union is and is not:

[It is not the] kind of union we have in the God-head- three persons in one God. It is not the kind of union we have in the person of Christ- two natures in one person. It is not the kind of union we have in man- body and soul constituting a human being. It is not simply the union of feeling, affection, understanding, mind, heart, will, and purpose...But it is a union of an intensely spiritual character consonant with the nature and work of the Holy Spirit so that in a real way surpassing our power of analysis Christ dwells in his people and his people dwell in him.<sup>265</sup>

Secondly, this union is mystical. By "mystery" the New Testament means 'something which eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither hath entered into the heart of man but which God has revealed unto us by his Spirit and which by revelation and faith comes to be known and appropriated by men' (Rom.16:25; <sup>266</sup> Eph.5:32; Col.1:26-27). The union of the Messiah and believers is by

<sup>262</sup> *ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>263</sup> *ibid.*, pp.162-165.

<sup>264</sup> Cf., *Romans* 1, pp.287-292.

<sup>265</sup> *RA*, p.166.

<sup>266</sup> Cf., *Romans* 2, pp.241-242.

nature inscrutable, a mystery, but true nevertheless, hidden from eternity and revealed in the new covenant aeon.<sup>267</sup>

### Similitudes of union

There are various similitudes to union with Christ. It is comparable to that which exists between the persons of the Godhead (Jh.14:23; 17:21-23). It is analogous to the relation between stones of a building and the chief corner stone (Eph.2:19-22; 1 Pet.2:4-5). It is also comparable to the union which Adam has with his posterity (Rom.5:12-19; 1 Cor.15:19-49), or that of husband and wife (Eph.5:22-33; cf., Jh.3:29), or of the vine and branches (Jh.15). Each of these comparisons sheds different light on the union of Christ and the believer.<sup>268</sup>

These likenesses are merely similitudes, and are not to be identified with, or equated to, union with Christ. Murray recoils from the thoughts of E. L. Mascall. [*Christ, the Christian and the Church. A Study of the Incarnation and Its Consequences* (New York, Longman's, Green and Co., 1946).] He taught that the Christian is ontologically united to Christ's human nature in baptism, 'so that all he possesses in it becomes ours.' 'He further teaches that Christ's human nature was exalted to the level of Godhead in virtue of 'union with the Person of the divine Word' (p.48)'; to participate ontologically in Christ is therefore to participate in 'God's own mode of life' (p.100). According to Murray, Mascall has made the error of mixing the two natures of Christ, something which the Chalcedon formula *ασυγχητως* sought to repudiate. And in failing to understanding the proper nature of analogy Mascall has made the gross miscalculation that a Christian's human nature ontologically participates in Christ's divine nature.<sup>269</sup>

### Union with the Godhead

There is another phase of union with Christ which is crucial to our understanding of the doctrine as a whole. Christ is united with the Father and the Spirit. 'We should expect, therefore, that union with Christ would bring us into similar relation with the Father.' This we see in John 14:23, "If a man love me, he will keep my word...and [my Father and I] will come unto him and make our abode with him" (cf., Jh.17:20-23; 10:30). There is also the unity of the Spirit and the believers due to the believers union with Christ (Jh.14:16-17; 1 Jh.1:3; Rom.8:9). Murray concludes, 'It is too confined and therefore a distorted conception of union with Christ that we entertain if it is Christ alone that we think of as sustaining such intimacy of relation to the people

<sup>267</sup> RA, p.167.

<sup>268</sup> *ibid.*, pp.168-169.

of God.' <sup>270</sup> He adds that union is 'communion with the three distinct persons of the Godhead in the strict particularity which belongs to each person in that grand economy of saving relationship to us.' We know the Father as Father, the Son as Redeemer and exalted Lord, and the Spirit as the Advocate, Comforter, and Sanctifier. <sup>271</sup>

## UNION WITH THE SECOND ADAM

### Historicity of Genesis 1-3

For Murray, the ground of Romans 5:12-21 is the historicity of Genesis 1-3. He cannot, therefore, accept either Brunner's [*The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption. Dogmatics 2* (London, 1952), pp.80, 104.] nor C. H. Dodd's [*The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London, 1934), p.79.] thesis that Adam's sin is not literal. Dodd understands Adam's sin as an illustration of the sinfulness of the "corporate personality" of mankind. [*Romans*, p.80] <sup>272</sup> According to Alan Richardson, [*A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, editor: A. Richardson, (New York, The MacMillan Company, 1951)] figures like Abraham and Adam are probably symbolic. Genesis 1-3 is a record of the myths of creation and the fall of man. They symbolise God's work of continuously creating that which is good, and man continually falling into rebellion. <sup>273</sup> Dr Whale tenaciously avers the same doctrine, adding that we are all "Adam." <sup>274</sup> Of the documentary hypothesis, Murray avers, 'The present writer does not know which is to be reprobated most, the perplexity introduced by the imposition of the documentary hypothesis or the easy assumption of discrepancy and the superficiality that goes with it.' <sup>275</sup>

### Introduction to Romans 5:12ff

In the context preceding Romans 5:12ff, Paul established the doctrine of justification by faith. In 5:12-21, he elucidates 'the principles in terms of which God governs the human race. God governs men and relates himself to men in terms of solidaric relationship. And just as the sin, condemnation, and death in which all members of the race are involved can never be construed or estimated in purely individualistic terms, so we never find righteousness, justification, and life in

<sup>269</sup> CW 3, pp.334-335.

<sup>270</sup> *ibid.*, p.172.

<sup>271</sup> RA, pp.171-173.

<sup>272</sup> *Imputation*, p.5.

<sup>273</sup> CW 3, pp.367-368.

<sup>274</sup> *ibid.*, p.303.

<sup>275</sup> *ibid.*, p.368.

operation except as the solidarity constituted by God's grace is brought to bear upon our human situation.' <sup>276</sup>

### Syntactical construction

Murray sees the clause ἐφ' ὃ πάντες ἡμαρτον (v12) as the crux of Romans 5:12ff. He examines the syntactical construction of Romans 5:12ff. Ὡςπερ (v12a) is a protasis ("as"). However, καὶ οὕτως (v12b) is not its apodosis. Καὶ οὕτως does not mean "even so", but, "in like manner". It is a coordinative or continuative phrase (cf., Acts 7:8; 28:14; 1 Cor.7:17, 36; 11:28; Gal.6:2). At the end of verse 12, Paul breaks off the protasis, by introducing a parenthesis from verses 13-17. Verses 18, 19, and 21 all pick up the protasis-apodosis theme, so that although the protasis of v12a is incomplete, it is fulfilled in the protases-apodoses of verses 18, 19 and 21. <sup>277</sup>

The "all sinned" of Romans 5:12ff indicates only the sin of Adam, and involvement of his posterity therein. Romans 5:12ff concerns Adam's representative headship of his offspring (mankind). That is, they as individuals, and as a collective mass, were represented by Adam as their representative leader. When he sinned, they sinned in him and with him. It is not only his sin, it is their sin, also. His sin was imputed, or counted to them, *as if* they had committed it, although they did not in reality sin. Adam's transgression was the occasion for the entrance of sin into the world, 'to the beginning of sin in the human race'. <sup>278</sup>

### The sin contemplated <sup>279</sup>

Murray eliminates three main interpretations of Romans 5:12ff: Pelagian, Roman Catholic, and Augustinian. Pelagius taught that 'Adam is the prototype- he sinned and brought sin and death into the world. Others in like manner sin and they also are afflicted with death.' <sup>280</sup> Murray counters this view with four points. Firstly, it is not true that all die because they voluntarily sin, take infants for example. Secondly, in Romans 5:12ff, Paul says that Adam's posterity did not sin as he did, that is, after his manner; they did not commit sins as individuals, but somehow sinned

<sup>276</sup> Romans 1, p.180.

<sup>277</sup> Imputation, p.9.

<sup>278</sup> Romans 1, p.181.

<sup>279</sup> Murray has five sub-headings concerning the imputation of Adam's sin. (1) sin contemplated. This asks, *whose* sin is referred to? (2) union involved. This asks, *how* was this sin given? (3) the nature of imputation. This asks the question, *when* was the sin imputed? (4) the sin imputed. This asks, *what* is the nature of the sin imputed?

<sup>280</sup> Imputation, p.10. He cites John Knox and Gerald R. Cragg [*The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, 1954)], and also C. K. Barret [*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York, 1957), p.111] as those who argue that πάντες ἡμαρτον refers to the sins of individuals [Romans 1, p.183.]

in him. So when Paul says, "death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam", what he means is that the universal reign of death is based upon transgression of an explicit law; and because all men, as individuals, did not sin by breaking an *explicit* law, then the universal reign of death is attributed to the sin of all men in the sin of Adam. Thirdly:

...the conclusive refutation of the view in question' is the affirmations that all sinned 'because of the *one sin* of the *one man* Adam...This reiteration establishes beyond doubt that the apostle regarded condemnation and death as having passed on to all men by the one trespass of the one man Adam. This sustained appeal to the one sin of the one man rules out the possibility of construing it as equivalent to the actual transgressions of countless individuals', (cf., vv15-19). [emphasis his]

Lastly, the parallel with justification would be evacuated of its potency: if there is no connection between Adam and his progeny, then Christ is merely a pattern for his "progeny", which ultimately means that the "righteous" achieve their righteousness by some self ability; but this would contradict Paul's doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>281</sup>

Murray then evaluates the interpretation of Augustinianism or Calvinism. Calvin taught that Adam was the root of mankind, not just *a* progenitor.<sup>282</sup> Once the root is corrupted, then the branches that spring from it will also be corrupted. Once Adam sinned and incurred a depraved and guilty nature, it was passed on to his progeny by natural generation. (Murray does not deny the doctrine of original sin, but only that it is not to be found in Romans 5:12ff.)<sup>283</sup>

Against Calvin, Murray has three arguments. The aorist ἥμαρτον (Rm.5:12) entails that sin is a historical punctiliar act, which may or may not have consequences. However, "all sinned",

<sup>281</sup> Romans 1, pp.183-184.

<sup>282</sup> Murray's criticisms of Calvin are very similar to his criticisms of Roman Catholic dogma, so we have decided to put its view in a footnote. Roman Catholic dogma expresses Adam's sin as the passing on of habitual sin by natural generation. It is the condition or state (habit) of Adam's sin, that is, the sinfulness of his sin, and not the sin itself, which is passed on to his progeny. In what this original or habitual sin consists, Rome has not pronounced. Yet, according to Murray, a definition may be served up which does a measure of justice to Catholicism [*Imputation*, p.14.] (He does not fully explicate Roman Catholicism's view, so we are left to piece together from two of his writings, on slightly different issues, what he probably meant.) Habitual sin consists in the lack of integrity, that is, the lack of ability to deal with innate corporeal impulses that seek to override reason or the will. It also involves a lack of holiness, that is, the ability to have communion with God, as well as lack of justice. [*ibid.*, pp.14-15; *CW* 2, p.43.] Because sin is the usurpation of the will or reason by innate corporeal impulses, and is not really the activity of the will, then man cannot be held guilty for blame or penalty. [*ibid.*, p.42] Whereas, Calvin clearly states that man is guilty due to this inherent corruption, the passing on of real sin.



according to Calvin, is not merely a punctiliar act- the one sin of Adam- but also the constant status and condition of sin, as it is passed on from person to person. To Murray, this contravenes the law of the aorist. And so he concludes that Calvin's view is legitimate only so far as "sinned" refers to inception of the process and condition of original sin in the one sin of Adam. Secondly, because Adam is paralleled to Christ, and whatever relationship pertains to Adam and his progeny also pertains to Christ and his (spiritual) progeny, then if Adam passed on, through infusion, corruption, Christ must also have passed on righteousness through infusion. Murray is adamant that justification has no relation to infused righteousness, but only to imputed righteousness. Lastly- as against Pelagius- the repetition of the one sin of the one man Adam (vv15-19) emphasises the "oneness" of sin, and therefore excludes the notion of many sins.<sup>284</sup>

Having discussed who sinned, Murray then moves on to determine what was the union which was involved between Adam and the "all".

### **The union involved**

There are two main interpretations in Reformed thinking of the union involved between Adam and all mankind: the first is called the Realistic view; the second is the Representative idea.

The Realistic theory of the union involved in Adam's sin, as taught by A. H. Strong and W. G. T. Shedd, says that Adam sinned, and as human nature was in him, and this was the common human nature of us all, then mankind (the common human nature) sinned. Murray, with Calvin, believes that not only was Christ the progenitive head of mankind through seminal union, he was also natural head: human nature was corrupted in Adam, and was passed on to his progeny. Nevertheless, Murray denies that the human nature as a unit, the common human nature, was *really* present in Adam.<sup>285</sup>

Shedd cites Calvin as being an adherent to realism. However, Murray undermines Shedd's claims. Although Calvin speaks of the sin of Adam as common, Murray discerns that Calvin does not mean by it that in Adam there was a common human nature that sinned. Calvin's doctrine of Adamic sin and its correlation with his progeny is derived exclusively from hereditary depravity.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> *Imputation*, pp.17-18.

<sup>284</sup> *ibid.*, pp.19-21.

<sup>285</sup> *ibid.*, pp.24-32.

<sup>286</sup> *ibid.*, pp.27-29.

According to Murray, the Realistic view has four problems. Shedd has to maintain that it is unwarrantable to say that "all" sinned personally and individually. This makes it extremely difficult to fix the nexus between Adam's sin and that of the human race. Also, the realist admits that in Romans 5:12ff there is no realistic union between Christ and his members. Thirdly, the realist can find no other example of realism in scripture. Consequently, the realist acknowledges that realism is only attributable to Adam and his posterity. Realism, therefore, defies the pattern of solidaric relationships in scripture, wherein the merit or demerit of the action of the representatives devolves upon their members.<sup>287</sup>

### The nature of imputation

Murray goes on to ascertain the nature of the imputation of Adam's sin to posterity. There are two views prominent in Reformed thinking at this point: mediate, and immediate imputation.

The most prominent name associated with mediate imputation is Josua Placaeus (1645).<sup>288</sup> He taught that Adam's sin is '...mediated through the inheritance from him of a corrupt nature.' In the eighteenth century, both Henry Smith and Samuel Hopkins held to a modified view of mediate imputation. Hopkins maintained that sin and guilt were derived from Adam, in virtue of natural generation and the covenant. Murray is keen to remark that in this classification, Adam's sin is not charged to the account of his progeny; the pollution of nature that stems from Adam in natural generation is not the cause of the "all" sinning; the "all" sin because of the relationship divinely constituted by God between Adam and his progeny, which entails that somehow it must follow in his footsteps. Thus, Hopkins never explains the nexus between the sin of Adam and the sin of his posterity.<sup>289</sup>

The Calvinists Charles Hodge and William Cunningham accuse fellow Calvinist Jonathan Edwards of espousing mediate imputation. They thought he taught that the charge of Adam's sin and guilt is consequent upon inherent depravity. B. B. Warfield disagrees (but Murray has to develop his thesis). Murray notices that in Edwards' writings there is a clear distinction made

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<sup>287</sup> *ibid.*, pp.32-36.

<sup>288</sup> Murray also names Campegius Vitringa, Hermann Venema, and J. F. Stapfer.

<sup>289</sup> *Imputation*, pp.48-49. Nathaniel Emmons and Timothy Dwight entertained similar views to Hopkins. Nathaniel W. Taylor basically submits a Pelagian description of the involvement of the "all" in Adam's sin. [*Imputation*, pp.49-52.]

between the imputed sin of Adam and the corrupt nature that we receive from him. A *prima facie* interpretation, therefore, lessens Hodge's claim.<sup>290</sup>

Murray comprehends three planes in Edwards reasoning. 1) the involvement of Adam's posterity in his sin and guilt; his posterity did not personally and individually sin, but he sinned as their representative. 2) the original corruption that operates in the lives of the seed of Adam is the imputation of his sin, and gives rise to guilt. 3) the punishment of God that confirms this depravity in evil, and that leads to guilt. To Edwards, 2) was the existential realisation of 1), and both constituted a unit; that is why he could say that both are one and the same guilt. Whereas 3) is consequent upon 2), and so Edwards can say there is an additional and distinct guilt. In essence, Cunningham and Hodge thought that 2) spoke of mediate imputation; however, Edwards constituted 1) and 2) as a unit, and saw 3) as referring to original sin and its concomitant guilt.<sup>291</sup>

Murray says that in Romans 5:12 there is no thought of any other medium apart from Adam's sin as the cause of his death. Therefore, it would be just as unlikely to posit a medium between the sin of the "all" and their death. If the many are constituted sinners by the disobedience of one man (v19), then this does not allow for the notion of hereditary depravity constituting men sinners.<sup>292</sup>

### The sin imputed

Having dealt with the nature of the imputation involved in Adam's sin, Murray proceeds to demonstrate the nature of the sin imputed. Sin has two aspects: moral pollution, whereby all the faculties, namely, will, conscience, affections, heart, and mind, are lacking in conformity to God's will; the other aspect is guilt. 'Guilt is twofold: demerit and judgement of demerit.' The former is potential guilt (*reatus potentialis*) and the latter actual guilt (*reatus actualis*). The latter may be 'suspended, as in forbearance, or completely annulled, as in remission'; but not so potential guilt, for 'whenever there is sin there is unworthiness and demerit'.<sup>293</sup>

Hodge tries to distinguish between guilt and the liability to punishment when speaking of the sinner's involvement in Adam's sin. Adam's condemnation- the consequence of his sin- is imputed to us, and not his sin. In other words, guilt or the liability to punishment or the judicial

<sup>290</sup> *ibid.*, pp.53-56.

<sup>291</sup> *ibid.*, pp.56-64.

<sup>292</sup> *ibid.*, pp.65-70.

<sup>293</sup> *CW* 2, p.80.

obligation to satisfy justice is imputed to us, but not guilt in the sense of demerit and moral pollution. [Systematic Theology 2, p.194.]<sup>294</sup> Murray adamantly rejects this view. Guilt comes between actual sin and its condemnation or liability, so that it springs from actual sin and leads to punishment. Guilt can be used of the wrong committed, as to say, *the sin is his guilt*; guilt can also refer to the judicial pronouncement upon sin: *he is guilty*. There is the difference between the guilt of act and the guilt of judgement. The imputation of all sin, as well as Adam's, involves the imputation of act and punishment and their accompanying guilt.<sup>295</sup>

### Romans 5:15-21

Murray continues to hold to the centrality of the concept of imputation in these verses. In verse 18, the phrase "justification of life" is not to be defined as the justification consisting in life. It is not the parallel of the same construction found in verse 17 "the free gift of righteousness".<sup>296</sup> This concern of Murray's no doubt comes from the motive to defend the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith. Further, he argues that *dikaïomatos* in Romans 5:16 denotes justification by faith because it is contrasted to "condemnation".<sup>297</sup> And that in 5:18, *dikaïomatos* is contrasted to the offence of Adam, and therefore denotes ethical righteousness.<sup>298</sup> Murray also states how *dikaïomatos* means a sentence of retribution (Rm.1:32),<sup>299</sup> and the requirements of the law (Rm.2:26; 8:4).<sup>300</sup> The reign of death in verse 17 is the consequence of Adam's sin, and did not come from the individual and personal sins of men. However the reign of sin in death (v21) arises out of the individual sins of men.<sup>301</sup> Sin (and its multiplication) is like Adam's sin, that is why it is said to increase (v20).<sup>302</sup>

### Karl Barth

Murray clashes with Barth's interpretation of Romans 5:18. The text says, "judgement came upon all men unto justification of life." Murray writes, 'universalism not only in respect of atonement but also of justification is implicit in Barth's construction' of Romans 5:18 found in *Christ and Adam. Man and Humanity in Romans 5*. [(New York, Harper and Brothers, 1957); *Church Dogmatics* 4:1 (E.T.), p.504.]

<sup>294</sup> *Imputation*, p.73.

<sup>295</sup> *CW* 2, p.81.

<sup>296</sup> *Romans* 1, p.202.

<sup>297</sup> *ibid.*, p.196.

<sup>298</sup> *ibid.*, p.201.

<sup>299</sup> *ibid.*, p.51.

<sup>300</sup> *ibid.*, pp.86, 283.

<sup>301</sup> *ibid.*, p.209.

<sup>302</sup> *ibid.*, pp.207-209.

Adam was not *federal* head of mankind, according to Barth, 'Adam is not to be regarded as a single historical personage who as such at the beginning of human history committed a particular sin which is unique in its relationships and effects as the one trespass in which all other members of the race are involved and are therefore related to it as to no other sin.'<sup>303</sup> Adam has a two-fold import. He is the archetypal man in relation to sin: all men are their own Adam; they have all committed their own sin against God, just as Adam. Moreover, because all sin just like Adam, they *are* him. Murray says that this interpretation destroys the distinction between Adam and his progeny. It also, incomprehensibly, dismisses the all too obvious federal relationship between Adam and his progeny, and between Christ and believers.

The *Ordnung* ("ordering principle") of Barth, constitutes the framework for his interpretation of Romans 5. Adam was Christ's type, and pointed to him; Christ is, therefore, the true man, the real man. Jesus Christ is the representative and revealer of mankind; mankind's ' "essential and original nature is to be found, therefore, not in Adam but in Christ" ', writes Barth. Adam's relationship with mankind (every individual) is therefore indicative of the greater relationship of Christ to mankind (every individual). Murray comments that this is universalism. If Barth is to be consistent to his framework, then due to the distributive universalism in the apodoses of Romans 5:18 and 19, he must interpret the apodosis in verse 21 in a similar manner.

It is not to be denied that Adam is the type of Christ, but Romans 5:14 does not disclose datum other than the analogy between Adam and Christ, continues Murray. Therefore, Barth's claim for the priority of Christ's humanness cannot be founded upon this text. Further, Barth's framework is superimposed upon 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. He asserts that the Pauline order of Christ first and Adam second corroborates his thesis that Christ is the true humanity in whom we are all justified. Murray points out that 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 undermines Barth's view that states Adam's claim to be head of humanity is only apparent.

Also, Murray acknowledges that Barth correctly interprets Paul's *a fortiori* (πολλῷ μᾶλλον) argument in Romans 5:9-10. Barth then proceeds to apply this line of thought to verses 15 and 17, but as governed by his framework. Consequently, he interprets these verses as meaning that Christ presents life to all men. However, Murray exclaims that this is an illegitimate procedure. He writes of verses 9-10, 'because we are reconciled we shall all the more be finally saved- the

latter is a necessity arising from the former.' [emphasis his] <sup>304</sup> There is no causal relationship between the two elements of comparison in verses 15 and 17. The *modus operandi* between the two sets of verses is similar, but there is a contrast stated in verses 15 and 17 that is not resident in verses 9-10, 'It is the superabundant freeness and graciousness of God's grace in *contrast* with the process of punitive judgement.' [emphasis his] <sup>305</sup>

## UNION IN CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

### Romans 1:3-4

According to Nygren, says Murray, fundamental to Paul's understanding of Romans 5:12ff is the contrast of the bondage of the old world or aeon, as it is found in Adam, with the new world or aeon, as it is found in Christ:

...is very largely built upon the contrast between the two aeons, the two realms which stand over against each other, the one the dominion of death, the other the dominion of life. The former is the age of Adam, the latter the age of Christ....In the one Wrath, Sin, Law, and Death hold sway, in the other Righteousness and Life. We are liable to associate with the word 'aeon' divisions of time. But in Nygren's construction the 'two aeons or ages' are not to be 'equated with our traditional division of time, time before the birth of Christ and time after that event'....They refer, rather, to 'two different orders of existence, one under the dominion of death and the other under the dominion of life. This contrast existed before the coming of Christ and continues after it. 'There was even faith in the time of the old covenant'; righteousness was witnessed by the law and the prophets....Where faith is, the person is 'removed from death's realm and received into life's aeon....The old aeon began with Adam and the new aeon burst upon man with the resurrection of Christ....But the powers of the latter find anticipation and are operative before Christ's coming and the powers of the former continue to exercise their influence after the resurrection of Christ. Only at the consummation will the powers of the new aeon be perfected and all tension eliminated.' <sup>306</sup>

Murray does not assent to Nygren's use of his two aeon method to argue that the Christian is delivered from the law, yet still under the law. Nevertheless, Murray's evaluation of Nygren is pretty favourable. <sup>307</sup> Yet, in his own theology Murray does not pursue any real nuance of Nygren's system.

<sup>303</sup> CW 4, p.317.

<sup>304</sup> *ibid.*, p.320.

<sup>305</sup> *ibid.*, pp.316-320.

<sup>306</sup> CW 3, pp.352-353.

<sup>307</sup> *ibid.*, pp.352-355.

But Murray was already aware of similar theology. In his exegesis of Romans 1:3-4, he writes that Christ's coming in the flesh (*sarx*) is contrasted to his status in the Spirit:

By his resurrection and ascension the Son of God incarnate entered upon a new phase of sovereignty and was endowed with new power correspondent with and unto the exercise of the mediatorial lordship which he executes as head over all things to his body, the church. It is in this same resurrection context and with allusion to Christ's resurrection endowment that the apostle says, "The last Adam was man life-giving Spirit" (I Cor.15:45). And it is to this that he refers elsewhere when he says, "The Lord is the Spirit" (II Cor.3:17). "Lord" in this instance, as frequently in Paul, is the Lord Christ. The only conclusion is that Christ is now by reason of the resurrection so endowed with and in the control of the Holy Spirit that, without any confusion of the distinct persons, Christ is identified with the Spirit and is called "the Lord of the Spirit" (II Cor.3:18). Thus, when we come back to the expression "according to the Spirit of holiness", our inference is that it refers to that stage of pneumatic endowment upon which Jesus entered through his resurrection. The text, furthermore, expressly relates "Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness" with "the resurrection from the dead" and the appointment can be none other than that which came by the resurrection.<sup>308</sup>

Concerning Christ as *sarx*, as taught in Romans 1:4, Murray merely says that it denotes Christ's human nature: Christ was from the line of David, according to the flesh.<sup>309</sup> As to *sarx*' wider meaning, Murray thinks that it does not denote that which is bad, or that it connotes badness. "Flesh" sometimes has no reflection of evil (Jh.1:14; 6:51, 53; Acts 2:26; Rom.1:3; 9:3, 5; Eph.2:14; 5:29; 6:5; Col.1:22; 2:1, 5; 1 Tim.3:16; Heb.5:7; 10:20; 12:9; 1 Pet.3:18; 1 Jh.4:2), says Murray. "Flesh" when conceived of as evil does not take its meaning from our physical being; sin does not arise from our bodies. The ethical usage of "flesh" gives it the denotation of evil (Rom.8:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13; 13:14; 1 Cor.5:5; 2 Cor.10:2; Gal.5:13, 17, 19, 24; Eph.2:3; Col.2:11, 18, 23; 2 Pet.2:10, 18; Jude 23).<sup>310</sup> When Murray thinks of a negative use of "flesh", he operates within the paradigm of moral depravity.

This brings us to Murray's comments on the relationship between Christ's death and resurrection and the application of these events in the lives of believers.

### Existential union

<sup>308</sup> Romans 1, p.11.

<sup>309</sup> *ibid.*, pp.8-9.

<sup>310</sup> *ibid.*, pp.244-245. See, *CW* 2, pp.77-82.

Union with Christ in his death and resurrection occurs in the life experience of the believer (2 Cor.5:14-15; Eph.2:1-6; Col.3:1-3; 1 Pet.4:1-4). Romans 6:1ff is concerned with existential union, for the theme of verses 1-14 is whether the Romans should continue in sin (v1). Due to existential union with Christ, the believer has died and been raised with Christ. Existential union is the necessary realisation of Christ's representation of the sinner in his own death and resurrection. Christ went to the cross and rose from the dead as representative head of his people. What happened to him, happened to them. The historical death and resurrection of Christ for his people *makes necessary* the realisation of the benefits of his death and resurrection for them in the moment of existential union. Their *existential* death and resurrection is not, therefore, merely analogous to Christ's redemptive-historical death and resurrection.<sup>311</sup>

As far as the existential union of Christ and believers is concerned, it is not that the believer becomes contemporaneous with Christ's death and resurrection; nor is it that the death and resurrection of Christ become contemporaneous, are re-enacted, in the life of the believer; Christ died and rose only once.<sup>312</sup>

In Romans 6, and in other passages, the fact of existential union is based upon the prior act of Christ's representative act on the cross and in the resurrection. The latter is implied in the former.

Christ died on behalf of those who were chosen in him before the foundation of the world. They must have been with him upon the cross and in his resurrection. Secondly, the apostle interweaves language of the historical death of Christ (v10) in between the existential death and resurrection of the believer in union with Christ's death and resurrection. Which 'makes inevitable the interpretation that the past historical conditions the continuously existential'.<sup>313</sup>

### **The relation between the finished work of Christ and our participation in it**

The historical gap between Christ's death and its application is discussed by Murray:

Christ expiated the sins of his people in the offering of himself once for all- he purged ours sins and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (cf. Heb.1:3). But sins are not actually forgiven until there is repentance and faith. Christ propitiated the wrath of God once for all when he died on the tree. But

<sup>311</sup> CW 2, pp.289-291.

<sup>312</sup> *ibid.*, pp.291-292.

<sup>313</sup> *idem.*



until we are savingly united with Christ we are children of wrath, even as others. We are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and reconciliation is an accomplished work, but we are not at peace with God until we are justified. Admittedly it is difficult to define precise relations of the past historical to the continuously operative in these cases. To put it more accurately, it is difficult to determine how the finished action of Christ in the past relates itself to those who are contemplated in that action prior to the time when that past action takes effect in their life history. But this difficulty in no way interferes with the distinction between the finished work and its application. Any added difficulty there may be in connection with our present topic arises, not from what is intrinsic to the subject, but from our unfamiliarity with this aspect of our relation to the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>314</sup>

## SUBSTITUTION

Arguably, Murray's doctrine of substitution is not integral to his doctrine of union with Christ. Yet, his doctrine of substitution is based upon Christ in his death and resurrection representing the believer.

### Interaction with Millard

The view that says that Christ was not vicariously sacrificed, Murray attacks. In his first published article, *The Christian Doctrine of Vicarious Atonement: The Origin of the Idea of Vicarious Atonement, II*,<sup>315</sup> he writes in reply to W. B. Millard's theory of the atonement given in the first section of the article. He thinks that Moses adopted and adapted the sacrificial idea from surrounding heathen nations, in order to educate the Israelites as to the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and, also, to secure a stipend for the clergy. The simple Israelites had not seen the incongruity of punishing an innocent lamb in the place of the offending sinner. Jesus replaced the cumbersome Mosaic ordinance with the law of love. However, pharisaical Paul re-instituted the Mosaic legislation:

It was not only natural but inevitable that [Paul] should draw a fanciful parallel between Jesus, "the lamb of God", and the lambs previously offered on the now discarded sacrifice. Was the lamb innocent? So was Jesus. Was the lamb put to death? So was Jesus. Was the forgiveness of sins secured by the ancient sacrifice? So now, for all time, is forgiveness secured through the sacrifice of Jesus.<sup>316</sup>

<sup>314</sup> *ibid.*, pp.292-293. More of Murray's view of how we were "in" Christ in his death and resurrection will be given in the chapters Justification by Faith and Sanctification.

<sup>315</sup> *Homiletical Review* (1931), 102:2.

<sup>316</sup> *ibid.*, p.92.

The concept of a sinner receiving forgiveness through the death of God's Son is monstrous, to Millard. The purpose of Christ's death was to give sacredness to his teaching, making it more influential.

In reply, Murray says that those who object to the doctrine of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ are ignorant of the fact that this doctrine is, in Paul Feine's words, ' "the teaching of the Christian Church of all ages and of all confessions" '. Murray adds, 'If the doctrine of Christ's vicarious sacrifice is at the center of historic Christianity, it is precisely because it is at the center of New Testament Christianity, and it is at the center of New Testament Christianity because it is at the center of the religion Jesus founded.' To say that Paul replaced the teaching of the gospels is wrong, for Christ unmistakably taught his own sacrificial death (Mk.10:45; Mt.20:28). Yet, 'the full understanding and development of the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary sacrifice was not reached during the ministry of our Lord himself.' This is because 'Christ was not primarily the teacher or preacher of redemption, but the accomplisher of it. And it is a known fact that in the redemptive sphere the full revelation of word has to wait for the revelation of deed.'<sup>317</sup>

Murray also comments:

Paul's language is very definitely that of the sacrificial altar, and we may summarize in the candid words of W. P. Paterson:

'...[Paul] does not...expressly say that Christ died in our stead (*anti*); the phrase is "on our behalf" (*hyper*, Rom.5:8, 8:32; 1Thess.5:10, etc), or "on account of our sins" (*dia*, Rom.4:25; *peri*, 1Cor.15:3). But the idea of an exchange of parts as betwixt Christ and man is unmistakable.'<sup>318</sup>

One of the most famous texts used by Reformed theologians to describe the doctrine of substitution is 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Of this verse, Murray writes, 'The complete identification with us, the substitution in our stead and the assumption of the liabilities and responsibilities that are ours with respect to sin could not be stated in stronger language.'<sup>319</sup> Christ's "becoming sin" seems to be interpreted by Murray as Christ being brought under sin's

<sup>317</sup> *ibid.*, pp.94-98.

<sup>318</sup> *ibid.*, p.96. For exactly the same position see C. Hodge, *2 Corinthians* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1974), pp.525-527; and Leon Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 3rd edition, (London, Tyndale Press, 1972), pp.62-64.

<sup>319</sup> *idem.*

dominion, in that 'his humiliation state was conditioned by the sin with which he was vicariously identified.' In becoming sin, he dealt with its power and guilt in his death.<sup>320</sup>

### Interaction with Hodgson

Leonard Hodgson writes, 'the atonement is God's action to "free His world from all evil by striking at its centre, sin." ' Forgiveness is the ' "taking of pain due to sin" ' by Christ upon the cross, ' "in such a way as to absorb and cut short its power to produce further evil, to treat it as raw material for increasing the world's output of goodness" '. [*The Doctrine of the Atonement* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951).] The atonement serves a perfect pattern which mankind needs to reproduce in order to achieve this goal. Christ has shown that God has dealt with the power of sin by overcoming evil with good: Christ overcame the evil of his oppressors by his sacrificial death on the cross.<sup>321</sup>

Murray rejects Hodgson because he undermines the doctrines of vicarious atonement and the perfection of the atonement. Also, he fails to understand the nature of forgiveness: it is only given through faith in Christ's substitutionary death.<sup>322</sup>

### Jesus condemned sin in the flesh

Romans 8:3 says, "For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature (*sarx*), God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in man." There is no reason to believe with Calvin, Hodge, Philippi, Haldane and Shedd that what Paul is referring to in Romans 8:3 is that Christ's death expiates our sin and thereby removes our condemnation. Christ's expiatory accomplishment is never 'defined in terms of *condemnation* of sin.' [emphasis his]<sup>323</sup> The governing thought of Romans 8 is deliverance from the ruling and regulating power of sin. The word "condemn" can mean the sentence of condemnation, and also consignment to condemnation (cf., 1 Cor.11:32; 2 Pet.2:6). Through Christ's death, God made a judicial judgement upon the power of sin (cf., Jh.12:31; Col.2:15). Romans 6:7, "justified from sin", corroborates this exegesis.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>320</sup> Romans 1, p.225; RA, p.41.

<sup>321</sup> CW 3, pp.371-372.

<sup>322</sup> *ibid.*, pp.373-374.

<sup>323</sup> Romans 1, p.277.

<sup>324</sup> *ibid.*, pp.278-279.

In the declarative sense, the law could condemn sin. But the law has no redemptive quality; it could not destroy the power of sin through the flesh (sinful human nature). The phrase “in the likeness of sinful man” (*en homoimati sarkos hamartias*) occurs nowhere else. Christ came in the flesh (Rom.1:3; Phil.2:7; 1 Tim.3:16; cf., Rom. 9:5; Jh.1:14; 1 Jh.4:2). He was not sent in sinful flesh. He was brought, rather, ‘into the closest relation to sinful humanity that it was possible for him to come without becoming himself sinful.’ <sup>325</sup>

Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh”. The “flesh” was not condemned, but sin was condemned in the flesh. It is not adequate to understand this condemnation as Christ’s holy life that subdued sin. The two previous phrases “in the likeness of sinful flesh” and “for sin” go against this view. As has been said, by his redemptive death, Christ overcame the power of sin. *Εν τη σαρκι* (“in the flesh”) is to be joined with *κατεκρινε*. It would be tautologous to take “sin” with “flesh”, because flesh *is* the sinful human nature. <sup>326</sup>

## COVENANT UNION

### The place of the Jews

There was an Israel with Israel: the true people of God, Abraham’s seed, was not co-extensive with the ethnic nation of Israel, Israel after the flesh (Rm.9:1-3). According to his own sovereign choice, God set-apart Isaac and Jacob to receive the promise, and Ishmael and Esau he hated (Rm.9:6-9). <sup>327</sup>

The covenant promise has not failed, for both Jews and Gentiles have been called (Rm.9:23). This elect group is ‘the true Israel, the true children, the true seed (*cf. vss. 6-9, 27; 11:5, 7*).’ In Romans 9:25-26, Paul cites Hosea 2:23; 1:10. ‘There might appear to be a discrepancy between the purport and reference of these passages in the prophecy and as applied by Paul. In Hosea they refer to the tribes of Israel and not to the Gentiles nations.’ However, ‘the restoration of Israel...[is] the type in terms of which the Gentiles become partakers of the same grace.’ <sup>328</sup>

<sup>325</sup> *ibid.*, pp.279-281. “Likeness” (Rom.8:3; Phil.2:7) merely obviates the thought of sinfulness. [*CW* 2, p.133; cf., *CW* 3, p.238.] “Flesh” in Romans 1:3 is Christ’s human nature in its entirety, and not merely his physical body. [*Romans* 1, p.8.]

<sup>326</sup> *Romans* 1, p.282.

<sup>327</sup> *Romans* 2, pp.4-24.

<sup>328</sup> *ibid.*, pp.37-39.

Israel's rejection was not complete. God will never cast off his people Israel (Rm.11:1), language reminiscent of the Old Testament (1 Sam.12:22; Ps.94:14 (LXX 93:14); cf., Jer.31:37). Paul himself was a Jew (Rm.11:1). In the Old Testament there was a remnant of Israelites according to the election of grace (Rm.11:2-6; cf., 1 Kg.19:10-18). The rest of ethnic Israel were hardened by God and did not receive election and justification by faith (Rm.11:7-10; Dt.29:4 (LXX 29:3); Ps.69:21-23 (LXX 68:22-24); Dn.5:1, 4-5).<sup>329</sup>

In Romans 11, it is said that Israel's rejection is not final. Israel did not stumble that they might fall (Rm.11:11):

It cannot be doubted but that the mass of Israel stumbled (cf.9:32, 33), and it cannot be doubted that this meant a fall with the gravest consequences (cf.vss.7-10)....The question is not: "did they stumble and fall?" To that question an affirmative answer would be required. Everything here turns on the clause, "that they might fall". The negative answer means that the purpose of their stumbling was not that they might fall but was directed to and designed for another end...."by their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy". The rendering is unfortunate. It is "by their trespass" rather than "by their fall". What is in view is the stumbling of Israel, their rejection of Christ as Savior. This was their trespass and it is by this that salvation came to the Gentiles....In the construction of the sentence, however, the salvation of the Gentiles is subordinate to another design....the saving interests of Israel. It is "to provoke them to jealousy"....

....The ethnic distinction between the Gentiles and Israel appearing earlier in these chapters (cf.9:25, 26, 30, 31; 10:19, 20) is here again brought to the forefront. The saving design contemplated in "to provoke them to jealousy" has in view, therefore, the salvation of Israel viewed in their distinct racial identity. This obviates any contention to the effect that God's saving design does not embrace Israel as a racial unity distinguished by the place which Israel occupied in the past history of redemption.<sup>330</sup>

The apostle Paul does not merely argue for the restoration of Israel; precisely, 'it is the blessing accruing to the Gentiles from Israel's "fulness".' The Gentiles are to await a great gospel blessing from the Lord, which 'will be occasioned by the conversion of Israel on a scale commensurate with that of their earlier disobedience.' Whatever "fulness" denotes, it implies a status in sharp contrast to the condition of apostasy and disobedience. The restoration of Israel will be life from the dead- union with Christ and the life that this brings.<sup>331</sup>

<sup>329</sup> *ibid.*, pp.65-75.

<sup>330</sup> *ibid.*, pp.75-76.

<sup>331</sup> *ibid.*, pp.76-84.

In Romans 11:16-24, Paul compares Israel to a vine. Verse 16 says, "If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches." "The firstfruit and the lump are parallel to the root and branches." The lump of dough is a reference to Numbers 15:17-21. The firstfruits and root are the patriarchs, 'Furthermore, in verse 28 Israel are said to be "beloved for the fathers' sake". ' The branches are the nation of Israel. God broke off some of the branches in judgement, because of their unbelief. However, there is a remnant still attached to the root by faith. To this remnant has been added the believing Gentiles, the unnatural branches. Even they can be cut-off if they become unbelieving. Yet, Israel is consecrated by the fathers, and this 'holiness of theocratic consecration is not abolished and will one day be vindicated in Israel's fulness and restoration.' <sup>332</sup>

The partial hardening of Israel will terminate in the "fulness" of the Gentiles. As in verse 12, fulness must denote an enlarged blessing. Thus, the thought is that of a large number of Gentiles being blessed, just as a large number of Israelites will be blessed, a number far exceeding a remnant. Israel's fulness (v12) is not the total number of the elect Israelites. 'The "fulness" is contrasted with Israel's trespass and loss and must refer to the restoration to faith and repentance of Israel as a whole.' Nor does it indicate the 'added complement necessary to complete the tale.' The full tale of the Gentiles is not the complete number of the elect; for "fulness" 'refers to an entering in that takes place in the future'. The fulness of the Gentiles 'denotes unprecedented blessing for them but does not exclude even greater blessing to follow. It is to this subsequent blessing that the restoration of Israel contributes.' <sup>333</sup>

And so all Israel will be saved (Rm. 11:26-27). This is a reference to ethnic Israel. It cannot refer to the elect of Israel, since it is so obvious that the whole of the elect of Israel will be saved. Verse 26 is the climax of a sustained argument about blessing to be imparted to ethnic Israel and to the Gentiles, and does not, therefore, concord with the view that "all Israel" is a note of the salvation of all the elect of Israel. 'Paul is not reflecting on the question of the relative proportion of saved Jews in the final accounting of God's judgement.' ' "All Israel" can refer to the mass, the people as a whole in accord with the pattern followed in the chapter throughout.' <sup>334</sup>

### The place of children within the covenant

<sup>332</sup> *ibid.*, pp.85-90.

<sup>333</sup> *ibid.*, pp.90-96.

In the old covenant, infants received the sign of circumcision, the seal of faith (Gn.17:10-12; Rm.4:11; Col.2:11-12; Rm.2:25-29; Phil.3:3). Murray says:

In view of the fact that the new covenant is based upon and is the unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant, in view of the basic identity of meaning attaching to circumcision and baptism, in view of the unity and continuity of the covenant grace administered in both dispensations, we can affirm with confidence that evidence of revocation or repeal is mandatory if the practice or principle has been discontinued under the New Testament.

There is no evidence of repeal in the New Testament. In fact, there is evidence of corroboration (Acts 16:15, 33-34; 1 Cor.16 (cf., Acts 10:47-48; 11:14); Acts 2:38-39). Moreover, the children of even one believing parent are holy (1 Cor.7:14). Children are called saints (Eph.6:1, 4; Col.3:20-21). Jesus said that we are to suffer the little children to come to him (Mt.19:14; cf., Mk.10:14; Lk.18:16). In Luke 18:15, it is said that kingdom of God is of little infants (βρεφς).<sup>335</sup>

Essentially, infants are included within the new covenant because both covenants are common. Murray cites Calvin:

'The covenant is common, the reason for confirming it is common. Only the mode of confirmation is different; for to them it was confirmed by circumcision, which among us is succeeded by baptism. Otherwise, if the testimony by which the Jews were confirmed concerning the salvation of their seed be taken away from us, by the advent of Christ it has come to pass that the grace of God is more obscure and less attested to us than it was to the Jews'....(*Inst.*IV, xvi, 6).<sup>336</sup>

## COMMENT

### ROMANS 11:16-24

#### General comment

Our evaluation of Murray's doctrine of union with Christ will take us into the area of justification by faith. Our concern is not so much to deal with this doctrine- for this will be done in Justification by Faith 2- but to draw out certain broad principles of theology fundamental to understanding soteriology and, therefore, for evaluating Murray's own soteriology.

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<sup>334</sup> *ibid.*, pp.96-99.

<sup>335</sup> *Christian Baptism* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1980), pp. 69-76.

Murray's teaching on union with Christ found in his *Redemption Accomplished* is an excellent concise statement on the doctrine of union with Christ. To balance this off, however, there are a couple of aspects of union with Christ that are conspicuously missing from his work. It is probable that the New Testament teaches that union with God can be a temporary thing. A central text is Romans 11:16-24.

### Romans 11:16-24

Murray's exegesis of this passage leaves certain questions unanswered. For example, in what manner were the Gentiles engrafted into the patriarchs, bearing in mind that in Romans 9:5 the patriarchs are said to be the exclusive property of the Jews? Another question, which follows on from the first is, what part does Christ play in this union? Murray is not at all specific as to Christ's role.

*Who is the root?* Cranfield says Murray's interpretation is partly wrong. Romans 11:16 says, εἶδε ἡ ἀπαρχὴ ἁγία καὶ τὸ φύραμα καὶ εἰ ἡ ρίζα ἁγία καὶ οἱ κλάδοι. Ἡ ἀπαρχὴ and ἡ ρίζα do not necessarily refer to the same thing, continues Cranfield. The former denotes converted Jews, the remnant (cf., 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:15). Just as a believing partner sanctifies the unbelieving partner and the unbelieving children (1 Cor. 7:14), so 'the existence of Jewish Christians serves to sanctify the unbelieving majority of Israel'. However, ἡ ρίζα denotes the Jews' relationship to the patriarchs.<sup>337</sup>

But it is probable, as Murray argues, that ἡ ἀπαρχὴ and ἡ ρίζα do denote the fathers. Both terms are said to result in sanctification, and therefore probably denote the same scope. In Romans 1:3, it says that Christ was of the seed of David, according to the human nature- so Murray. Romans 9:5 says Christ is of the fathers. In 11:28, we are told that the Jews are to be respected because of the fathers. As Murray persuasively demonstrates, chapter 11 has at its heart the contrast between the Jews and Gentiles, and how both will experience the blessedness of God. The ethnic nation of Israel had been cut-off from the fathers.

Yet, to say that "root" denotes merely the fathers is not quite pointed enough. R. J. Rushdoony concludes Murray is wrong to state the root is the fathers. Rushdoony opts for the view that ἡ ἀπαρχὴ and ἡ ρίζα both denote Christ, because we do not believe in the patriarchs but in the

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<sup>336</sup> *ibid.*, p.49.



Messiah.<sup>338</sup> Rushdoony has not grasped what was said earlier: that Christ came *through* the fathers. The branches, which included ethnic Jews of Paul's day, were cut-off from the root. These same branches are grafted in *through faith in Jesus Christ*.

Another question, does the root include ethnic Israel? As Murray said, throughout Romans 9-11 there is the contrast between the elect of Israel and the non-elect of Israel. The elect of Israel are characterised by faith in the promise of God, faith in the promises to the fathers, which was a faith ultimately anticipating the Christ. Is ethnic Israel, that is, the elect *of the old covenant*, to be subsumed under the fathers and Christ? Murray said that Paul's argument was to demonstrate that the Israelites were still the people of God. Entrance back into the blessing of God is through faith in Jesus Christ. The Jews and Gentiles to be engrafted are those belonging to this day in which the new aeon in Christ Jesus has been inaugurated. In other words, the root branch distinction is based upon an salvation-history distinction. The root is representative of the old covenant perspective, the old aeon, which culminated in the death of Christ. The root may also represent the elect of the old covenant who have clung to Christ by faith. Christ's death ushered in the new aeon, the aeon of the resurrection. To this Christ, the Christ who spans two aeons, is added, *in the present*, Jews and Gentiles.

*Conditionality.* We can return to the main issue of this sub-section: conditionality within the covenant. The Gentiles of the new covenant age, it is said, will be cut-off, if they exercise unbelief. The union with Christ, engrafting, that Gentiles participate in is certainly covenantal. Murray himself said that all soteric blessings are covenantal. And yet- this is the point- the Gentiles can be cut-off from this new covenant union. Murray makes no allowance for this possibility. On the other hand, Calvin does.

Calvin was bold enough to argue that visible church, both old and new, a corporate body, was adopted and redeemed. He also says that there were some who were redeemed and yet who fell away (see Perseverance). Calvin teaches two types of redemption or adoption: the adoption of the church, and the adoption of the truly saved person or individual. However, Calvin's exegesis of the New Testament redemption language or his interpretation of the usages of "adoption" is mostly, apart from one or two comments, concerned with individuation. Further, if one says that the visible church has been redeemed, then, to be consistent to a Reformed framework, it would

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<sup>337</sup> *Romans 2*, ICC, editors: C. E. B. Cranfield & J. A. Emerton, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1989), pp.564-565.

seem that one would have to say that that same church has been “saved”. This is possibly why Murray cannot receive Calvin’s theory. The doctrine of a “saved” visible church is a problem that Calvin and the Reformed tradition either did not see or tried to avoid.

There was conditionality in the old covenant. At this point we are merely referring to the fact that some Israelites were in covenant union with God, yet God punished them, cut them off, for their unbelief. Murray quoted Calvin saying the covenant was common: the new is essentially the old. This is behind Calvin’s doctrine of the visible church.

With Calvin, we believe that the visible church can fall away. The implications of condition salvation for limited atonement are obvious. *Condition salvation respects only the church, those in covenant with Christ*. When he died on the cross to redeem the church, he *actually* redeemed it. We would tentatively suggest that the corporate body called the church, as considered as a genus, experiences “salvation” at two levels: on the external level, the level of merely being brought into the covenant community; and on the internal level, the level of being part of the true Israel, the elect. In the New Testament, the emphasis most definitely falls upon the internal aspect of spiritual salvation. However, sometimes the external aspect is propounded, as in Romans 11; Hebrew 6, 10 and 2 Peter 2:1.

We want to make it clear that we are not denying the doctrine of limited atonement. Of course, our view is extremely undeveloped, and is therefore open to intense questioning and criticism. But, the implications of Calvin’s doctrine of the visible church, for the Reformed church, are immense, because the “father” of Calvinism is saying that there is a union made with Christ that *can* be broken. Moreover, Calvin is implying that Christ’s death most definitely has reference to the non-elect, more specifically, Christ by his blood redeemed non-elect persons. As commented before, Calvin does not work out the implications of what he said. Yet, one thing must be said: Murray has no conception of temporary union, and this is a basic failure of his soteriology.

In the previous chapter, we commented that Murray did not fully appreciate the New Testament’s use of the Old. What we have just reason about conditionality is evidence of this. Also in the last chapter, we stated Murray’s idea of conditionality within the covenant. His view was governed by covenant blessing being only for the elect. Murray wholly ignores that some members of the old covenant were cut-off from the covenant community. This is to say that Murray’s notion of

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<sup>338</sup> *Romans and Galatians* (Valecito: California, Ross House Books, 1997), pp.216-217.

conditionality within the covenant, and the historical debate itself, is prejudiced by a Calvinist Systematic Theology doctrine- the sovereignty of God. Murray repeats this mistake in his doctrine of perseverance- see Perserverance.

"*All Israel will be saved*". Murray said that the salvation of all Israel (Rm. 11:26) is the salvation of all Israelites who will believe in Jesus Christ. We do agree with Murray that the phrase does not denote the whole sum of the elect Israelites. This is because of the eschatological divide we mentioned before.

Yet, we do not believe that the text is rejecting the view that "all Israel" includes Gentiles. Palmer Robertson writes, 'By the process of "ingrafting," the Gentile becomes an "Israelite" in the fullest possible sense'.<sup>339</sup> Thus, "all Israel" are those of this era from the Jews and Gentiles who submit to the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is truly of the Jews! Murray interprets Romans 9:23 saying that the restoration of the Jews is merely a type of the restoration of the Gentiles, and this is why Paul can use Old Testament texts to refer to the deliverance of the Gentiles. But this, as it stands, is arbitrary hermeneutics by Paul, the plucking out of certain texts out of their context to suit a different purpose altogether. The promised restoration of the Israelites in the Old Testament was a restoration of a new covenant people, a people, the Old Testament makes clear, which would consist of a conquered world- the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham.<sup>340</sup>

If this is so, why does Paul then contrast the Jews with the Gentiles in verses 28-31? He does so because he uses "Israel" in different ways. Always it denotes ethnic Israel. However, what manner of ethnicity is referred to has to be deduced from the context. "All" ethnic Israel will be saved- Jews and Gentiles; Israel, ethnic Israel, is hated because of the gospel. But the real thrust of Romans 11 is to counter the boasting of Gentiles. They had, basically, incurred the same error as the Jews. The Gentiles boasted that they were now the covenant people of God, and that the Jews had been thrown onto the rubbish tip. Paul responds by saying that it is not Gentile nor the Jew considered as nations that matters, but whether one belongs to the true Israel, the proper ethnic Israel, the Israel of faith. So Paul retorts that the claim of "Gentile-ness" would, if the Gentiles were not careful, end up in their being cut-off from the covenant. It is not that Paul is advocating the possibility of the complete and utter cutting-off of all Gentiles, but merely the

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<sup>339</sup> *Christ of the Covenants*, p.39.  
<sup>340</sup> *ibid.*, pp.39-40.

cutting-off of *boasting* Gentiles. Which corresponds to the actual cutting-off of the boasting Israelites.

## ROMANS 1:3-4

### Introduction

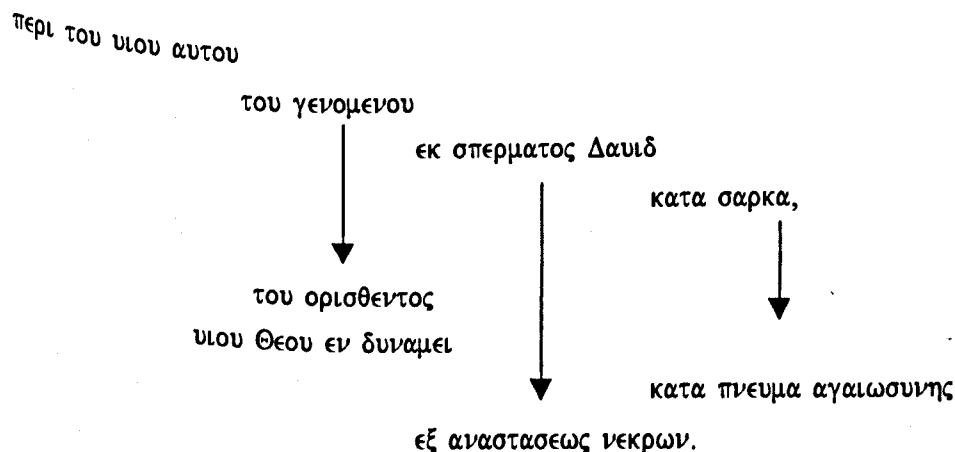
In the last chapter, we outlined Gaffin's critique of Murray. Gaffin concentrated upon the death and resurrection motif. His premise was that Christ's resurrection was the intrusion of the new life of the new world, the resurrection world, in the present, and that our existential death and resurrection in union with Christ is also the intrusion of the new world's life. This theology, in its basic premise, is identical to Nygren's two aeon theology. In Murray's exegesis of Romans 1:3-4 he does show an appreciation for the concept of two aeons. But this example is, more or less, the end of his recognition. The penetration of the new age, the resurrection age, into the old is as pervasive as Nygren states. But there is something equally interesting to be discovered in Romans 1:3-4- it is the relation that Jesus as *sarx* maintains to the resurrection.

### Exegesis

*Structure.* Romans 1:3-4 says:

περι του υιου αυτου του γενομενου εκ σπερματος Δαυιδ κατα σαρκα,  
του ορισθεντος υιου Θεου εν δυναμει κατα πνευμα αγαιωσυνης εξ αναστασεως νεκρων.

A possible structure may be as follows.



The counterpart of being declared or marked out as Son of God- this issue will be discussed later in the chapter- is γινεσθαι (v3). It is not the normal word for "birth".<sup>341</sup> And on this occasion, it may have a meaning something like "arising" or "coming". But it may, nevertheless, imply the incarnation.

According to Murray, Christ of the seed of David, of the flesh, is indicative of him having been under a state of humiliation and weakness. In his resurrection, continues Murray, Christ was raised into an abundance of the Spirit, the realm of the Spirit. But is this the whole picture?

*The Sonship of Christ.* Part of the problem with Murray's interpretation is that it creates a radical contrast with between the son of David (of the flesh) and the risen Son. We doubt very much if this is Paul's intention; or at least, we doubt whether he only meant such a contrast.

First of all, the "Son" is said to have come from, arisen from, the seed of David, according to the flesh (v3). The identity of the Son is bound, therefore, by Davidic begetting. This is to say that there is no other Son than the Davidic Son. Further, it is the same "Son" denoted in verse 4 as raised from the dead, and declared as Son. Murray's interpretation of Romans 1:3-4 makes too sharp a divide between Christ's natural divine Sonship and his Davidic Sonship. There is identification and continuity: the Son is the Davidic Son. The Davidic "son" was called the son of God. Christ was proclaimed the Davidic Son at his resurrection (Heb.1:5; 5:5-6). However, for Christ, there was no such thing as mere Davidic Sonship. That is, his Davidic Sonship was divine Sonship, the enthroning of God. This is why Paul writes of the Davidic Son's enthronement in Philippians 2:5ff that it is the declaration of his divinity, that he is Yahweh (Phil.2:11; cf., Jh.17). Thus, for Paul, "Son" functions as a description of the divine One, the eternal Son, begotten of the Father, yet, as enthroned and vindicated as the Messianic Son.<sup>342</sup>

For Murray nearly all the references to Jesus as "Son" and "Son of God" refer only to his pre-incarnate, ontological state as divine Son. There are exceptions that refer to Christ as the Son of God incarnate, the Messiah (1 Cor.15:28; Heb.3:6; Lk.1:36). Central to Murray's argument is typology. Hebrews 1:5b; 5:5 and Matthew 2:15 do not refer to Christ's Messianic Sonship but to his divine Sonship. Concerning Hebrews 1:5b, Murray observes that it is an allusion to God's relationship as Father to Solomon (2 Sam.7:14; cf., Is.9:7; Lk.1:32-33). On the economic plane,

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<sup>341</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, vol.1, p.59.

Solomon was not the Messianic Son. 'Hence, as pertaining to Christ, the transcendent plus that obtains may be carried a step further and conceived of in terms of what is ontological and transcendent.'<sup>343</sup>

It would take a separate chapter to give an answer to Murray. So we will confine ourselves to some basic comments. What is the nature of typology, to Murray? How can Solomon's earthly sonship be a type of Christ's divine sonship? Is man a type of God? Romans 1:3 strongly emphasises the fact that Christ has come from David, *after the flesh*. In Murray's writings, this does not seem to matter at all, apart from 1 Corinthians 15:28; Hebrews 3:6 and Luke 1:36. Types have two elements, corresponding to the nature of the association between the old covenant and the new. There is an element of continuity. For example, in the old covenant there was the high priest; Christ *is* the great high priest. There is discontinuity: Christ *was* the great high priest; the greater Solomon; the greater David, etc., etc.. This is the message of the new covenant, particularly of Hebrews. Whereas, Murray's typological understanding of the Sonship of Christ leaves no room for actual continuity, but merely focuses on discontinuity: David, an earthly son, thus a messianic son; Christ the heavenly Son.

We are not denying Christ's ontological divine Sonship. Further, we are saying that this theology is present in every use of Son in reference to Christ- so we go further than Murray! Only the divine Son could fulfil the messianic promises; only he could undo what Adam did. Murray says that "Father", when used in reference to Christ's relationship with the first person in the trinity, is indicative of the first person's ontological relationship to the second. The eternal and divine Son came from heaven (Jh. 3:31), out from the Father (cf., Jh. 8:42; 13:3; 16:27-28; 17:8), and was to return to his Father (cf., Jh. 7:33; 16:5, 10, 17; cf., 17:5).<sup>344</sup> Yet, Jesus said that he was returning to his Father "for my Father is greater than I" (Jh. 14:28). This is a text Murray does not care to examine. It indicates Christ's Messianic Sonship, his subordination to the will of the Father. It also informs us of the reason why he, the Son, was returning: because he was subordinate to the *Father*; he was fulfilling the *Father's* will. This is to say that the Sonship Christ returns to is one in which he is understood by John to be subordinate to the Father. Murray eviscerates Sonship of purpose, for to him, Christ's Sonship is mainly a reflection of his divine Sonship. But God *sent* his Son- this demands goal. "Son" is goal orientated. The "giving" of the Son demands that we

<sup>342</sup> Cf., Paul Beasley-Murray, "Romans 1:3f: An Early Confession of Faith in the Lordship of Jesus", *Tyndale Bulletin* 31 (1980), p.151; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p.23; Cranfield, *Romans*, vol.1, p.60.

<sup>343</sup> *CW* 4, pp.58-81.

<sup>344</sup> *ibid.*, pp.63-66, 69.

conceive of the Son as the redemptive Son. If Romans 1:4 was merely written to reveal how God the Son most potently demonstrated his divinity, why did Christ go to the extreme of dying and rising? Would he not have been better of creating another solar system, instead, or giving a tour of heaven?

Murray correctly rejects Barth's view that the doctrine of the trinity is only a possibility in scripture. For Barth, God's whole presence is revealed in operation; his operation is his essence. That is why Barth says that the immanent trinity conforms exactly to the economic trinity. Murray responds that it is inaccurate to refer to an "economic trinity". The trinity's economic relations are only what pertains to it *ad extra*. Second, the economic *relations* do *conform* to the immanent relations. However, they are not inherently expressions of the immanent relations. It is inevitable that the immanent relations of the trinity are given to us within the economy of redemption.<sup>345</sup>

We agree with Murray's logic; yet Barth is partly correct. For the Christ or Son that we know is he who came into time and space. It was *this Son* who was begotten by the Father in eternity. This is not to say that Christ was in a sense incarnate before he became incarnate; but to say that the eternal Son was always considered as "given".

Romans 9:5. Christ is said to have come of the fathers according to the flesh (*sarx*). This surely contains the theology that Christ is the promised seed, the Davidic Son. Also, "Christ" is titular<sup>346</sup> reflecting the Pauline understanding of the risen Son, crowned by the Father. Retrospectively, it can be said of this Christ that he died, and that he was from the fathers. However, it is probable that the event of his resurrection guides Paul's theology of Χριστός. Murray persuasively demonstrates that the Christ, the Davidic Son, is eulogised in the last clause of Romans 9:5, as "over all" men as God.<sup>347</sup> It is our view that when Christ is described as having come from the fathers after the flesh it embodies the doctrine that the Christ who was born of man was raised as the same man to be declared as God.

<sup>345</sup> CW 4, pp.280-281.

<sup>346</sup> Cf., Dunn, *Romans 9-16*, p.528; D. Carson, "Christological Ambiguities in Matthew", *Christ the Lord*, editor: H. H. Rowdon, (Leicester, IVP, 1982), p.100..

<sup>347</sup> *Romans 2*, pp.245ff. Cf., Murray J. Harris, *God Over All* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1992), p.156.

2 Timothy 2:8. It says, Μνημονεύε Ιησούν Χριστόν ἐγῆγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ, κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον. This text may be broken up possibly in the following style:

Μνημονεύε Ιησούν Χριστόν ἐγῆγερμένον ἐκ νεκρῶν,  
ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ,  
κατὰ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον

Clearly referred to is the fact that Christ has been raised from the dead. However, the prepositional phrase ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ, because of its parallel with ἐκ νεκρῶν, seems also to be unfolding Christ's ἐγῆγερμένον. This would suggest the reading: Christ was raised (from the dead), from the seed of David. Thus, in this system, the ideas of resurrection from death and coming from the seed of David are governed by the phrase "Jesus Christ having been raised".<sup>348</sup> In other words, the concept of a Christ who was subject to the flesh is to be understood as an event that was itself subject to the goal of the ushering in of a new era. The Christ of the seed of David is raised from the dead, and vindicated as such.

This brings us to properly to the discussion of Christ as *sarx*.

## CHRIST AS *SARX*

### Summary of Murray

What is denoted when it is said that Christ came according to the flesh (*sarx*) (Rm.1:3; 9:5)? Of Romans 1:3; 8:3; 9:5, Murray says that *sarx* denotes that Christ came as man, he was a human. As man he became like sinful flesh (Rm.8:3). Murray elsewhere explains this "likeness" as Christ's humiliation under the curse. In his humiliation state, sin ruled over Christ, says Murray. Christ died to sin. He vicariously bore sin so as to break its guilt and power. But we were bondslaves of sin, whilst Christ was not.<sup>349</sup>

### Romans 8:3

Murray informed us that Romans 8:3 does not refer to Christ as sin-offering. Murray starts from the position that expiation cannot condemn sin. Calvin is not afraid to write that Christ's

<sup>348</sup> Cf., G. W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, NIGTC, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1992), pp.397-398.  
<sup>349</sup> Romans 1, p.225.



expiation condemned sin.<sup>350</sup> It is difficult to understand Murray's exegesis of Romans 8:3. How did Christ condemn sin? By condemning it in the flesh, replies Murray. This explanation is wanting, for it does not inform us how Christ's flesh condemned sin; it merely says that it did. Dunn also criticises Murray for making this same generalisation.<sup>351</sup> Dunn adds that *periharmartias* is often used in the LXX to translate *hatta'th* ("sin offering", Lev.5:6-7, 11; 16:3, 5, 9; Num.6:16; 7:16; 2 Chron.29:23-24; Neh.10:33; Ezek.42:13; 43:19), and in Isaiah 53:10 it translates '*asham* ("guilt offering"). The "law" of sin-offering was required by the Jews to take away their sins. Christ's sacrifice, 'the law of the sin-offering', was 'part of "the just requirement of the law"'.<sup>352</sup> By his *avon*, Christ bore God's judgement upon our sin, he condemned it. Moo accepts that Murray's view is only by implication correct, inasmuch as once sin had been condemned, then it no longer had the power to bring into condemnation.<sup>353</sup>

The implication of Christ as *asham* is that he not only bears guilt and sin, but "becomes" his people. This magnifies the corporate nature of his death, because he only "becomes" them due to his union with them. There is no evidence in Calvin's writings that he considered that the elect were present in Christ when he died and rose. But this is the logical outworking of his doctrine of the original sin. Just as Adam acted alone, but his sin was passed on, so Christ acted alone, and his righteousness is passed on to his people.

### Christ the sinner

Christ substituted himself for us upon the cross, says Murray. The exact meaning of "substitution" is drawn out by A. A. Hodge:

Christ...by divine appointment, and of his own free will...assumed all our legal responsibilities and thus assumed our law-place, binding himself to do in our stead all that the law demanded of him when he suffered the penalty due us, and rendered the obedience upon which our well-being was made to depend. Vicarious sufferings and obedience are penal inflictions, and acts of obedience to law which are rendered in our place or stead (*vice*), as well as in our behalf by our substitute. An alien goes to the army in the place of a drafted subject. He is the substitute of the man in whose place he goes. His labours, his dangers, his wounds and death are vicarious.<sup>354</sup>

<sup>350</sup> Romans, p.160.

<sup>351</sup> Romans, p.422.

<sup>352</sup> "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus," *Sacrifice and Redemption*, editor: S. W. Sykes, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.42.

<sup>353</sup> Romans, p.481.

The sum of Hodge's statement is that Christ did not suffer merely on our behalf but also suffered instead of us.

G. B. Stevens says that if we are guilty, then God cannot punish someone who is innocent in our place, for this would be a travesty of justice. Charles Hodge, in order to substantiate the traditional view, takes recourse in the theology of covenant. Just as an earthly sovereign may, by a special agreement or covenant, arrange to have a criminal replaced by an innocent man, so Christ was appointed by God's eternal covenant to take the place of sinners. Hodge further comments that Christ in his death bore only the condemnation of our sin, and not its actual demerit. On both occasions, notes Stevens, Hodge offers no examples to support his theory.<sup>355</sup>

In Murray's, C. Hodge's, or Calvin's writings, there is no irrefutable argumentation concerning how a guilty one can be acquitted by the death of one who is innocent. Another way of saying the same thing is to state that the traditional understanding of substitution is inadequate to describe Christ's death. (We are not rejecting the idea of substitution, but merely saying that the traditional formulation needs revising.) For example, today, if a football player is substituted for another, then it is not the one who has left the field who continues to play; nor does he who has taken his place represent him. In short, a traditional understanding of "substitutionary" atonement empties the cross of *any* effect, for *in strict terms* Christ is securing redemption, and therefore justice, for no one but himself.

It might be said that our criticism is a concession to historico-critical method, which posits that any given theological concept must prove its validity in practice. Our criticism is not coming from this angle, although Stevens' is. What we are concerned to show is that our doctrine of penal sacrifice must be compatible with the doctrine of God's justice and righteousness, and it is our contention that current formulations of the Reformed position of penal substitution do not *fully* take into account that God's justice is uniform: there is not one set of standards for the cross, and another or others for outside of it. God will only punish the guilty. The corollary of this is that emphasis must be given to the *guilt* of Christ.

It is at this point we return to Calvin:

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<sup>354</sup> *The Atonement* (London, Evangelical Press, 1974), p.39.

<sup>355</sup> *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1905), pp.182-187.

But how does it happen, someone may object, that a beloved Son is cursed by His Father? I reply, there are two things to be considered, not only in the person of Christ, but even in His human nature. The one is that He was the unspotted Lamb of God, full of blessing and grace. The other is that He took our place and *became a sinner* and subject to the curse, not in Himself indeed, but in us. He could not be outside God's grace, and yet He endured His wrath. For how could [Christ] reconcile [the Father] if He regarded the Father as an enemy and was hated by Him? Therefore the will of the Father always reposed in Him.<sup>356</sup>  
[emphasis ours]

Murray would never have accepted that Christ was a sinner. The governing notion of Christ's sacrifice, reasons Calvin, is that Christ was an *אשם* (see Propitiation, etc.): Christ became what we are, and repentant sinners become what he is. Christ was made an *אשם*, a sacrifice for sin (Rm.8:3), says Calvin. This accounts for Christ's guilt. Yet, he is only guilty as covenant head: the sin of his people becomes his.

### Romans 1:3; 9:5

Christ as *sarx* does not refer to Christ as mere man. Christ has come out of the line of David, out of the fathers, according to the flesh. Gaffin says that *sarx* can on occasion be synonymous to this present (old) age (οὗτος ο αἰών). This present age is the 'earthly order with all that is characteristic of human life and necessary for its maintenance.' At times this aeonic *sarx* is ethically qualified in a negative manner (1 Cor.1:20ff; Gal.5:19ff).<sup>357</sup> For us, this connotation to aeonic *sarx* is what is denoted by *sarx* in both Romans 1:4 and 9:5. Yet, in these verses *sarx* also has a positive ethical connotation. Christ is of the seed of David, a line which was subject to the mastery of the realm of sin. To say that Christ became flesh is to say that he was made "under the law" (Gal.4:3), that he was subject to sin's curse, and eventually bore the penalty of sin. On the other hand, *sarx*, in the verses in question, also connotes a positive ethical element. It is Christ *in the flesh* who is exalted. The Son who is raised according to the Spirit is the *incarnate* Son. Christ's *sarx* had two "forms": one of the line of David under bondage, and one of the line of David in exaltation.

The concept of two forms of flesh is brought out in 1 Corinthians 15.

### 1 Corinthians 15:20ff

<sup>356</sup> Galatians, p.55. For the view that Christ was a "sinner", see P. Head, "Jesus Resurrection", p.69.  
<sup>357</sup> Resurrection & Redemption, pp.107-108.

1 Corinthians 15:20ff is programmatic: it sets the framework in which we must understand Christ's death and resurrection and their application. The first thing to see is that history is that of two Adams.

*History is two Adams.* According to Murray, mankind is summed up in two people: Adam and Christ. This is certainly the impact of 1 Corinthians 15. More pointedly, Christ is understood as the apocalyptic last Adam. His salvation is described in terms of the final destruction of his enemies in his resurrection and his people's. The thrust of Romans 5:12ff, according to Murray, is that of present curse and blessing arising from two different historical acts. However, Romans 5:12ff cannot be read unless we perceive that the "in Adam" "in Christ" divide is ultimately apocalyptic. The salvation described in Romans 5:12ff anticipates ultimate vindication; this salvation is the penetration in the present of the apocalyptic deliverance of God's people in Christ Jesus.

*Christ in Adam.* Christ's resurrection from the dead is the pattern to be imposed upon those who have died in faith (vv20-21). Adam merely brought death, but Christ brings resurrection from the dead (v20). "All", Jews and Gentiles, die in Adam- see coming discussion- "all" live in Christ (v22).

But we must pause here. Death comes through being "in Adam". There is no other way for death to come; just as there is no other way for resurrection from death to come except "in Christ". If Christ died, then he must also have been "in Adam". This is what we have implied all along. To say Christ is *sarx* is to argue that he also has been brought under the dominion of sin which has entered the world through Adam. Murray would never have accepted this thought. To use Ferguson's words, 'Since [Christ's] *person* is not of Adamic stock, he does not share in the guilt and condemnation of Adam (Rm.5:12-14).' <sup>358</sup> In response to this, we have already argued that there is no such thing as Son outside of incarnation. Ferguson is making a distinction that scripture will not allow. It is the divine Son, the Messianic Son, in all his personality, in his person, who became flesh, who became "of Adam" (Lk.3:22-38). Further, Christ did share in the guilt and condemnation of Adam. Is there any other kind of guilt and condemnation? For what sin was Christ punished? It was the sin of his spiritual progeny, its sin in Adam!

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<sup>358</sup> *Holy Spirit*, p.42.

Since Christ's life is programmatic for the believer, we would have to say that until the believer experiences the resurrection of the body, he is still under the dominion of Adam, the law, and sin. But this does not mean that his destiny is destruction; his destiny is the victory that Christ, who was in Adam, procured- resurrection life.

*Christ the Messianic Son.* Christ resurrection, as an event two thousand years ago, is the firstfruits of the resurrection of those who sleep in him (v23).<sup>359</sup> Moreover, when all those in Christ will be made alive, at his coming, then he will destroy all his enemies, including death (vv24-28). Particularly, the reign of the Son (vv27-28), as Murray implied, was in fulfilment of the Messianic (Davidic) promise. Thus, to say, "last Adam" is to say "last David". Christ's Sonship, his Messianic Sonship, is the accomplishment of what Adam ought to have achieved. And as Christ reigns over his enemies, so his progeny will reign with him.

If Christ's victory is programmatic, then so also is the Sonship described in 1 Corinthians 15:27-28. Murray said that 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 referred to Christ's Messianic Sonship. These verses link Psalm 8:6 and Psalm 110:1. Paul understands Christ as the Second Adam, who will bring everything under his feet. However, the original context of Psalm 110:1 refers to the LORD, God, bringing the Lord's enemies to heel. Yet here in 1 Corinthians 15:27-28 it is the second Adam who will accomplish a divine work. In 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 Paul cites Hosea 13:14 and Isaiah 25:8. The latter verse is part of a thanksgiving hymn to Yahweh, rejoicing in his victory over his enemies (Is.24). But in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55 the victory procured is Christ's resurrection battle with death- Christ is the victor!<sup>360</sup> Paul sees no tension in describing the divine victor as the son of Man, the second Adam. Specifically, Christ as Son is Christ as enthroned last Adam, the seed of David.

*Adam: the prophetic type of Christ.* Christ's body was sown in death in order to be made alive (v36). There are various kinds of flesh (*sarx*), says Paul: one of men, one of animals, one of fishes, one of birds (v39). This is an allusion to the list of creation given in Genesis 1. *Sarx* in this occasion denotes a living being, an individual living being existing in the world. And as there are different kinds of flesh, so there are also different kinds of bodies. Also, there is the glory of celestial and terrestrial bodies (*soma*) (vv40-41). Again, this is an allusion to Genesis 1, to the luminaries and living beings; but with the emphasis upon "glory" (*doxa*). The body (*soma*)

<sup>359</sup> See Murray, *Romans* 1, pp.306-307.

of a believer is sown a natural body and raised as a spiritual body (*soma*) (v44). This continues Paul's previous reasoning that there are different kinds of bodies.<sup>361</sup> It probably also preserves his distinction that there are different kinds of flesh. Christ's body was sown in corruption (v42), dishonour (v43), as a natural body (v44), and in weakness (v44), and then raised in incorruption (v42), glory (v43), as a Spiritual body (v44), and in power (v44). "All in Christ" will follow his example. Just as Christ was glorified in his resurrection, so we will be glorified at the resurrection.<sup>362</sup> "In Adam" death is the only option; "in Christ" death is swallowed up in life. Adam is therefore the man of the dust, bound to this present cursed world. Whilst Christ is the man from heaven, the resurrection realm, the ruler over all things- Lord (vv45-49).

However, the contrast to δόξα (v43) is ἐν αἰμίᾳ ("dishonour"). Does this suggest that there is not a distinction to be made between two different kinds of *sarx*? Does *sarx* only correspond to "dishonour"? Also, how do we understand Paul's use of Genesis 2:7 in verse 45? Gaffin records that in verse 44b Paul's reasoning is 'apparently *a fortiori*: if there is a psychical [*sic*] body characterized by corruption...then all the more must there be a spiritual...body.' Gaffin believes that this is theologically incoherent; for 'How can Paul say the resurrection body with its attributes may be predicated on the basis of the body placed in the tomb with its attributes? Is Paul saying that death and life are so related synthetically that the latter can be directly inferred from the former? Such a notion is in flat contradiction [*sic*] with Paul's uniform teaching elsewhere.' Gaffin continues, and argues that "psychical" in verse 44b has a broader application than in verse 44a. Adam's pre-fall body is alluded to in verse 45. Therefore the psychical body of verse 44b is a reference to the wider concept of Adam as representative of this world.<sup>363</sup>

A pivotal text for understanding 1 Corinthians 15:20ff is 2 Corinthians 3. In this text, certain themes overlap with 1 Corinthians 15: Spirit (vv3, 6, 17); death (v7); glory (vv8-11, 18); Lord (v17); and image (v18). In verses 8-11, the glory of Moses is compared and contrasted to the glory of Christ. The glory of Moses was transient, bringing death; the glory of Christ is irremovable, bringing liberty. To be transformed into Christ's glory is to become his image (v18). The implication being, that not to be in his image is to be in the image of Moses.

<sup>360</sup> See Tremper Longman III & Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1995), pp.153-156.

<sup>361</sup> See Calvin, *1 Corinthians*, pp.336-337.

<sup>362</sup> Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, pp.105-106. To Murray, "The Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor.3:17) refers to the same lordship described in 1 Corinthians 15:45, 47. In his glorification, Christ was been endued with the Spirit. Thus, the Spirit is identified with Christ. [*Romans* 1, p.11.]

<sup>363</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.80-82.

This gives us reason to believe that Moses followed in the same line of condemnation as Adam, and reproduced the same image, the same glory. Thus, it is probable that in 1 Corinthians 15:43, "dishonour" is actually lack of glory, or a different glory, a different image, a different *sarx* to that of a resurrected body.

What we are advocating is precisely what Gaffin rejects: the condemned body of Christ, of the believer, demands its fulfilment in a resurrection body. Gaffin's problem is that he deals with death and resurrection as mere categories. Yet, we cannot understand the death of Christ and of the believer unless we understand them as demanding the resurrection body- otherwise our faith is in vain!

Ultimately, the issue is typological. Don Garlington, picking up on Romans 5:12ff and 1 Corinthians 15:45-47, goes as far to say that Christ can only be compared Adam.<sup>364</sup> This is to take Murray's principle of a continuum of grace between the old and new covenants too far. It is quite obvious that Paul constantly compares and contrasts Christ to those other than Adam. Garlington also persuasively displays how in Romans 5:12-21 Paul does not merely contrast Christ to Adam, but Paul also draws out the comparison between both. In other words, Adam is a prophetic figure anticipating Christ.<sup>365</sup>

The Christ-Adam comparison-contrast is continued in Romans 6, but as conducted in the distinction between Moses and Christ. T. Holland connects Romans 5:12ff and Romans 6:1ff, writing, 'Man has been condemned in Adam, Paul must now demonstrate that there is another representative man who can undo Adam's fatal work. To establish this, he must explain how and when this new solidarity was established.'<sup>366</sup> In Romans 6, Murray clearly identifies, equates,

<sup>364</sup> "The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Part III: The Obedience of Christ and the Obedience of the Christian (*continued*)", *WTJ* (Internet), p.4.

<sup>365</sup> *ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>366</sup> *The Paschal-New Exodus Motif in Paul's Letter to the Romans with Special Reference to its Christological Significance* (Doctoral thesis, University of Wales, Lampeter, 1996), p.375. Romans 6 deals with sanctification, and Romans 5 dealt with justification, says Murray. The only connection he draws between both chapters is this:

If grace superabounds where sin abounds, if the multiplication of transgression serves to exhibit the lustre of grace, and if the law administered by Moses came in alongside in order that the trespass may abound, the logical inference would seem to be, let us sin all the more in order that God may be glorified in the magnifying of his grace. This is the antinomian distortion of the doctrine of grace and it is also the objection of the legalist to the doctrine of justification apart from works by free grace through faith. It is both the

baptism into Christ with union with Christ. Murray acknowledges the analogical service that Moses pays, because Old Testament believers were baptised into him.<sup>367</sup> Yet, to us, 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 provides us with more than mere analogy between Moses and Christ. It says, "that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." In verse 6, Paul concludes, "Now these things occurred as types". The baptism of Israel into Moses was typical of Christ's baptism.<sup>368</sup> The fathers responded to God's promise, and, so, were "under grace". They nevertheless are branded as guilty. This is apocalyptic typology. History is to be understood from the vantage point of the apocalypse. From the perspective of the human predicament mankind- Jews and Gentiles- is bound in Adam, unto death. Christ had to be baptised into this environ. All of history prior to resurrection, the resurrection of the dead on the day of the Lord's return, is the history of death; this history brings only despair. So much so, that even Adam before his fall is viewed as condemned. Yet, Christ's incarnation and death anticipated his victory. His resurrection was the intervention of the apocalyptic victory. In his resurrection, he brought a new history with him, the history of the new world. The fathers, even including Adam himself, are linked to the apocalyptic Christ through the umbilical cord of faith. So scripture on the one hand describes human history as evil, on the other hand, after Christ, we see the entrance of a new history, a new aeon, and this sun sheds its rays both into the past and into the future.

*Apocalyptic themes.* It is vital understand that concepts such as death, life, resurrection, immortality, glory, honour, dishonour, mortality, immortality, Lord, reign, rule, deliverance, living, spirit and image are, for Paul, strictly speaking, apocalyptic motifs.

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distortion and the objection that the apostle answers in this chapter, and in his answer he develops the implications of the death and resurrection of Christ. [*Romans* 1, p.212.]

<sup>367</sup> *Romans*, 1, p.214.

<sup>368</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, p.137. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, revised edition, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1886), p.193. William. S. Plummer, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 1971), p.274. Everett F. Harrison, *Romans, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, editor: F. E. Gaebelein, (London, Pickering & Inglis Ltd, 1976), 10, p.69; John Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Leicester, I.V.P., 1994), p.173; A. Robertson & A. Plummer, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, second edition, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1963), p.200. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p.391. Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Leicester, I.V.P., 1987), p.139; Gordon. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, TNITC, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1991), p.445; Paul Gardiner, *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian* (London, University Press of America, 1994), pp.112-119.



From here will now evaluate Murray's teaching on the two Adam motif found in his exegesis of Romans 5:12ff.

## ROMANS 5:12-21

### The problem of "all"

Karl Barth. We think that Murray's critique of Barth is perfect, apart from one consideration: Murray's own interpretation of "all" in Romans 5:12, 18. "All" in these verses is never said by him to denote all kinds of men, Jews and Gentiles, *in distinction to every single man*; although, he does refer to the 'human race' sinning in Adam's sin.<sup>369</sup> The parallelisms of contrast in Romans 5:18-19 make it more probable that if "all" in 5:18a and "many" in 5:19a denote every single person, then "all" in 5:18b and "many" in 5:19b also denote every single person. Universalism of this sort is avoided if "all" and "many" are taken in a generic sense.<sup>370</sup> Murray is well aware of the fact that Paul was writing to both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>371</sup> Moreover, concerning "all" in 3:9, 12, 19, 22-23; 10:12; 11:32, he considers it to refer to Jews and Gentiles who are under the dominion of sin.<sup>372</sup> To us, it is probable that "all" in 5:12, 18 and "many" in verse 19, denote

<sup>369</sup> Romans 1, p.14; Romans 2, p.243.

<sup>370</sup> Cf., W. Hendriksen, *Romans*, pp.129-130.

<sup>371</sup> The church in Rome was comprised of Jews and Gentiles. Jews are mentioned in Romans 2:17ff; 16:3 (cf., Acts 18:2), 7, 11. Gentiles are referred to in Romans 11:13 (cf., 11:19-31); 15:8-29. Theodore Zahn thinks that in the church at Rome the Gentiles were in a minority. [*Introduction to the New Testament 1* (Edinburgh, E.T., 1901).] He says that in Romans 7:1-6, for example, Paul addresses the readers as if they were Jews. Murray notes that Zahn's conclusion is based upon "under the law" in these verses as denoting the Mosaic law. However, in these verses, as well as in Romans 6:14, the phrase is inclusive of Gentiles. In Romans 7:4, Paul's use of "law" relates to those who have participated in Christ's death, and must therefore include Gentile Christians. Further, the fact that Paul is speaking to those who know the law (7:1), does not preclude the notion that the Gentiles had become acquainted with the Old Testament scriptures. [*Romans 1*, pp.xix-xx.]

It is accurate to state, as Zahn does, that "nations" (ἐθνη) sometimes means Jews and Gentiles. This is evident in the gospels, says Murray (cf., Mt.25:32; 28:19; Mk.11:17; Lk.24:47), and possibly, in Romans 1:5, 13; 15:18; 16:26. However, in Romans, ἐθνη frequently denotes Gentiles in comparison to Jews (2:14, 24; 3:29; 9:24, 30; 11:11, 13, 25; 15:9-12, 16, 27), making it probable that its usage throughout Romans is exclusive to the Gentiles. Even Paul's citation of Genesis 17:5 in Romans 4:17-18 is not necessarily indicative of an inclusive usage (cf., Gal.3:8-9). [*ibid.*, pp.xx-xxi.]

In Romans 11:13, Paul calls himself a minister to the Gentiles, and this is repeated in 15:16. It relates the same purpose as stated in 1:13. Paul's reference to his ministry for the obedience of the Gentiles in 1:5 is repeated in 15:18. And when in 15:26 the gospel is said to be spread amongst the nations, once more the aim is for them to be obedient. These suggest that the main bulk of the church in Rome was Gentile. [*ibid.*, pp.xxi-xxii.]

<sup>372</sup> Romans 1, pp.102-103, 106; Romans 2, p.57, 103.

both Jews and Gentiles.<sup>373</sup> They are cursed in Adam (5:12, 18-19) and are delivered by Christ's righteousness (5:19). Thus, "all" and "many" refer not primarily to quantity but kind.

*Romans 3:22-23.* A generic use of "all" is probably also to be found in *Romans 3:22-23*.<sup>374</sup> Of verse 22, Murray argues that *παντας τους πιστευοντας* means that righteousness through faith in Christ comes indiscriminately to every kind of believer.<sup>375</sup> Yet, Murray's exegesis at this point is possibly an unnecessary repetition; for why would Paul want to say that righteousness comes to all kinds of believers who believe? This is a rather clumsy rendition. Murray then interprets the second *παντα* (v23) as denoting every individual, for every individual has sinned and fallen short of God's glory.<sup>376</sup> Much hinges on the use of the participle *δικαιουμενοι* in verse 24. Murray believes that verses 22b-23 are probably parenthetical, and that *δικαιουμενοι* is in 'direct sequence with "a righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ, unto all who believe"'.<sup>377</sup> But there is no need for this construction. Murray's interpretation is, in the final issue, theologically constrained. *δικαιουμενοι* most naturally qualifies *παντες* of verse 23.<sup>378</sup> Murray could never accept this, for to him this would necessitate arguing that every single man who has sinned is also justified by faith in Christ Jesus. Our interpretation gives *παντες* and *παντα* generic meanings: all men, Jews and Gentiles, are being saved through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ (v22a); all men, Jews and Gentiles, have sinned and are falling short of God's glory (v23); God's righteousness comes [to all men, Jews and Gentiles] through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (v24).

Moreover, the presence of *υστερουνται* (v23) and *δικαιουμενοι* (v24) is possibly further evidence that the same group of people is referred to in verses 23 and 24. For, as Murray says, *υστερουνται* is in the present tense: all are falling short of God's glory.<sup>379</sup> "Being justified" is possibly a reference to the abounding of the grace of God in Christ Jesus in the present; all men who are falling short of God's glory are presently being justified by his gift. This view, as we will see, fits in with the interpretation that "all sinned" (v23; 5:12) is a summary phrase denoting the fact that

<sup>373</sup> See, Don Garlington, "The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans: Part IIP", *WTJ* 55 (1993), p.98.

<sup>374</sup> Cf., Hendriksen, *Romans*, pp.129-130.

<sup>375</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.111-112.

<sup>376</sup> *ibid.*, p.112.

<sup>377</sup> *idem.*

<sup>378</sup> Cf., C. Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1968), p.91; Moo, *Romans*, p.227; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, p.168; Ernst Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1994), p.95; Cranfield, *Romans*, vol. 1, p.205.

<sup>379</sup> *ibid.*, p.113.

all men, Jews and Gentiles, have been and *are* committed to rebelling against the LORD their creator.

*Implications.* If “all” denotes Jews and Gentiles, in Romans 5:12, then to say that “all have sinned” denotes their sin in Adam’s sin- so Murray- is surely inappropriate? The Jew-Gentile theme was not in existence until the nation of Israel was created. Thus, it is probable that Paul was referring to the effects of Adam’s sin upon his posterity, the repetition of his sin by his posterity.

*Romans 5:13-14.* The fact that sin is being traced back from the Jew-Gentile distinction to Adam is brought out in Romans 5:13-14.

Of these verses, Murray holds that the sin of those who were in-between the period of Adam and the Mosaic law was the sin of Adam, because sin is always rooted in law. However, the clause “sin is not taken into account where there is no law” (v13) is indicative of the fashion in which the Mosaic law functions: it exacerbates, makes known, sin; the presence of sin without the Mosaic law is not as aggravated as it would be with it.<sup>380</sup> “Death” prevailed because the law written on the heart, the natural law given to our forefather Adam, had been violated.

### **The entrance and passing of sin**

*Romans 11:25.* In Romans 5:12, it says that sin “entered” the world. Throughout the New Testament εἰσερχομαι denotes an actual, real entrance. Paul uses this verb on three other occasions: Romans 11:25; 1 Corinthians 14:23, 24. In Romans 11:25 we are told about how the hardness of Israel is in part until the fulness of the nations has come or entered. Then 11:26 says, “and so all Israel shall be saved” (καὶ οὕτως πᾶς Ἰσραὴλ σωθήσεται). Our exegesis of Romans 11:16-24 showed how the Gentiles became part of ethnic Israel through faith in Christ, that is, the promise of the fathers. It would seem probable, therefore, that when Paul says in verse 26 that “all Israel” has will be saved, that he is referring to the salvation of Jews and Gentiles who have faith in the risen Christ.

<sup>380</sup> See, Thomas Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfilment* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1993), p.89; Moo, *Romans*, p.333; William Hendriksen, *Romans* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1980), p.180; F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, TNTC, editor: R. V. G. Tasker, (Leicester, IVP, 1979), p.130; C. K. Barret, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (London, Adam and Charles Black, 1957), p.112; John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPIC, (London, SCM Press, 1990), p148.

Thus, *καὶ οὕτως* in Romans 11:26 does not signify consequence, but “in this way”, “in this manner”. The “entrance” of the nations is their submitting to the gospel’s call and consequent entrance into ethnic Israel. It is, in other words, union with Christ, the true Israel, the last Adam.

*Thematic overlap.* Paul’s use of “all” in Romans 5:12ff is similar to his use of “Israel” in Romans 11:16-27. That is, both have their own distinctive common denominator, both are qualitatively, not quantitatively determined. The “all Israel” that will be saved in Romans 11:26 is the same “all” that is justified in Romans 5:18.

The only other use of *καὶ οὕτως* in Romans is in 5:12. It is probable that it also has the meaning “in this manner” (see Gal.6:2; 1 Cor.7:17; 11:28; 1 Thes.4:17). Sin entered the world; it burst onto the scene of creation, a creation headed by Adam. Sin “united” itself with the world, a world consequently defined as the “all”. It was through this union that death, through sin, passed to all men.

*“Passed”.* The use of *διηλθεν* (*διερχομαι*) in Romans 5:12 is vital to grasp. The only other soteric use of it in Paul is in 1 Corinthians 10:1 (cf., 16:5; 2 Cor.1:16). In this verse, *διερχομαι* is used to describe Israel’s passing through the sea. This was tantamount to baptism into Moses and deliverance from the Egyptians. As we said before, baptism into Christ, union with Christ, is the antitype of baptism into Moses. The church passes through the sea of death- spiritual and physical- in Christ’s death (Rm.6). Christ’s death was a reversal of the fallen order of Adam. In Adam *death* reigns (Rm.5:17a); in Christ *man* reigns (Rm.5:17b). In Christ, men pass through death; in Adam death passes through men! Adam forfeited his reign; Christ’s people reign in him (cf., Heb.2:9).

*Misunderstanding of the aorist.* One of Murray’s fundamental arguments in his exegesis of Romans 5:12ff is the use of the aorist in the phrase “all sinned”. He defined the aorist as a punctiliar act in the past. As far as the phrase “all sinned” is concerned, this meant that there could be no concession to the idea of the “all” sinning continually. However, his definition of the aorist has been undermined by modern grammarians. The aorist, as Don Carson says, is an ‘a-orist, without a place, undefined’. It is punctiliar, but not necessarily in the sense of a completed action in the past, although it may have this connotation. Its punctiliariness consists of merely being an action, whether past and accomplished, or present and repeated. Therefore, the aorist’s

nature must be determined by context, and not be seen as continuously denoting an accomplished, historical act.<sup>381</sup>

### Incomplete parallels

*Failure to point out that we were with Christ in his obedience. Murray's system is incomplete:*

(Adam) Romans 5:12ff



We were with Adam in his sin

(Christ) Romans 5:12ff



We were *not* with Christ in his death and resurrection

Because of Christ's strict parallelism with Adam, *Murray* should have argued that Romans 5:12ff teach that we were present with Christ in his death and resurrection. Adam's offence was one minute act, whilst Christ's obedience or righteousness was a lifetime, consummating in his resurrection. For Murray's parallelism to remain, he should have said that Christ's obedience was our obedience, that his righteousness was imputed to us in his death and resurrection.

*Inconsistent use of the protasis-apodosis.* But Romans 5:12ff does not refer to our righteousness being imputed to us in Christ's death and resurrection. Romans 5:12ff focuses upon the effects of Adam's sin, and the effects of Christ's righteousness. That is why Murray cannot help but see the obvious reference to existential sin in verses 20-21. But this view leads him into more confusion. He argues that the protasis of verse 12 is fulfilled not merely in an apodosis, but the apodoses of verses 18, 19, 21. We will outline our objection.

<sup>381</sup> *Exegetical Fallacies* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1993), pp.70-75. Cf., Royce Gordon Gruenler, cited by William D. Mounce, *The Basics of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1993), p.189.

*Protasis (v12):* \_\_\_\_\_  
the sin of Adam, his historical sin,  
is imputed to us.

*Apodosis (awaiting)*

*Protasis (v18):* \_\_\_\_\_  
the sin of Adam, his historical sin,  
is imputed to us.

*Apodosis*  
the righteousness of Christ is  
imputed to us, not in his  
righteous act, but through our  
act of faith

*Protasis (v19):* \_\_\_\_\_  
the disobedience of Adam, his historical sin,  
is imputed to us.

*Apodosis*  
the obedience of Christ is  
imputed to us, not in his  
righteous act, but through our  
act of faith

*Protasis (v21):* \_\_\_\_\_  
the sin of all men, their existential sin

*Apodosis*  
the righteousness of Christ is  
imputed to us, not in his  
righteous act, but through our  
act of faith

The protasis of verse 21 is out of sequence. It should, according to Murray's logic, refer to Adam's sin. Moreover, in the apodoses, it is clear that far from referring to our being righteous in Christ's righteousness, it denotes, says Murray, that righteousness is imputed to us *in our experience*. It may seem that the last protasis-apodosis (v21) is balanced, but it is not. For it to be balanced, the sin of the many would have to be an imputed sin, and it is not.

The apodosis of Romans 5:12. It perplexes us that Murray picks up the complement of the protasis of verse 12 in the apodosis of verse 18, when there is protasis-apodosis in verse 15. He does so because of the reference to sin spreading through one man, namely Adam, (v12), and the one man's one sin, of verse 18. As Murray says, verse 18 relates the one sin of Adam, and does convey the idea of the "one man", Adam. It is sin that is in the forefront in verse 18a. Yet, it is

sin that is in the forefront in verse 12, albeit the sin of the one man. Verse 15 takes up the theme of sin of verse 12, and completes the protasis.

### The forensic

*Thematic overlap between Romans 5 & 6.* To understand the specifications of the forensic language of Romans 5:12ff, an understanding of the overlap between Romans 5:12 and Romans 6 is most useful.

The continuation of themes in Romans 6 over from Romans 5:12-21 is probably indicative of both passages detailing the same doctrines but from different perspectives, corresponding to the continuation of the two Adam motif: sin and sinning (αμαρτια; αμαρτανω) (5:12 (x2), 13 (x2), 14, 15, 16, 20, 21; 6:1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23); death and dying, both arising from sin, (θανατος; αποθνησκω) (5:12 (x2), 14, 17, 21; 6:9, 16, 21, 23); grace (χαρις) (5:15 (x2), 17, 20; 6:1, 14, 15); righteousness (δικαιοσυνη) (5:17, 21; 6:13, 18, 19, 20); the gift (χαρισμα) (5:15; 6:23); life (ζωη) (5:17, 18, 21; 6:4, 22, 23); the reign (βασιλευω) of death and sin has been overcome (5:14, 17 (x2), 21 (x2); 6:12); Christ brings justification (δικαιωσις) (5:18), (δικαιωμα) (5:16, 18), and we are justified through Christ's death (δικαιωω) (6:7).

There are other parallels between Romans 6 and Romans 5:12ff. Adam sinned and his seed sinned; the saints are to avoid lawlessness (ανομια) (6:19 (x2)). Adam's seed are characterised by unrighteousness (αδικια) (6:13); the saints are righteous (δικαιος) (5:19). The law was the occasion for sin (5:13 (x2), 20); the law holds Adam's seed in bondage to sin (6:14, 15). Christ enabled us to live (συζαω) (6:8), (ζαω) (6:10 (x2), 11, 13); sinners in Adam live (ζαω) in sin (6:2). Adam's seed obey (υπακουω) sin (6:12); Christ brought obedience (υπακουω) (5:19), and through him we yield our members either to obey (υπακουω) (6:12, 16) (υπακοη) (6:16) unrighteousness or righteousness. In Adam we died because of sin; in Christ we died (θανατος) (6:3, 4, 5, 11), (αποθνησκω) (6:2, 7, 8, 9, 10) to sin.

Now to work through some of the above parallels.

"Sin." The focus in Romans 6 is deliverance from the thralldom of sin and the rebelliousness of sinning. "Sin" in 5:12 does not denote, as Murray argues, moral depravity, nor merely the imputed sin of Adam. It is, rather, the atmosphere of non-Spirit, which, consequently, gives rise to rebelliousness. Adam forfeited the Spirit when he fell. Sin is depicted by Paul as a tyrant and jailer, "It 'reigns' (5:20; cf. 6:13); it can be 'obeyed' (6:16-17); it pays wages (6:23); it seizes

opportunity (7:8, 11); it “kills” (7:11, 13)...All this suggests that sin is far more than guilt forensically considered; it is, in fact, a life-force of its own.’<sup>382</sup>

According to Romans 2:12, the Jews and Gentiles have one thing in common: they have both “sinned” (αμαρτανω). This reflects *creation’s* apostasy- “Adamic creation”- from God.<sup>383</sup> In Romans 3:23, the construction παντες ημαρτον (“all sinned”) is used to describe the sinfulness of all nations. This phrase ‘is the precise combination of words found in 5:12’ and ‘glances back to 3:9: παντα υφ αμαρτιαν ειναι, Paul’s conclusion from the foregoing discussion of mankind’s rebellion against the Creator’, writes Garlington.<sup>384</sup> Romans 3:23 distils the theology of 1:18-3:20: creation has rebelled against its creator. The thought of individual acts of rebellion, rather than moral depravity *per se*, is underlined in that αμαρτανω normally denotes personal sin in Paul’s writings.<sup>385</sup> W. Hendriksen, whilst not taking exactly the same position propounded in this chapter, does nevertheless believe that “all sinned” instructs us that every man sinned after being born. He adds, ‘Why should “all sinned” mean one thing (actual, personal sins) in Rom.3:23, but something else in 5:12?’<sup>386</sup>

*Death.* The death that Adam brought into this world was his own death. What was his death? Murray interprets “death” in Romans 5: 12 (x2), 14, 17, 21; 6:23, as merely physical death.<sup>387</sup> However, in his interpretation of Romans 6:16, 21, the “death” referred to is death in all its aspect, culminating in hell. And to counterbalance this, of the parallel clause concerning righteousness, in 6:16, Murray says that it refers to obedience promoting a righteousness in all its aspects, and which finally is consummated in the new heavens and the new earth.<sup>388</sup>

According to Genesis 3, Adam’s death was not merely physical death, but also spiritual death. Murray’s interpretation of “death”, in respect of the sons of men, in Romans 5 and 6 moves from physical death, to death in all its aspects. However, in Romans 6 “death” is Christologically defined. Death, the tool of sin, captivated our Lord Jesus. He, as Adam, was brought under sin’s dominion. The “aspects” of death Murray referred to seemingly did not to include the aspect of universal curse. The curse is not sin, but the curse is death expressing itself. Christ was subject

<sup>382</sup> “Obedience of Faith”, pp.103-104.  
<sup>383</sup> *ibid.*, p.106.

<sup>384</sup> *idem.*  
<sup>385</sup> *ibid.*, pp.106-107.

<sup>386</sup> *Romans*, p.179.

<sup>387</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.181-182, 209, 238.

<sup>388</sup> *ibid.*, pp.231, 238.



to death for he was subject to the curse. Therefore, we conclude that the death referred to in Romans 5:12-21 and Romans 6 is captivity to the lordship of sin, culminating in physical death.

“Condemnation”. The use of “condemnation” in Romans 5:16 ‘is qualified within this context by “sin” (vv.12-13) and “death” (vv.14-17), both of which transcend the juridical and have to do with the consequences of man’s apostasy considered in *toto*.’ <sup>389</sup>

“Reckoned”. Καθιστημι (v19) ‘never designates a judgment or consideration which does not conform to the actual state of the people involved. People, in other words, were really made sinner or righteous through the disobedience and obedience of the two men respectively.’ Even so, there is a forensic side to Paul’s soteric language. Behind his use of δακαιοω is the hiphil of פָּדָה, which normally is forensic, and denotes not merely a juridical standing, but also a relationship in existence. <sup>390</sup>

*Judgement and justification.* Garlington says that to assign δικαίωμα different meanings in 5:16 and 18 takes no account of the LXX’s use of the δικ- group. The triad δικαίωμα-δικαιοσύνη-ζωή, derived from OT covenantal ideology, speaks of a renewed relationship with the Creator.’ Thus, δικαίωμα in verse 16 comments upon faithfulness to God in the covenant- we will continue to discuss Murray’s doctrine of justification in the old covenant in Justification by Faith 2. <sup>391</sup>

### The apocalyptic

The whole language of Romans 5:12ff is apocalyptic, a present day enactment of the clash between Christ and Adam upon the last day.

*Future grace.* In 5:17, it says that those who receive God’s gift of righteousness shall reign (βασιλευσουσιν) through the one man, Jesus Christ. Further, in verse 19 it states that by the obedience of the one the many shall be made (κατασταθουσιν) righteous. Verse 21 comments that as sin reigned in death, so grace might reign (βασιλευση) through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

<sup>389</sup> *ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>390</sup> *ibid.*, p.7.

<sup>391</sup> “...the Obedience of the Christian (*continued*)”, p.7.

Murray says that the βασιλευσουσιν (v17) denotes the ‘certainty and security of the reign in life rather than its futurity.’ The certainty of it will mature in the future.<sup>392</sup> This reign is conjoined with the believer’s life. Possibly an understanding of Paul’s view of “life” in Romans may shed light on the import of the tense of βασιλευσουσιν.

“Life” in Romans. In Romans 2:7 the themes of “glory”, “honour” and “incorruption” are present. These three words are found are present in 1 Corinthians 15:20ff. Murray says that the three words define the future hope of the Christian. In like manner, this hope is describe as “eternal life”.<sup>393</sup> Also, ‘the guarantee of the final and consummated salvation is the exaltation life of Christ...(cf. 1 Cor.15:20-24)’, says Murray of Romans 5:10.<sup>394</sup> “Justification of life” (5:18) is the justification which issues in life, believes Murray.<sup>395</sup> In Romans 6:4, it says that the believer should walk in newness of life. This is a reference, says Murray, to the existential application of Christ resurrection life.<sup>396</sup> Because the believer is dead with Christ, he will also live with him (Rm.6:8). Of this verse, Murray says that it does not refer exclusively to resurrection life.<sup>397</sup> The fruit of holiness is eternal life (Rm.6:22-23). Murray comments on verses 21-22, that “life”, here, is not to be restricted to the consummated life to come. “Life” in Romans 7:10; 8:2, 6, is spiritual life, says Murray.<sup>398</sup> For him, “the Spirit of life” (Rm.8:2) is the Holy Spirit (cf., 1 Cor.15:45).<sup>399</sup> Of Romans 8:10, “the Spirit is life” equates to the Spirit being life, ‘the Holy Spirit as life in the consummating act of redemption, namely, the resurrection.’<sup>400</sup> In Romans 8:13, it says that if believers put to death the sinful deeds of the body, they shall live. This is relating spiritual life which will consummate in the life of the resurrection, believes Murray.<sup>401</sup>

Romans 6:4 does denote the believer’s present walk in faith. And “life” in 7:10; 8:2, 6, does refer to spiritual life. Romans 6:5 goes on to say that we shall be (εσομεθα) united with Christ in the likeness of his resurrection. Yet, once more, Murray says merely that the future is indicative of

<sup>392</sup> Romans 1, p.198.

<sup>393</sup> *ibid.*, p.64.

<sup>394</sup> *ibid.*, p.175.

<sup>395</sup> *ibid.*, p.202.

<sup>396</sup> *ibid.*, p.216.

<sup>397</sup> *ibid.*, p.223.

<sup>398</sup> *ibid.*, pp.252, 276, 285-286, .

<sup>399</sup> *ibid.*, p.252.

<sup>400</sup> *ibid.*, p.290.

<sup>401</sup> *ibid.*, p.294.

certainly.<sup>402</sup> There is no need to continuously qualify a distinctively apocalyptic meaning of "life". The concept of life is always determined by Christ's resurrection life and the Spirit of Christ as the Spirit who is life. Romans 2:7; 5:18; 6:22-23; 8:13, are quite possibly only touching on the life which will be given in our own resurrection. However, *this same resurrection life* is present with us. Thus, it is not mere spiritual life we receive, but Spiritual-life, resurrection-life.

It is probable that the when it says believers shall be made (κατασταθῶσονται) righteous (5:19), the reference is to future justification, the justification of the elect in the day of judgement. Geerhardus Vos does say that the justification of the elect now has 'remarkable analogies to the absolute vindication expected at the end.'<sup>403</sup> D. Garlington goes one step further, to say that the believer's justification is a future condition projected back into the present.<sup>404</sup> (We will follow this discussion through in Justification by Faith 2.)

1 Corinthians 15. The idea of pure futurity in Romans 5:17, 19, 21, should not be lightly dismissed. This is more pronounced when the distinct theological consensus between Romans and 1 Corinthians 15:19ff is perceived. We only need to describe Murray's own understanding of this consensus.

Christ was made the life-giving Spirit at his resurrection (Rm.1:4; 1 Cor.15:45).<sup>405</sup> Our future life is the resurrection life of the apocalypse (Rm.2:7; 1 Cor.15:20ff). The glory of God will finally be dispensed to God's children at their resurrection (Rm.5:2; 8:18, 21, 29; 1 Cor.15:43).<sup>406</sup> The tribulations of this life subserve our eschatological hope (Rm.5:4; 1 Cor.15:19).<sup>407</sup>

Christ's resurrection life guarantees our resurrection life (Rm.5:10; 1 Cor.15:20-24). Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Rm.4:5; 5:13; 1 Cor.15:56).<sup>408</sup> Paul expresses confidence in the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rm.7:13, 25; 1 Cor.15:57).<sup>409</sup> The mortal bodies that believers possess now will be fitted with a newness of quality for the resurrection state (Rm.8:11; 1 Cor.15:35-54).<sup>410</sup> Creation is subject to decay and death (Rm.8:21; cf., 1 Cor.15:49-50).<sup>411</sup>

<sup>402</sup> *ibid.*, p.219.

<sup>403</sup> *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, editor: R. Gaffin, (Phillipsburg, P&R, 1980), p.93.

<sup>404</sup> "The Obedience of the Faith in the Letter to the Romans Part II: The Obedience of Faith and Judgement by Works", *WTJ* (Internet), pp.5-8.

<sup>405</sup> *Romans* 1, p.11.

<sup>406</sup> *ibid.*, pp.113, 319.

<sup>407</sup> *ibid.*, p.164.

<sup>408</sup> *ibid.*, p.250.

<sup>409</sup> *ibid.*, pp.258-259, 269-270.

<sup>410</sup> *ibid.*, pp.291-292.

The firstfruits of the Spirit are the 'pledge of the plenitude of the Spirit to be bestowed at the resurrection.' The firstfruits of the Spirit anticipate the resurrection body 'fully conditioned by the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor.15:20; 48-50).<sup>412</sup> No "powers" can separate us from God (Rm.9:38-39; 1 Cor.15:24).<sup>413</sup>

If Christ's resurrection life is the root of our life in him, does this mean that he also was "saved", and that our salvation is the existential realisation of *his* salvation?

## CHRIST'S JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION

Οριζω  
Gaffin says Romans 1:4 teaches the justification of Christ. The text says that Jesus was raised from the dead and declared to be the Son of God with power. The verb οριζω used for "declare" can mean "appoint" or "declare", according to Murray. But, in Romans 1:4, he prefers "appoint" to "declare". He acknowledges that "declare" is an option if we take οριζω as it is often used in the LXX to mean "mark out the boundaries", and from this "to declare" or "to mark out". Jesus was "appointed" Son of God with power. Murray counters an envisaged objection that would say that Jesus was always Son of God and need not be appointed as such, by arguing that it is the Messianic Son that is referred to: it is the Son of God incarnate, who, according to his human nature, at the point of his resurrection, received power from the Father; Christ was appointed to be a Son with power, therefore.<sup>414</sup> K. L. Schmidt takes a mediate view. The Son is appointed and declared to be the Son of God: ' "a divine declaration is the same as a divine appointment: God's verbum is efficax." ' <sup>415</sup> We think Schmidt is correct. To Gaffin, Christ's declaration as Son was the moment of his justification and adoption, because it was the moment when the Son, who was of *sarx*, and was therefore without power, was raised in Spirit, and therefore into power.<sup>416</sup>

Calvin is aware of the justification of Christ. Of Romans 5:18, he writes, '[Paul] does not, however, say that Christ's righteousness, δικαιοσύνη, is thus efficacious, but his justification, δικαιωμα. Christ, Paul reminds us, was not privately righteous on His own account, but the

<sup>411</sup> *ibid.*, p.304.

<sup>412</sup> *ibid.*, pp.306-307.

<sup>413</sup> *ibid.*, pp.333-334.

<sup>414</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.9-12.

<sup>415</sup> Cited by Richard Gaffin, *Resurrection & Redemption*, p.118.

<sup>416</sup> *ibid.*, pp.98-128.

righteousness with which He was endowed was more extensive, in order that He might enrich believers with the gift conferred upon Himself.’<sup>417</sup>

#### Romans 4:25

In Romans 4:25 it says that Christ was “raised for our justification”. Murray says that this text merely refers to Christ’s resurrection being proof positive of our justification that comes through faith in Christ’s *death*.<sup>418</sup> Moo says that the text might allude to Isaiah 53, which refers to the Servant justifying the many. Moo denies this possibility, however, on the grounds that Paul’s understanding of Christ being raised unto justification is not the same theology as found in Isaiah 53.<sup>419</sup>

But Moo offers no evidence whatever. In fact, we would declare that the two texts are exceedingly similar. In the chapter on justification, we will see that Murray says that there has been a history of interpretation that accepts the justification of Isaiah 53 is the same spoken of in Romans.<sup>420</sup> Moreover, the Servant was a corporate figure: what he did was for the nation; *the nation* accomplishes *in* the Servant; to say “Israel” is to say “Servant”, and *vice versa*.<sup>421</sup>

Moo also argues that the preposition “because of”, if given its normal meaning in Paul, would mean that because of Christ’s resurrection we were justified. Moo rejects this view, however, believing that it does not accord with the Pauline doctrine of justification *by faith*. Once more, Moo goes halfway, only to withdraw. To us, the text is not referring to the saints’ justification in Christ’s resurrection, but to justification in their experience.

Head believes that Murray’s exegesis of Romans 4:25 is insufficient because Christ’s resurrection was his justification (1 Tim.3:16), and by faith we participate in his resurrection, and so his justification is attributed to us. It is in this manner that Christ is our representative, says Head.<sup>422</sup> But this view does not describe how there is any link between our justification and Christ’s. That is, Head does not explicate the true representative nature of Christ’s person and work. To him, Christ is a representative merely from a retrospective position. The question is, whom did Christ

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<sup>417</sup> Romans, p.117.

<sup>418</sup> Romans 1, pp.152-157.

<sup>419</sup> Romans, pp.288-289.

<sup>420</sup> See also P. Head, “Jesus Resurrection in Pauline Thought: Romans”, *Proclaiming the Resurrection*, editor: P. Head, p.68.

<sup>421</sup> See, David Seeley, *The Noble Death*, JSNT Supplement Series 28, (Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), pp.40-42.

represent two thousand years ago when going to the cross and in his resurrection? His resurrection is the cause of their justification precisely because *in him their head* they were raised up unto justification two thousand years ago. It is this event that is then realised in their experience.

### 1 Corinthians 15:17ff

We can do no better than to quote Gaffin:

The unexpressed assumption is that Jesus' resurrection is his justification. His resurrection is his justification as the last Adam, the justification of the "firstfruits." This and nothing less is the bond between his resurrection and our justification.

The same underlying assumption gives depth to what is on the surface in 1 Corinthians 15:17 (where in the immediate context, vv.20ff., Paul is concerned with the adamic significance of Christ's resurrection): justifying faith is worthless, if Christ has not been raised (cf. v.14), because a dead Christ is an unjustified Christ, and an unjustified Christ means an unjustified believer. Elsewhere the appeal for justifying faith (Rom.10:9) and even justification itself (Rom.8:34) is based primarily and directly on Christ's resurrection or on Christ resurrected.<sup>423</sup>

### Romans 6:7

It says, ο γαρ αποθανων δεδικαιωται απο της αμαρτιας. This is translated by Murray as meaning, "for he that has died has been freed from sin's power." The only reason Murray gives for this construction is that the context is concerned with sanctification.<sup>424</sup> Douglas Moo says that although this interpretation of δικαιω goes against normal Pauline usage, it is valid, because nowhere else does Paul refer to our dying in connection with justification.<sup>425</sup> In Romans 5:9, it says we have been justified by Christ's blood. Justification and death are therefore correlated. Romans 5:9 does not say we died in order to be justified.

However, Moo has not accounted for the death and resurrection motif. If we are justified "through" Christ's blood in our experience, it is because we were justified "through" his blood and were with him upon the cross; his death was our death, and his death is realised in our experience. Murray confessed to struggling with the relation between Christ's death and its application to us. It is indeed an excruciatingly difficult issue. Yet, for us, he never develops its

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<sup>422</sup> "Jesus Resurrection", p.69.

<sup>423</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.123-124.

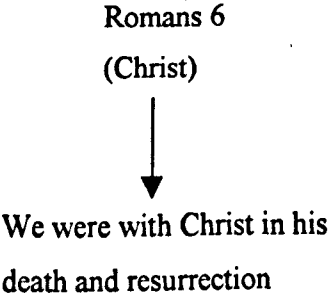
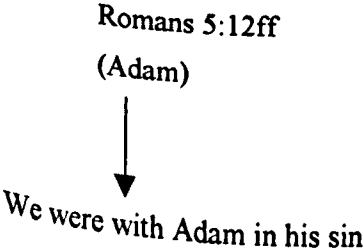
<sup>424</sup> *Romans 1*, p.222.

true potential. Romans 6:7 is saying this: when we died to sin *in our experience*, and therefore, through faith, we were justified. The sinner has been delivered, justified from the presence of the personified power called sin.

Probably the more accurate way to render Romans 6:7 is to say, “Through our death we were justified.” That is, as a stage unto justification, our death was necessary. The preposition in Romans 5:9 should be construed in the following manner: due to the death of Christ, as a preparatory stage, we were justified. We believe this is accurate because of the Pauline death and resurrection motif. Strictly speaking, as Gaffin argues, Christ’s resurrection, and not his death, was his justification. 1 Timothy 3:16 says that Christ “was justified in the Spirit (ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι)”. The Spirit, in Pauline theology, is the Spirit of the new resurrection world. Christ’s resurrection was the moment he was endued with the Spirit: the body the Lord had was a Spirit crafted body, and it thereby vindicated Christ: there was a triumphant new Adam, a new Son, who would bring in a new creation. Earlier we said that Christ in the flesh (Rm.1:4) was indicative of priority being given to his resurrection. So here in Romans 5:9: the death of Christ is being interpreted by Paul as the inevitable stepping stone to resurrection. Adam brought death- full stop; Christ’s death was in order to bring life.

**Realism or representation?**

Our view might be mistaken as being another version of Realism. But this would be a wrong perception. According to Murray’s doctrine of representation, Adam sinned, and *at that moment* his sin was *imputed* to his progeny, and so they were classed as those who had sinned, even although they did not exist and did not actually sin. This is also our understanding of the moment of Adam’s sin. Murray, consistently in our opinion, then goes on to say in his exegesis of Romans 6, that we were present with Christ in his historical death and resurrection. To diagrammatically *represent Murray*:



<sup>425</sup> Romans, p.376.

Thus, to our mind, in interpreting Romans 6:7, we have simply followed through Murray's own theology of representation- ours is not that of realism.

But we do not think that Romans 5:12ff refers to the imputation of Adam's sin and the imputation of Christ's righteousness *as taught by Murray*. Our understanding of Romans 6:7 and the overlap between Romans 5:12ff and Romans 6 should make us wary of Murray exegesis of Romans 5:12ff. In one word, our opinion is that the theology of representation taught, by Murray, to be explicit in Romans 5:12ff is implicit, and his understanding of representation is better applied to Romans 6.

### Is justification by faith, then?

Occasionally within the history of Reformed theology there have been theologians who have argued that justification is established in union with Christ in the eternal decree. Consequently, it is said that Christ's resurrection was the first stage of our justification, and faith the moment when we realise that we were justified in Christ, but we were primarily justified in the eternal decree.<sup>426</sup>

It is not our opinion that we were justified in eternity in the decree. As John Owen says, the decree of justification was an 'immanent eternal act of [God's] will', which does not 'produce any outward effect, or change any thing in nature and condition of that thing concerning which his purpose is'. By the manifestation of his eternal love, God justifies the ungodly by their faith (Rm.4:5; 3:22).<sup>427</sup> However, we do believe that we are justified in Christ's resurrection. Does this mean we are not justified *by faith*?

Owen objects to justification at the point of Christ's death and resurrection. He says that God is lawgiver. In substituting Christ for the elect God *relaxed* his law that demands that obligation is to be met by the transgressor.<sup>428</sup> By his death, Christ fully met our obligation. A man may pay a ransom to free a prisoner so that the day it is paid he 'hath the right to his liberty', yet he cannot

<sup>426</sup> For this view, see Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* 8 (Edinburgh, James Nichol, 1864), p.135; John Gill, *Complete Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1978), pp.291-300; Abraham Kuyper, *Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Christian Classics, n.d.), pp.189-191; Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids, Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966), pp.502-509.

<sup>427</sup> *Works of John Owen* 10 (London, BOTT, 1967), pp.276-277.

<sup>428</sup> *ibid.*, p.270.



participate in it until he knows about it. So also Christ paid our ransom, yet we do not automatically perceive it.<sup>429</sup>

This illustration, says Trueman, 'does...leave the door open to a doctrine of eternal justification, as it appears to imply that the decisive moment of faith is simply the point at which believers realize that they have already been pardoned.'<sup>430</sup> Trueman cites Baxter's criticisms of Owen. In summary, Baxter argues that we cannot say a man is delivered, and then argue that he is not; and that what right has God to deny us heaven for a period if it is previously ours by right.<sup>431</sup> Concerning Christ's historical death, Owen responds to Baxter, saying that Baxter has isolated the ransom from the covenant. The terms of the covenant are such that God sovereignly decides when to free the debtor.<sup>432</sup>

Owen's argument begs the question. It is he who says that his illustration and its explanation demonstrate a *covenant* relationship. Therefore his illustration and its explanation are most definitely covenant theology. Further, taken at face value, he teaches that *we have been delivered* in Christ death.<sup>433</sup> Therefore, it is he who ends up abstracting the covenant from the payment; for the covenant, according to Owen, entailed Christ's redemption *of us*; it did not obtain the mere satisfaction of God's anger that is *then* applied as deliverance to those who are elect.

Louis Berkhof accepts that we can refer to an objective justification of the whole body of Christ in his resurrection, but 'this should not be confounded with the justification of the sinner which Scripture speaks.' Berkhof then resorts to, in essence, the same argument as Owen to show that the atonement procured freedom.<sup>434</sup>

The body that Christ died and rose again for was a body of individuals. Therefore, we cannot accept Berkhof's compromise. However, we accept that there is an "objective" element to justification is Christ's resurrection. The issue that must be decided is, what was the precise manner in which Christ a federal head? We have argued that when Adam acted, we acted in him; and that when Christ was raised, we were raised with him. Those who refuse to accept that we were objectively justified in Christ's resurrection, would, it seems to us, have to deny our sinning

<sup>429</sup> *ibid.*, p.268.

<sup>430</sup> *Claims of Truth*, pp.212-213.

<sup>431</sup> *Aphorisms of Justification*, pp.146ff, cited by Trueman, *ibid.*, p.218.

<sup>432</sup> *Works* 10, pp.457-458.

<sup>433</sup> *ibid.*, p.268.

in Adam's sin. Were we raised with Christ two thousand years ago? If so, then why are we raised in the present, if it happened then? As we will see in Justification by Faith, faith is Christ raising us up in union with him, realising our resurrection in him two thousand years ago.

## CONCLUSION

Although Murray's basic teaching on union with Christ was said to be excellent, he ignores a New Testament emphasis: conditional union. For Murray, the church is the company of the elect. However, our exegesis of Romans 11:16-24 showed that the visible church, considered as consisting of elect and non-elect, was covenantally united to God. This union can end if believers became rebellious. Calvin also believed in a conditional union with Christ. Calvin's view arises out of his understanding of the visible church.

Murray was aware of the two aeon distinction when it came to Jesus' death and resurrection as described in Romans 1:3-4. However, he made too sharp a distinction between both aeons. Christ as *sarx* is indicative of the fact that as the Davidic king, the Son of God, he was exposed to the realm of sin, but then raised to the realm of Spirit *as sarx*. We concluded that Christ was, when subject to the realm of sin, under Adam and a sinner. Calvin also said that Christ was a sinner, but not that he was in Adam. Having risen from the dead, Christ sanctified *sarx*. In this way we pointed out the weakness in Murray's doctrine of substitution. For as the last Adam, Christ was made a sinner because we were with him upon the cross. We said that fundamental to understanding the concept of a *sarx* of two perspectives is 1 Corinthians 15:19ff. This text is programmatic, evincing that salvation is an apocalyptic concept.

Murray had an extensive section on Romans 5:12ff, and the two Adam motif. Murray correctly observed that salvation-history is the contrast between the two Adams. His exegesis of Romans 5:12-21 was pervaded by a traditional notion of the forensic, no more so when explaining the imputation of Adam's sin. We did not demur at Murray's *theology* of the imputation of Adam's sin, but at Murray's reading of it into Romans 5:12ff. The thrust of Romans 5:12ff is to bring out the effects of the one sin of Adam and the one sin of Christ upon their respective progeny. Thus, we agree with the overall emphasis of Calvin's exegesis of Romans 5:12ff. Although forensic language is perfectly in order to describe justification by faith and the effects of Adam's sin, it was shown that in both cases the forensic always corresponds to an actual moral state.

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<sup>434</sup> *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1979), pp.519-520.

Romans 6:1-14 related the union implied in 5:12ff. Murray precisely described the union related in Romans 6:1-14 as the church being present in Christ when he died and rose, and that these events are then realised in its experience. We said that the union *implied* in 5:12ff describes that when Adam sinned we actually sinned (it was not merely that his sin was imputed to us), just as the church was *actually* raised with Christ in his death and resurrection.

*Section 2:*

*Redemption Accomplished*

## Chapter 4: The Necessity of the Atonement

In his *Redemption Accomplished*, Murray starts his presentation of the doctrine of the atonement with a section on the necessity of the atonement. What must be borne in mind when evaluating this aspect of Murray's doctrine from his book, is that it is very short and is directed toward the Christian public (as the whole of *Redemption Accomplished* is). Therefore, our comments will be very brief, covering the subject in general.

### STATEMENT

Did God have to atone for the sins of men? Murray restricts himself to two opinions that are held in the Reformed tradition: hypothetical necessity; and, consequent absolute necessity.<sup>435</sup>

#### **Hypothetical necessity**

The view named hypothetical necessity argues that God invented the atonement merely, because, out of the various possibilities that lay at his hands to save mankind, it would exhibit his grace more than any other.<sup>436</sup>

#### **Consequential absolute necessity**

There is nothing within God's constitution or being which compelled him to make atonement for sinners; neither was he urged to do so by any extraneous factors or forces. Thus, it was not absolutely necessary, as far as his being was concerned, for him to make atonement.<sup>437</sup>

Having chosen to save mankind, he had to do so through the atonement of Christ. The *reason* for God's act of atonement is his sovereign good pleasure. Having sovereignly decided to save, the *means* he had to use was the vicarious death of Christ.<sup>438</sup>

#### **Six reasons**

The reasons why he had to use this means are as follows. Firstly, Hebrews 2:10 says it was "appropriate" for the Father to perfect the Saviour, and 2:17 remarks that it "became" the Saviour to be made like his brethren in every respect. The view known as hypothetical necessity says that

<sup>435</sup> It is also called absolute necessity, but consequent absolute necessity is more in vogue, it seems.  
<sup>436</sup> *RA*, pp.11-12.  
<sup>437</sup> *ibid.*, pp.10-11.

these verses display that the accomplishment of salvation is merely consonant with the divine wisdom and love. This is insufficient. For the force of these expressions teach us that the dictates of the divine nature made it necessary for God to accomplish salvation through the perfection of the Son. Secondly, John 3:14-16 strongly suggests that the only alternative to perishing is faith in a crucified Christ. Thirdly, Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:9-18; 9:9-14, 22-28 emphasise the need of a final, perfect, and efficacious sacrifice, which could only be met by the blood of the incarnate, eternal Son of God. Hebrews 9:22ff is subdivided by Murray into three parts. The sacrifice is required due to the absolute, not hypothetical, exigencies of sin. Only the incarnate Son of God could offer such a sacrifice. Because the Levitical system was patterned after the heavenly, then if the heavenly is only hypothetical, so also must be the Levitical. Fourthly, salvation is from sin unto holiness. It embraces, therefore, not only forgiveness of sins, but also justification. Justification's nature is that of righteousness; righteousness' nature is that of the obedience of Christ. The obedience of Christ includes his death. Therefore, the necessity of righteousness means the necessity of Christ's death. Penultimately, would the cross be the greatest exhibition of divine love if it were not necessary? Lastly, due to the attribute of God's justice, he must punish all sin, even the sin of those whom he would save (Deut.27:26; Nah.1:2; Hab.1:13; Rom.1:17; 3:21-26; Gal.3:10, 13).<sup>439</sup>

#### Calvin

In a review of Louis Berkhof's *Vicarious Atonement Through Christ*, Murray disagrees with him when he writes that Calvin believed in hypothetical necessity. Murray merely states that Calvin held to absolute necessity.<sup>440</sup>

### COMMENT

#### The necessity of consequent absolute necessity

A major part of Reformed theologians agree with Murray that the sacrifice of Christ was consequentially absolutely necessary to make atonement.<sup>441</sup>

<sup>438</sup> *ibid.*, pp.11-13.

<sup>439</sup> *ibid.*, pp.13-18.

<sup>440</sup> "A Calvinistic Exposition of the Atonement", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2 (1936), p.53. In his *Systematic Theology*, Berkhof quotes Calvin from *Inst.*2:12:1, saying, "It deeply concerned us, that He who was to be our Mediator should be very God and very man. If the necessity be inquired into, it was not what is commonly called simple or absolute, but flowed from the divine decree, on which the salvation of man depended." ["A Calvinistic Exposition of the Atonement", p.369.]

<sup>441</sup> Murray cites George Stevenson and Francis Turretin, *RA*, p.12. See, W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester, IVP, 1994), pp.569-570; R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids,

Robert Strimple cites Professor Roger Nicole as someone who rejected Murray's theory of consequent absolute necessity. Nicole says that as creatures we should not presume that God can or cannot do something. Strimple's responds saying, just as there are things inherently impossible for God, for example, he cannot lie, so there must be some things inherently necessary for God. This is not a limitation for God, but is his freedom and glory ("aseity"), <sup>442</sup> the necessity of his own nature, and not the necessity of formal logic or natural law. <sup>443</sup>

It is questionable whether there is a specific starting point within Reformed theology in its descriptions of the necessity of the atonement. Murray proceeds from a predominantly exegetical basis, whereas R. L. Dabney holds that the 'argument for the necessity of the atonement proceeds chiefly on the question, whether distributive justice is an essential moral attribute of God'. <sup>444</sup>

Thomas Goodwin, a hypothetical necessitist, <sup>445</sup> says that the atonement is rooted in the nature of God, and not merely the will of God:

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Zondervan, 1972), pp.486-489; W. Cunningham, *Historical Theology* 2 (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1994), pp.249-270; A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (London, Pickering & Inglis, 1965), pp.713-715; the Marrow men and Thomas Boston, [cited by James Walker, *The Theology of Scotland 1560-1750*, 2nd edition, (Edinburgh, Knox Press, 1982), p.71]; J. H. Thornwell, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell* 2 (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1974), pp.106-205; John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* 10, editor: W. Goold, (London, BOTT, 1967), pp.541-618; John Newton, *The Works of John Newton* 6 (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1985), p.247; John Howe, *The Works of John Howe* 3 (London, Religious Tract Society, 1870), pp.347-380; Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* 2 (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1976), pp.565-569; Thomas Brooks, *Brooks' Works* 5 (Edinburgh, J. Nichol, 1847), pp.351-352; Thomas J. Crawford, *The Doctrine of the Holy Scriptures Respecting the Atonement* (Edinburgh, William Blackwood & sons, 1871), pp.401-419; A. A. Hodge, *Atonement*, pp.236-239; *Outlines of Theology*, new edition, (London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1883), pp.401-402; C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* 2, pp.489-493; Robert Letham, *Work of Christ*, p.127; Synod of Dort articles 1-4, *The Harmony of Protestant Confessions*, editor: P. Hall, (USA, Still Waters Revival Books, n.d.), pp.550-551; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.369; B. B. Warfield, *The Person and Work of Christ* (Philadelphia, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1950), p.353.

<sup>442</sup> We presume what Strimple means by the aseity of God his self-existence. That is, the whole meaning and reason of his being resides in himself: of himself (*a se ipso*), and from himself (*es se ipso*).

<sup>443</sup> Tape, *Necessity of the Atonement* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1987). Strimple mentions another argument against consequent absolute necessity. It is said by F. D. Morris that if we can forgive some injury done to us without insisting upon complete reparation, then surely God can forgive some injury against himself without demanding full compensation. Strimple rejoins that man is not meant to be vengeful, but is to leave vengeance to the Lord (Rom.12:19). [*Necessity of the Atonement*.]

<sup>444</sup> *Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1985), p.486. See, Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp.369-370.

<sup>445</sup> James Orr says that hypothetical necessity was a scholastic distinction. [*The Progress of Dogma* (London, James Clarke, 1901), p.237.] Examples of hypothetical necessity are found in Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* 5, (Edinburgh, James Nichol, 1863), pp.14-16; Beza (in early life), Zanchius, Twisse [cited by Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.369]; Augustine and Aquinas, [cited by Murray, RA, p.11]; S. Rutherford and the early J. Owen [cited by John Macleod, *Scottish Theology*

And again, are not all his attributes his nature, his justice as well as mercy? his hatred of sin, as well as the love of the creature? And is not that nature of his pure act, and therefore active, and therefore provokes all his will to manifest these attributes upon all occasions? Doth not justice boil within him against sin, as well as his bowels of mercy yearn toward the sinner?...And as to run a course of mere rigorous justice pleased him not, so likewise nor to stretch the pure absolute prerogative of mercy. Wherefore some of the fathers have, after the manner of men, brought in mercy and justice here pleading; the project of mercy was his delight, as mercy is, Micah vii.18. And he had resolved above all to shew it. But then justice is also his sceptre, whereby he is to rule, and govern, and judge the world. Wherefore his wisdom, as a middle attribute, steps in, and interposeth as a means of mediation between them both, and undertakes to compound the business, and accommodate all, so as both shall have their desire and aims, their full demonstration and accomplishment.<sup>446</sup>

Here Goodwin teaches that justice is an essential attribute of God exercised on *all* occasions. Goodwin's thesis provides reason for saying that it is over simplistic- even for Murray's brief chapter- to imply that the adherent to hypothetical necessity does not accommodate the doctrine of God's justice.

Robert Strimple adds Hebrews 9:23 to Murray's citation of Hebrews 2:10, as an example of a text that if taken by itself does not prove consequential absolute necessity.<sup>447</sup> Yet, the texts that Murray uses to prove consequent absolute necessity, Goodwin, *after* he has laid down the premise of hypothetical necessity, goes on to exegete them as saying that there was a necessity for the atonement. He does this using exactly the same kind of language as Murray.<sup>448</sup> Possibly the first five arguments that Murray uses if taken by themselves would not prove consequential absolute necessity. Gordon H. Clark is more definite, 'Murray quotes a number of verses to support his position; but it seems to me that none of them proves his point. They all insist and make perfectly clear that God chose the method of the cross. They do not show that a different method was impossible.'<sup>449</sup> Therefore, it is again too simplistic to imply that the likes of Goodwin do not take into consideration texts such as Hebrews 2:10; and 9:23.

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(Edinburgh, BOTT, 1974), pp.70-71]; Patrick Gillespie [cited by James Walker, *Theologians of Scotland*, p.71]; John Ball and Thomas Blake [cited by R. Strimple, *Necessity*.]<sup>446</sup>

<sup>447</sup> Works 5, p.16. Cf., Works 10, p.608-609.

<sup>448</sup> *Necessity*.  
<sup>449</sup> Works 5, pp.18ff.

<sup>449</sup> *The Atonement* (Jefferson: Maryland, The Trinity Foundation, 1987), p.88.



It seems to us that the ultimate problem with the view of hypothetical necessity is that it does not take seriously enough the justice of God. As Dabney said, God's justice demands satisfaction. To say, as Goodwin does, that wisdom is some sort of arbitrator or mediator is foreign to scripture. If the atonement is not *absolutely* necessary, then sin is not an *absolute* problem. Or, if the atonement was not consequentially absolutely necessary, then what right have we to say that justice, in whatever form, was absolutely necessary? (Since the bible's concept of justice is inextricably linked with sin and the atonement.)

#### Calvin

G. P. Fisher says that all Calvin was admitting was 'that the mission of the Saviour springs from the *grace* of God, and from no constraint to which He was subject to provide a way of salvation.'

<sup>450</sup> R. Strimple holds that Berkhof was heavily influenced by the thesis of Robert Franks. <sup>451</sup>

Strimple concludes that Calvin was denying antecedent absolute atonement- that God had to save mankind. <sup>452</sup> Calvin does not have a lot to say on the specific doctrine of the necessity of the

atonement, it would seem. Berkhof concedes that the Reformers taught that punitive justice was an inherent perfection of the divine being. <sup>453</sup> In the light of this, the citation of one reference of

Calvin by him seems rather inadequate.

### CONCLUSION

Following Dabney, the issue of the justice of God is to be considered the key to the debate over the necessity of the atonement. This is because five out of the six reasons for consequent absolute necessity that Murray cites do not in themselves prove his thesis. The foundation for it must be derived from the doctrine of the holiness and justice of God- Murray's last argument out of the six.

Even acknowledging that Murray's presentation of the doctrine of the consequential absolute necessity of the atonement is very brief and for the general laity, it still assumes too much, because, Goodwin, for example, had a different idea as to the role of the justice of God.

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<sup>450</sup> *History of Christian Doctrine*, second edition, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1902), p.308.

<sup>451</sup> See, Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.369.

<sup>452</sup> Tape, *Christ as Priest* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1987). Cf., Sydney Cave, *The Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), pp.164-165; Emil Brunner, *The Mediator* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, n.d.), p.472; and, Thomasius, *DG. 2*, p.641, cited by G. P. Fisher, *Christian Doctrine*, p.308; J. Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith* (Leicester, IVP, 1986), p.289.

<sup>453</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p.370.

Consideration must be taken by scholars over the multifacetedness of opinion on the matter of the necessity of the atonement.

The question over Calvin's opinion is not so easy to settle, but it seems more likely that he did hold to consequent absolute necessity.

The next chapter is the obedience of Christ.

## Chapter 5: The Obedience of Christ

With the Reformed tradition, Murray assigns to the death of Christ only six doctrines: the obedience of Christ; satisfaction; sacrifice and expiation; propitiation; reconciliation; and redemption.<sup>454</sup> They are designed to show that the cross terminates solely upon God.<sup>455</sup> In this chapter, Murray's teaching on the obedience of Christ will be evaluated.

### STATEMENT

Texts such as Matthew 3:15; Luke 12:50; John 4:34; 6:38; 10:17-18; Romans 5:19; Philippians 2:7-8; and Hebrews 5:8-9; 10:9-10 (cf., Ps.40:8; Is.42:1; 49:6; 52:13-53:12), show 'that our thought of the atonement is not biblically oriented unless it is governed by this concept of obedience.' Murray quotes Calvin, ' "Now someone asks, How has Christ abolished sin, banished the separation between us and God, and acquired righteousness to render God favourable and kindly toward us? To this we can in general reply that he has achieved this for us by the whole course of his obedience." ' [Inst.2:16:5.] The formula that describes this righteousness is the *active* and *passive* obedience of Christ.<sup>456</sup> Reformed theology also emphasised the active and passive obedience of Christ.<sup>457</sup> The whole of Christ's life, and not certain stages of it, was characterised by active and passive obedience.<sup>458</sup>

The phrase "passive obedience" does not signify that the cross was something imposed upon the will of Christ, something that he had no control over, for he was active in the laying down of his own life, and willingly fulfilled the whole will of God (Jh.10:18). Christ came into a sin-cursed world, and there suffered for the sake of his own. It is his suffering, which culminated in his death upon the cross, that is known as passive obedience.<sup>459</sup>

<sup>454</sup> Cf., A. A. Hodge, *Outlines*, pp.401-411.

<sup>455</sup> B. B. Warfield, *Person and Work*, pp.368-369.

<sup>456</sup> The terms that are becoming increasingly preferred to describe Christ's obedience are preceptive and penal. The former equates to active obedience, the latter to Christ's passive obedience. [R. L. Reymond, "Obedience of Christ", *EDT*, p.785.] Aquinas (1274) used the terms *meritum* and *satisfactio*. The former corresponded to active obedience, the latter to passive obedience. [A. A. Hodge, *Atonement*, p.43.] The term "passive" comes from the 'Latin writings of seventeenth-century theologians', says A. A. Hockema.

<sup>457</sup> *CW* 2, p.152.

<sup>458</sup> *RA*, pp.20-21.

<sup>459</sup> *ibid.*, pp.21-22.

Christ's active obedience was his fulfilling of the law of God in all its precepts. The passive obedience of Christ provides the basis for the remission of sins, the negative side of justification, whilst his active obedience furnishes the foundation for the positive side of justification, namely the imputation of the life and righteousness of Christ. '[Christ] took care of the guilt of sin and perfectly fulfilled the demands of righteousness. He perfectly met the penal and the preceptive requirements of God's law.'<sup>460</sup> The "obedience of the one man" (Rom.5:19) is Christ's active and passive obedience, and is the same as "the one act of righteousness" (Rom.5:18).<sup>461</sup>

Hebrews 2:10-18; 5:8-10 gives us a clearer understanding of Christ's obedience. Four lessons can be taken from these texts:

- (1) it was not through mere incarnation that Christ wrought our salvation and secured our redemption. (2) It was not through mere death that salvation was accomplished. (3) It was not simply through the death upon the cross that Jesus became author of salvation. (4) The death upon the cross, as the climactic requirement of the price of redemption, was discharged as the supreme act of obedience....<sup>462</sup>

Because of the difference between man and God, it would have been humiliation for the Son if he had become man in conditions where there was no curse due to sin. However, the Son came into a world of sin, misery, and death. He took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom.8:3). The phrase "likeness of sinful flesh" adverts to the supernatural mode of the incarnation, 'a mode which guaranteed sinlessness', as well as the fact that he had real flesh, being of the seed of David which was sinful, and of a woman who was sinful. In this flesh, the Lord bore, as our Redeemer, the 'vicarious endurance of sin impressed upon him. Unparalleled agony, reproach, shame, and curse were his.' [emphasis ours]<sup>463</sup>

The category of obedience has four divisions. Inwardness- Christ did not externally obey God, but his whole being was involved in doing so. Progressiveness- Christ's progression in wisdom and, therefore, knowledge (Lk.2:52) imply that his obedience progressed. The demands of God upon him intensified, and, consequently, sufferings also. Climax- the death of Christ was the supreme act of righteousness. Dynamic- what was it that enabled him to obey the Father? It was suffering (Heb.2:10; 5:8-9): he learned obedience through the things he suffered; previous

<sup>460</sup> idem.

<sup>461</sup> Romans 1, pp.204-206.

<sup>462</sup> RA, p.22.

<sup>463</sup> ibid., p.133.

sufferings in pursuance of the will of God strengthened him to face the greatest act of obedience, his death upon the cross.<sup>464</sup>

Christ's earthly sufferings in obedience to the Father were not merely in fulfilment of righteousness, to the end of accomplishing atonement upon the cross. They were also a prerequisite for his current heavenly activity, enabling him to sympathise with his brothers (Heb.2:17-18; 4:14-15).<sup>465</sup>

Murray adds, 'justification is the righteousness of Christ. This implies his obedience and therefore his incarnation, death, and resurrection....A salvation from sin divorced from justification is an impossibility and justification of sinners without the God-righteousness of the Redeemer is unthinkable.'<sup>466</sup> Murray subsumes the resurrection under obedience; even though the resurrection was the seal upon Christ's obedience,<sup>467</sup> 'his resurrection from the dead, insofar as [he] was active in the resurrection, was an integral element of his messianic commission and obedience.'<sup>468</sup>

### COMMENT

#### One or two forms of righteousness?

Accepting for the moment that Murray's distinction of active and passive obedience is correct, we encounter a difference of meaning that needs clarification. At one point, he states that the active and passive obedience of Christ are Christ's righteousness. Romans 5:19 does refer to his whole life, including his death, as obedience or righteousness. And it is this that provides the basis for justification. Yet, in application of this *one* righteousness in justification, only the active obedience of Christ is considered as being imputed for righteousness, according to Murray. In theological terms it might be possible to speak of two types of righteousness, but Murray attempts no clarification. It would seem, therefore, that he has not properly resolved the tension posed by his own doctrine. We would suggest that this is because he has a vested interest. He desires to refute an Arminian doctrine of justification. He cannot deny the import of a passage like Romans 5:18-19. But to say that justification consists merely in the forgiveness of sins is inadequate, he

<sup>464</sup> CW 2, pp.152-157. R. L. Reymond comments that Murray's four divisions of obedience neatly capture the essence of Christ's obedience. ["Obedience of Christ", p.785.]

<sup>465</sup> CW 1, p.49.

<sup>466</sup> RA, pp.16-17.

<sup>467</sup> Romans 1, pp.152-157.

would reason. Reformed theology in general has therefore resorted to the teaching that the imputation of Christ's righteousness is equated with his active obedience, and the forgiveness of sins is conjoined with his passive obedience.<sup>469</sup>

### Active and passive obedience?

There is no indication of active and passive obedience *per se* in Romans 5:18-19. Philippians 2:7-8 yields the same conclusion: Christ's obedience is seen as mere submission to the will of God. We agree, therefore, with A. A. Hodge, when he says that during the whole course of Christ's earthly existence 'all his suffering was obedience and all his obedience was suffering. The righteousness which he wrought out for his people consisted precisely in this suffering obedience.'<sup>470</sup> It is disappointing that Hodge then goes on to explicate Christ's obedience as active and passive, such as defined by Murray.

What is the ground for saying that Christ's sufferings were in fulfilment of the "penal" aspects of the law? Is Murray speaking of, or at least alluding to, the sacrificial system of the Old Testament? If so, could not obedience to the sacrificial system be called fulfilling the "preceptive" aspect of the law? Exactly how does "penal" law differ from "preceptive" law?

### Calvin

It seems that Calvin held to one righteousness, the whole earthly existence of Christ. Alan C. Clifford does admit that Calvin sees the whole of Christ's life as being integral to redemption, but he thinks that Calvin saw Christ's life as merely a building stage to his death.<sup>471</sup> Murray's quotation of Calvin disproves this view. Also, the text of Calvin that Clifford has in mind, and which is an exposition of Romans 5:19, undermines his own claim:

And indeed he elsewhere extends the ground of pardon which exempts from the curse of the law to the whole life of Christ....Thus even at his baptism he declared that a part of righteousness was fulfilled by his yielding obedience to the command of the Father. In short, from the moment when [Christ] assumed the form of a servant, he began, in order to redeem us, to pay the price of deliverance".<sup>472</sup>

<sup>468</sup> CW 1, p.49.

<sup>469</sup> Cf., William Thomas Binford Jr., *Implications of Covenantism and Dispensationalism upon the Doctrine of the Active Obedience of Christ* (M.Th., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985), pp.2-3.

<sup>470</sup> *Atonement*, p.250.

<sup>471</sup> *Calvinus* (Charenton, Reformed Publishing, 1996), p.86; *Atonement and Justification* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990), pp.12, 171, 186-197; "The Gospel and Justification", *EQ* 57:3 (July, 1985), p.257.

<sup>472</sup> *Inst.* 2:16:5.

A *prima facie* interpretation suggests that Christ *established righteousness* at the moment of the incarnation, which righteousness was fundamental to redemption. This is what Murray conveys. And to silence any discontent with our interpretation, we should notice what Calvin *immediately* says upon these words, 'Scripture, however, *the more certainly* to define the mode of salvation, ascribes it peculiarly and specially to the death of Christ.' [emphasis ours] <sup>473</sup> Calvin makes exactly the same distinction elsewhere, 'Hence I infer, first, that Christ was made righteousness when he assumed the form of a servant; secondly, that he justified us by his obedience to the Father'. <sup>474</sup> It is clear, therefore, that Calvin emphasises the blood of Christ, not necessarily, as Cunningham <sup>475</sup> and C. Hodge <sup>476</sup> say, in order to deny and exclude the Romish doctrine of justification, but to highlight what Paul emphasises: that Christ's righteousness is the sum of his whole life, yet his vicarious sacrifice is the centre and pinnacle of his righteousness.

In terms of illustrations, Calvin's doctrine of Christ's righteousness is akin to the shape of a needle. The point of the needle is not the needle properly speaking; the needle is the full form of the metallic object. Yet, the part of the needle which is primary is the pointed edge of it, the tip. Thus, when we think of a needle, we immediately think of a *sharp* object. In like manner, when Calvin thought of Christ's righteousness, he immediately thought of Christ's death, which implied his righteous life.

Did Calvin believe in the active and passive obedience of God, as taught by Murray? Cunningham comments that we cannot say that Calvin believed in the distinction "active and passive obedience". But he concludes that Calvin's theology amounted to the same thing. <sup>477</sup> G. C. Berkouwer also believes that Calvin believed in the distinction between active and passive obedience. In commenting on active and passive obedience in Calvin, Berkouwer says, 'Not one single act and not one single incident in the life or suffering of Christ can be said to belong exclusively to the one or the other.' <sup>478</sup>

As it stands, Berkouwer's distinction is meaningless. If not one single incident belongs to exclusively the active or passive obedience, then what is the point in the distinction? Berkouwer

<sup>473</sup> *ibid.*, 2:16:5.

<sup>474</sup> *ibid.*, 3:11:8.

<sup>475</sup> *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1989), p.403.

<sup>476</sup> *Systematic Theology 3* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1993), p.133.

<sup>477</sup> *The Reformers*, pp.403-404.

responds that the distinction is not meaningless in the context of historical debates on Christ's obedience. For example, Piscator denied that in fulfilling the law Christ was meriting reconciliation.<sup>479</sup> Berkouwer is far from clear in what he means by Christ "fulfilling the law". The Arminians and the Reformed camp both argue that the question of whether one accepts the Reformed formula of active and passive obedience or the Arminian view that Christ's death alone is righteousness for us, determines whether we can say that justification equates to forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness- Reformed theology- or merely the forgiveness of sins- Arminian doctrine. Cunningham, for example, names this interrelationship as a 'natural consequence'.<sup>480</sup> We are, in reality, questioning this interrelationship.

At this point, we will not determine whether the doctrine of soteric justification equates to forgiveness of sins only or forgiveness plus imputed righteousness, for this will be worked out in Justification by Faith. For the moment, we will examine whether justification equals forgiveness of sins in Calvin's thought.

Clifford cites many texts by Calvin which explicitly state that the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to us is merely the death of Christ. Consequently, righteousness is equated to forgiveness.<sup>481</sup> Clifford counters the objection that argues that Calvin makes double imputation statements like 'the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ' (*Inst.* 3:11:2), by mentioning that Calvin was using such co-ordinate phrases in an equipollent manner, the one to express the other, both expressing exactly the same thing: the death of Christ leads to the forgiveness of sins, which is imputed for righteousness.<sup>482</sup> We believe Clifford is correct.

Yet, there are too many texts that make it difficult to accept the synonymy of righteousness and the forgiveness of sins. We are not thereby proposing the two-fold distinction of passive and active obedience. For Calvin, there are other ways of describing justification, for example, acquittal,<sup>483</sup> pardon,<sup>484</sup> remission of sin,<sup>485</sup> sins which are not imputed,<sup>486</sup> acceptance,<sup>487</sup> and

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<sup>478</sup> *The Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1973), p.321.  
<sup>479</sup> *ibid.*, pp.321-322.

<sup>480</sup> *The Reformers*, p.402.  
<sup>481</sup> *Calvinus*, p.86; *Atonement and Justification*, pp.12, 171, 186-197; "The Gospel and Justification", p.257.

<sup>482</sup> *Calvinus*, p.86.  
<sup>483</sup> *Inst.* 2:16:5; 2:17:5.  
<sup>484</sup> *ibid.*, 3:11:5.

<sup>485</sup> *Romans*, p.86.  
<sup>486</sup> *Inst.* 2:17:4; *Romans*, p.86.



guilt which is taken away.<sup>488</sup> We would propound that, for him, justification is at one and the same time said to be each of the above descriptions taken individually, yet comprises these ideas. Rather than having two different elements of righteousness and forgiveness, it seems that Calvin is intimating that justification is one entity with different aspects, each implying the other.

An illustration might help. Murray's view of justification is elemental: the one concept of justification consists of two *distinct* elements called forgiveness and the imputation of righteousness. Or we might put it this way: justification is made up of two separate coins. Whereas, it is probably the case that Calvin saw justification as one coin with two sides: forgiveness and the imputation of righteousness. And therefore, it is not merely that the one implies the other, but that the one *is* the other- it is the same coin; further, they are distinct, like one impression of the coin, "heads", is distinct from the other impression on the other side, "tails". Properly speaking, Calvin's view is multi-perspectival or of multi-impressions. It is a unique "coin" which has many sides to it, all of which bear their own identity: to say "justification" is to mean remission, is to mean forgiveness, etc..

### Reformed theology

Reformed theology argues for the active and passive obedience of Christ, said Murray. This is true. Do all Reformed theologians mean the same thing by these terms? Murray gives the impression that they do. Alan C. Clifford says that in the Reformed camp, for example, John Owen, the *Savoy Declaration*, and the *WCF*, there is delivered the doctrine of the active and passive obedience. Yet, what Clifford means by those terms is this: Christ's active obedience is his obedience to the law of God in his life, and not his death; Christ's passive obedience is his death upon the cross.<sup>489</sup> Both Murray and Clifford cannot be correct.

James Buchanan<sup>490</sup> and A. A. Hodge<sup>491</sup> both express the opinion that Reformed divines held to a doctrine of active and passive obedience that was exactly the same as Murray's. W. Cunningham remarks that the Reformers held precisely the same doctrine as the divines, though he does not

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<sup>487</sup> *Inst.* 3:11:4.

<sup>488</sup> *Romans*, p.110.

<sup>489</sup> *Calvinus*, pp.83-86; *Atonement and Justification*, pp.12, 171, 186-197; "The Gospel and Justification", p.257.

<sup>490</sup> *Doctrine of Justification* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1981), p.307.

<sup>491</sup> *Outlines*, p.403.

fully explicate what he means.<sup>492</sup> Examples of Reformed theologians who held to Murray's distinctions are George Smeaton<sup>493</sup> and L. Berkhof.<sup>494</sup>

Owen did not agree with the phrase "passive obedience".<sup>495</sup> He accepted that Christ's life was in obedience to the Father, but he, *contra* Murray, teaches that Christ learned obedience *in spite* of suffering.<sup>496</sup> Yet, Owen was anxious to state that Christ's death was an active event wherein he was obedient to the Father.<sup>497</sup> S. Ferguson's<sup>498</sup> and T. J. Crawford's<sup>499</sup> views seem to be, on the face of them, identical to Owen's.

The *Savoy Declaration* 8:5 does not make any reference to active and passive obedience, especially as defined by Murray, "The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself...hath fully satisfied the Justice of God, and purchased not merely reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven".<sup>500</sup> It must be said that the theology of the *Declaration* is, on the face of it, as *Clifford* describes.

Further, neither the *WCF*<sup>501</sup> nor the *Westminster Larger Catechism* employ the terms active obedience and passive obedience. The *WCF*, according to A. A. Hodge, held that Christ's obedience is active and passive in relation to his life and death- Murray's view.<sup>502</sup> But, it seems that the *WCF's* and *Westminster Larger Catechism's* theology is the same as the *Savoy Declaration's*.<sup>503</sup>

Explicit examples of Clifford's opinion are J. L. Dagg (1794-1884),<sup>504</sup> and J. Bunyan.<sup>505</sup> Clifford traces the distinction, as he sees it, back to Beza.<sup>506</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> *Historical Theology* 2, p.45.

<sup>493</sup> *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1991), pp.230-231.

<sup>494</sup> *Systematic Theology*, pp.379-382. There is some question as to C. Hodge, [*Systematic Theology* 3, pp.142-143, 148-150], and R. L. Dabney, [*Systematic Theology*, pp.625-626].

<sup>495</sup> S. B. Ferguson, *John Owen on the Christian Life* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1995), p.87.

<sup>496</sup> *The Works of John Owen* 1, editor: W. H. Goold, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1977), pp.338-342; *The Works of John Owen* 2, editor: W. H. Goold, (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1976), pp.135, 177-178.

<sup>497</sup> *Works* 2, p.135; *The Works of John Owen* 3, editor: W. H. Goold, (London, BOTT, 1966), p.177; *Works* 5, p.9; *The Works of John Owen* 9, editor: W. H. Goold, (London, BOTT, 1968), pp.534-535.

<sup>498</sup> *The Christian Life* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1989), pp.85-86.

<sup>499</sup> *Atonement*, p.83.

<sup>500</sup> *The Savoy Declaration of Faith*, editor: A. G. Matthews, (London, Independent Press, 1959), p.87.

<sup>501</sup> Cf., W. Cunningham, *The Reformers*, p.405.

<sup>502</sup> *The Confession of Faith* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1983), pp.182-183.

<sup>503</sup> *WCF* 8:5; 11:1, 3; *WLC* 38, 39, 55, 70, 71.

<sup>504</sup> *Manual of Theology* (Harrisonburg: Va., Gano Books, 1990), p.269.

Regardless of how we interpret the *Savoy Declaration* or the *WCF*, it is probable that there is no full consensus within Reformed theology as to what exactly is meant by active and passive obedience.

### “Expiatory” life?

Must we agree with Jonathan Edwards’ belief that the blood shed at Christ’s circumcision is just as efficacious as that poured out on Calvary? <sup>507</sup> Binford Jr. thinks not. <sup>508</sup> Murray stated that Christ’s life sufferings were vicarious. Calvin said that at the point of the incarnation, Christ was our righteousness. Murray and Calvin refer to the expiatory death of Christ, and Murray talks of Christ’s vicarious sufferings leading to that expiation. But were Christ’s suffering before Golgotha actually “expiatory”? There is nothing within Calvin and Murray to suggest so, but it is possible that we have not properly understood either of them.

We tentatively suggest that it is possible that the whole of Christ’s life was propitiatory and expiatory. A text to test our theory with is Matthew 8:17, “This is to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.” Verse 16 tells us that Jesus had just healed the sick and driven out spirits from certain people. So, he in some sense took upon himself the sicknesses of those whom he had healed and personally bore the process of casting out spirits. Matthew’s quotation comes from Isaiah 53, the fourth Servant Song. Isaiah 52:13-53:13 portrays the vicarious sin-bearing of the Servant. The fourth Song is continually linked with Jesus vicarious *death* (Mat.20:28 [Isa.53:10-12]; 27:12 [Isa.53:7]; 27:57 [Isa.53:9]; Acts 8:32-33; 1Pet.2:24). D. Carson writes, ‘It is generally understood since the work of C. H. Dodd (*According to the Scriptures...*) that when the NT quotes a brief OT passage, it often refers implicitly to the entire context of the quotation. This is very likely [in Matthew 8:16-17] here, for Matthew has a profound understanding of the OT.’ <sup>509</sup> It would seem inadequate, therefore, to say with Hendriksen that Christ merely vicariously suffered when healing. <sup>510</sup> Any view of Matthew 8:17 must root its interpretation in Christ’s *death*. Carson says that Christ’s

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<sup>505</sup> *The Complete Works of John Bunyan* 2, unabridged, (Marshallton: Delaware, The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1968), p.345.

<sup>506</sup> *Atonement and Justification*, p.171.

<sup>507</sup> Cited by Binford Jr., *Implications of Covenantism*, p.3.

<sup>508</sup> *ibid.*, pp.46-50.

<sup>509</sup> *Matthew*, EBC 8, general editor: F. E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids, Regency Reference Library, 1984), p.205.

<sup>510</sup> *Matthew* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1989), pp.400-401.

healings *anticipated* the cross.<sup>511</sup> Once more, this seems insufficient; for it is upon him *healing* that he is said to fulfil the Isaianic passage. Are we contradicting ourselves? Possibly, yet, if we consider the whole of Christ's existence on earth as expiatory, then there is no need to say merely that Christ's sufferings prior to his death were in anticipation of his death. To put it another way, in Isaiah 53, it is possibly not merely the Servant's death that is referred to as being expiatory, but the whole of his existence or sufferings, including his death. It cannot be denied, however, that his sufferings were a sign of his death to come and also anticipated it.

### CONCLUSION

Christ's obedience was his righteousness, and comprised his active and passive obedience, says Murray. The former relates to Christ's righteous life in obedience to God's precepts; the latter to the sufferings he endured, also in obedience to God's will.

We concluded that Murray developed "righteousness" in two senses, revealing his desire to accommodate the theory that justification consists of Christ's righteousness and forgiveness of sins, as two distinct blessings, in order to refute Arminianism.

It would seem as though both Calvinism and Arminianism have tried to squeeze Calvin's doctrine of the obedience of Christ into their respective positions. Whether Calvin believed in what was later known as the active and passive obedience is difficult to ascertain. However, we suggested that he believed in one righteousness, Christ's life and death- *contra* Clifford- which was imputed to us as the forgiveness of sins, otherwise known as righteousness. Calvin did not settle for the thought that justification consists of remission and imputation. Certainly, these were two elements, but there were various others; thus revealing that Calvin viewed justification as a multi-perspectival concept.

Further, our brief foray as to what is meant by the distinction active and passive theology in Reformed theology concluded that the formula was uniformly used, but there was no uniform opinion as to its meaning, as Murray's work suggests.

Finally, it was tentatively suggested that Christ's life as well as his death was expiatory. At the very least, we must say that Christ's sufferings in his life were vicarious and anticipated his death.

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<sup>511</sup> *When Jesus Confronts the World* (Leicester, IVP, 1987), p.34.

## Chapter 6: Satisfaction, Expiation, Propitiation and the Perfection of the Atonement.

In this chapter, Murray's doctrines of satisfaction, expiation, and propitiation will be evaluated. To these subjects will be added his doctrine of the perfection of the atonement. No remark will be made concerning it, for we agree with all his comments on it.

### STATEMENT

#### SATISFACTION, EXPIATION, PROPITIATION AND SUBSTITUTION

To begin with, some introductory points. The six categories which Murray says constitute the death of Christ, his blood, namely obedience, satisfaction, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation and redemption, are, each one of them, distinct blessings; one is not to be confused with the other. For example, although propitiation is similar to reconciliation, it is *not* the basis of it.<sup>512</sup> In Romans 3:25-26, we read, however, that the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ *satisfied* the justice of God.<sup>513</sup>

#### Satisfaction

The Old Testament trespass (guilt) offering was prescribed for sins in which the rights of God or man were infringed (Lev.5:14-6:7; 7:1-10). A ram was offered. It secured reparation, compensation, and thus satisfaction.<sup>514</sup> Christ is the Servant of the Lord who was a trespass offering (Is.53:10).

<sup>512</sup> RA, p.33.

<sup>513</sup> "Satisfaction" has been used in different ways. In the past, the term *satisfactio* was the partner of *meritum*. *Satisfactio* equated to the passive obedience of Christ, *meritum* to his active obedience. This was Aquinas' distinction. [A. A. Hodge, *Atonement*, p.43.] Writing in the nineteenth century, A. A. Hodge says that, properly speaking, "atonement" refers to Christ's satisfaction given by his sufferings on the cross, his expiation. It does not refer to the satisfaction rendered by him through his obedience to the law of the covenant. [ibid., p.34.] Hodge was aware that "atonement" was now doing duty for both "satisfactions". [ibid., p.33. Cf., B. B. Warfield, *Person of Christ*, p.351.] The doctrine of satisfaction was stated scientifically by Anselm (1093-1109). He said that Christ's death alone satisfied the divine justice. [Outline, p.423.] This view was held and developed by the Reformers [Cf., Warfield, *Person of Christ*, p.354.] From the seventeenth century onward, the Reformed tradition used "satisfaction" in the sense held by Hodge. [Outline, p.401; Warfield, *Person of Christ*, p.354.]  
<sup>514</sup> *Biblical Theology*, pp.49-51. Murray lists four sacrifices which were used in the Old Testament cultic system: burnt (or whole); peace; sin; and trespass. [BT, pp.45-49.] Derek Kidner adds one more offering to this list, the cereal offering, which accompanied both the burnt and peace offerings. ["Sacrifice Metaphors and Meanings", *Tyndale Bulletin* 33 (1982), p.132.]

## Expiation (sacrifice)

All the Old Testament sacrifices had reference to two things: expiation and consecration. <sup>515</sup>

Expiation has reference only to sin and its liabilities, 'The sacrifice was the divinely instituted provision whereby the sin might be covered and the liability to divine wrath and curse removed.'

<sup>516</sup> The sacrifice of Christ is the anti-type of the Levitical sacrifices. They had inherent limitations. Christ did not literally fulfil every nuance of the Levitical sacrifices; they were patterned after his offering. His blood covered the sins of the offender that were transferred to him, and thereby removed liability to divine anger, guilt was thereby expiated and sin purged away. <sup>517</sup>

Christ was not only the sacrifice, he was the priest who offered it, "he offered himself without spot to God." He abides a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, not to offer a sacrifice, but as the one who embodies its virtue and efficacy, and who, as such, makes intercession for his people. <sup>518</sup>

## Propitiation <sup>519</sup>

Propitiation has reference to the person of God. The Hebrew word denoting propitiation means "to cover". Of it, Murray notes three things, '(1) it is in reference to sin that the covering takes place; (2) the effect of this covering is cleansing and forgiveness; (3) it is before the Lord that both the covering and its effect take place'. The covering effects the appeasement of an angry God, who must punish all sin due to his holy nature. <sup>520</sup> In Romans 3:25, Murray defines

<sup>515</sup> RA, p.45. Murray says:

Consecration by itself, in the sinful state, is conditioned in its validity and acceptance by the anterior fact of expiation. The specific form which the sacrifices of consecration takes is also due to the fact of sin. Vos says that 'while the Law does not appoint a special sacrifice to sin alone, it does devote the vegetable sacrifice to consecration alone'. Leviticus 5:11-13 is an exception to Vos's statement that the vegetable, bloodless statement is devoted to the offering of consecration only. This does not negate the general provision that the shedding of blood is necessary for the forgiveness of sin. [Biblical Theology, p.45.]

<sup>516</sup> RA, p.25. For a close comparison between the sacraments and Christ's work, R. Strimple cites the *WCF* XXVII: 22. He also says that this relationship corresponds to that which pertains to the Levitical sacrifices and Christ's death. [Tape, *The Atonement: Expiatory and Propitiatory* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1986).]

<sup>517</sup> *ibid.*, pp.25-28.

<sup>518</sup> *ibid.*, pp.28-29.

<sup>519</sup> Most recent English translations of the bible do not retain "propitiation".

<sup>520</sup> RA, p.30.

*hilasterion* as "propitiatory sacrifice", and not, as Anders Nygren does, as "mercy-seat". [Commentary on Romans (Philadelphia, Muhlenburgh Press, 1949), p.156ff.]<sup>521</sup>

Sin is *anomia*, lawlessness. The law of God written on the heart and found in the scriptures is the authority of God, because it proceeds from his being; it is therefore the 'transcript of his moral perfection'. The law is a moral imperative, binding the conscience, and is not subject to prudential or utilitarian considerations. 'Sin is a real evil...in opposition to illusion' and 'negation, privation or limitation...a positive something...not simply the absence of something.' Sin is not a 'specific evil' such as death, calamity or disease. 'These are consequences of sin but sin has features that these other evils do not have.'<sup>522</sup>

The wrath of God is not 'the fitful passion with which anger is frequently associated in us'; 'it is the holy revulsion of God's being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness', his revulsion against *anomia*. It is not simply God's 'purpose to punish sin or to secure the connection between sin and misery', for this is 'to equate wrath with its effect and virtually eliminate wrath as a movement within the mind of God.'<sup>523</sup>

Murray does not pursue the Evangelical-Liberal debate over the term *hilasterion*, as to whether it means propitiation or expiation. He summarily dismisses C. H. Dodd's position, saying that the evangelicals L. Morris and Roger Nicole had competently repudiated it.<sup>524</sup> Murray briefly criticises C. K. Barret for interpreting *hilasterion* solely as expiation:

Barret's argument is singularly lacking in relevance when he says: 'The common Greek meaning "to propitiate" becomes practically impossible when, as sometimes happens, God is the subject of the verb. God cannot be said to propitiate man' (p.77). Who would maintain that in Rom.3:25 (cf. Heb.2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) the propitiation has man as its object?<sup>525</sup>

<sup>521</sup> Romans 1, p.117; CW 3, p.352.

<sup>522</sup> CW 2, p.77-78.

<sup>523</sup> Romans 1, p.35. Murray merely mentions that C. Hodge and Calvin are guilty of this error. [Romans 1, p.35.] We have already dealt with Calvin (see An Evaluation of Murray's Method, etc.). C. Hodge writes that God's wrath is 'the calm and undeviating purpose of the Divine mind, which secures the connection between sin and misery, with the same general uniformity that any other law in the physical or moral government operates.' [Romans, p.35.] We would have to agree with Murray's estimate Hodge.

<sup>524</sup> CW 4, p.309.

<sup>525</sup> idem.

The "man" is not the object of propitiation in Romans 3:25, the object is God's own wrath, Murray thinks. Barret does go on to say that 'expiation has...the effect of propitiation: the sin that might justly have excited God's wrath is expiated...and therefore no longer does so.'<sup>526</sup>

According to Murray, D. M. Baillie says the effect of God's wrath having been propitiated was that it "changed into love and mercy" '. [*God was in Christ* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).]<sup>527</sup> H. W. Clarke's argument is also reviewed by Murray. [*The Cross and the Eternal Order* (London and Redhill, Luterworth Press, 1943).] Clarke aimed to show the place the atonement occupies in the whole scheme of the divine plan and of world history. Murray sums him up:

...when he comes to the explanation of what this substitution means he avers that the "cry of forsakenness" on the Cross means that Christ "lost God" and that this "is sins dread penalty for man". "He endured the experience of it in order that man might be freed from its present threat and its ultimate clutch" (p.102). "Christ's experience as Saviour travelled an orbit in some fashion and in some degree coincident with that appointed for the sinner's doom" (p.101).<sup>528</sup>

Baillie and Clark are rejected by Murray. His counter-argument is basically two-fold. The atonement is forensic, propitiatory, because God loves himself and must satisfy his justice. Also, it is rooted in the eternal, electing love of God: it was God the Father who gave his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for the salvation of his people.<sup>529</sup>

## THE PERFECTION OF THE ATONEMENT

### Historic objectivity

The atonement was accomplished once-for-all without any participation on our part. It is not supra-historical: it does not exist in a realm that is above history. It was truly historical, and happened in Palestine some two thousand years ago. It would be correct to say, however, that the one who made redemption, Jesus Christ, is above history as far as his divine nature is concerned. Neither is the atonement contemporary: it is not happening now. Although, Christ does reign in heaven, and he is ever active, as the depository of salvation, in applying the salvation accomplished once-for-all upon the historical cross. Galatians 4:4-5 teaches that the atonement

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<sup>526</sup> *Romans*, p.78.

<sup>527</sup> *CW* 3, p.342.

<sup>528</sup> *CW* 3, pp.314-15.

<sup>529</sup> *ibid.*, pp.315-316, 344-345.



was rooted in time and history, as the Son of God took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh, at just the right moment. The incarnation cannot recur, therefore.<sup>530</sup>

### Finality

This aspect of the perfection of the atonement is the grounds for the polemic against the Romish doctrine of the mass. The atonement is completed and unrepeatable.<sup>531</sup> Murray disowns the view of D. M. Baillie that believes the sin-bearing of Christ is ongoing, an eternal event in the eternal realm. Baillie believes that the divine sin bearing cannot be confined to the historical event of Jesus' sacrifice but must be regarded as eternal, and that 'God's work of reconciliation still goes on in every age in the lives of sinful men, whose sins He still bears' '.<sup>532</sup>

Murray says it is necessary to highlight the continuing high priestly activity of Christ, but only in that he makes intercession. The two conditions of the atonement were obedience and humiliation. It is quite remiss to state that the atonement is ongoing, when it is clear that Christ is not continually incarnated, again going through the whole process of obedience.<sup>533</sup> We must pay deference only to that conception of atonement that is laid before us in scripture, for it speaks of only one atonement, which is temporal.<sup>534</sup>

### Uniqueness

Horace Bushnell states that the sacrifice of Christ is merely a perfect illustration of the principle of self-sacrifice that is energetic in every holy heart when it is confronted by sin and evil. In such a way, Christ *vicariously* identified himself with mankind, revealing that God does care for his creation. When the weak man looks to the example of Christ he is encouraged by his self-sacrificial love, and so seeks to be like-minded, struggling against the powers of sin and evil.<sup>535</sup>

Christ's life of suffering and servitude indeed serve as an exemplar, says Murray. To aver that we make our own Gethsemane, that we achieve our own freedom and salvation by our suffering, is a totally different matter. There is no "law of being" whereby man somehow makes a vicarious sacrifice patterned after Christ's. The divine wisdom necessitated that sacrifice must be achieved by the God-man, and him alone. To say that the atonement is dependent upon man's vicarious

<sup>530</sup> RA, pp.52-53.

<sup>531</sup> *ibid.*, p.53.

<sup>532</sup> CW 3, p.334.

<sup>533</sup> RA, pp.54-55.

<sup>534</sup> *ibid.*, p.55.

activity, as defined by Bushnell, is to eradicate the biblical doctrine of the sovereignty of God: God alone chooses to make atonement; he foreordained it to be accomplished in Christ.<sup>536</sup>

### Intrinsic efficacy

The sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to meet all the exigencies of our sin and all the demands of God's justice. Christ did not merely make a token payment for the debt of our sin, he did not merely cancel the debt, he eradicated it (Rom.5:19, 21; Heb.5:9; 10:14; cf., *Westminster Confession*, VIII, v).<sup>537</sup>

## COMMENT

### THE RELATION TO ONE ANOTHER OF THE VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ATONEMENT IN CALVIN'S THOUGHT

#### Central notion of atonement: *asham*

It is difficult to determine with precision Calvin's doctrine of atonement. Only by sacrifices, and not by works, could satisfaction be made in the Old Testament, he says. These sacrifices had no efficacy in themselves, but only as they were types of Christ, *the sacrifice*.<sup>538</sup> He writes:

אָשָׁם (*asham*) denotes both sin and the sacrifice which is offered for sin, and is often used in the latter sense in Scriptures. (Exodus xxix.14; Ezek.xlv.22.) The sacrifice was offered in such a manner as to expiate sin by enduring its punishment and curse. This was expressed by the priests by means of the laying on of hands, as if they threw on the sacrifice the sins of the whole nation. (Exod.xxix.15.)...Our sins were thrown upon Christ in such a manner that he alone bore the curse.

On this account Paul also calls him a "curse" or "execration:" "Christ hath redeemed us from the execration of the law, having been made an execration for us." (Gal.iii.13.) He likewise calls him "Sin;" "For him who knew no sin hath he made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor.v.21.) And in another passage...(Rom.viii.3, 4.) What Paul meant by the words "curse" and "sin" in these passages is the same as what the Prophet meant by the word אָשָׁם (*asham*.) In short, אָשָׁם (*asham*) is equivalent to the Latin word *piaculum*, and expiatory sacrifice.

<sup>535</sup> idem.  
<sup>536</sup> ibid., pp.56-57.  
<sup>537</sup> ibid., p.57.  
<sup>538</sup> *Inst.*3:4:30.

Here we have a description of the benefit of Christ's death, that by his sacrifice sins were expiated, and God was reconciled towards men; for such is the import of this word אָשָׁם (*asham*.) Hence it follows that nowhere but in Christ is found expiation and satisfaction for sin.<sup>539</sup>

The controlling notion of atonement, to Calvin, is that it is an אָשָׁם. The אָשָׁם removes God's punishment of sin by expiating sin. It also removes God's curse by expiating sin. Thus, expiation removes punishment and curse. Calvin quotes Paul as saying that Christ "redeemed" us by becoming a curse. This suggests that Calvin saw redemption and expiation as the same event, if not similar. Christ is therefore called a "curse" and "sin", which is the same as saying he was an אָשָׁם or expiatory sacrifice. Further, Calvin correlates expiation to reconciliation and satisfaction.

### Expiation, propitiation, reconciliation and redemption

Propitiation is the effect of expiation, 'we are always enemies, until the death of Christ is interposed to propitiate God...it is by the expiation that has been made that God, who before was justly hostile to us, is now propitious to us. Thus, since our reception into favour is ascribed to the death of Christ, the meaning is that the guilt, for which we were otherwise punishable, has been taken away.'<sup>540</sup> Notice that reconciliation is effected by propitiation.

Reconciliation, propitiation, and redemption are brought together by Calvin:

If we are accounted righteous before God because we are redeemed at a price, we certainly borrow from some other source what we do not have. Paul soon explains more clearly the value and object of this redemption, viz. that it reconciles us to God, for he calls Christ a propitiation or...mercy seat. What he means is that we are righteous only in so far as Christ reconciles the Father to us.<sup>541</sup>

Redemption reconciles us to God in that Christ propitiates the Father. Yet, Calvin suggests that propitiation is the "price" of redemption. So, on the one hand, propitiation seems to be in order to redemption, and on the other, it is part of it. This puzzle is cleared up by him:

And whenever Paul makes mention of the redemption procured by [Christ], he calls it ἀπολυτρώσις, by which he does not simply mean *redemption*, as it is

<sup>539</sup> Isaiah 4, pp.123-125; cf., p.75.

<sup>540</sup> *ibid.*, p.110.

<sup>541</sup> *Romans*, p.75.

commonly understood, but the very *price* and satisfaction of redemption. For which reason, he also says, that Christ gave himself an *αντιλυτρον* (ransom) for us. "What is propitiation with the Lord (says Augustine) but sacrifice? And what is sacrifice but that which was offered for us in the death of Christ?" <sup>542</sup>

Once more, Calvin distinguishes between the price of redemption and redemption. This time, the "price" is equivalent to ransom. Redemption is effected by ransom. Yet, as before, redemption, or more precisely, ransom, is correlated with propitiation. "Ransom" and "propitiation" are synonymous.

Indeed, he considers the "redemption" as expiation, 'By mentioning *blood* alone he did not mean to exclude other parts of redemption, but rather to include the whole of it in a single word, and he mentioned blood, in which we are washed. Thus, the whole of our expiation is denoted by taking a part for the whole.' <sup>543</sup> First, "redemption" is considered as something that "blood" denotes by taking a part for the whole, and then, in the same breath, "expiation" is considered as something that "blood" denotes by taking a part for the whole.

Calvin also says:

...since *חַטָּא*, the word by which sin itself is properly designated, was applied to the sacrifices and expiations offered for sin. By this application of the term, the Spirit intended to intimate, that they were a kind of *καταρματων* (purifications), bearing, by substitution, the curse due to sin....Wherefore, in order to accomplish full expiation, he made his soul *חַטָּא*, i.e., a propitiatory victim for sin (as the prophet says, Is. liii. 5, 10), on which the guilt and penalty being in a manner laid, ceases to be imputed to us....(2 Cor. v.21)... "the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all" (Is. liii. 6); namely, that as he was to wash away the pollution of sins, they were transferred to him by imputation. Of this the cross to which he was nailed was a symbol, as the Apostle declares, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...." ...But that these things may take deep root and have their seat in our inmost hearts, we must never lose sight of sacrifice and ablution....And hence mention is always made of blood whenever Scripture explains the *mode* of redemption: although the shedding of Christ's blood was available *not only* for propitiation, *but also* acted as a laver to purge our defilements. <sup>544</sup> [emphasis ours]

The expiation of Christ cleanses away the pollution of sins resulting from the curse by the imputation of sin and its pollution to Christ. Propitiation was thereby accomplished. Calvin then

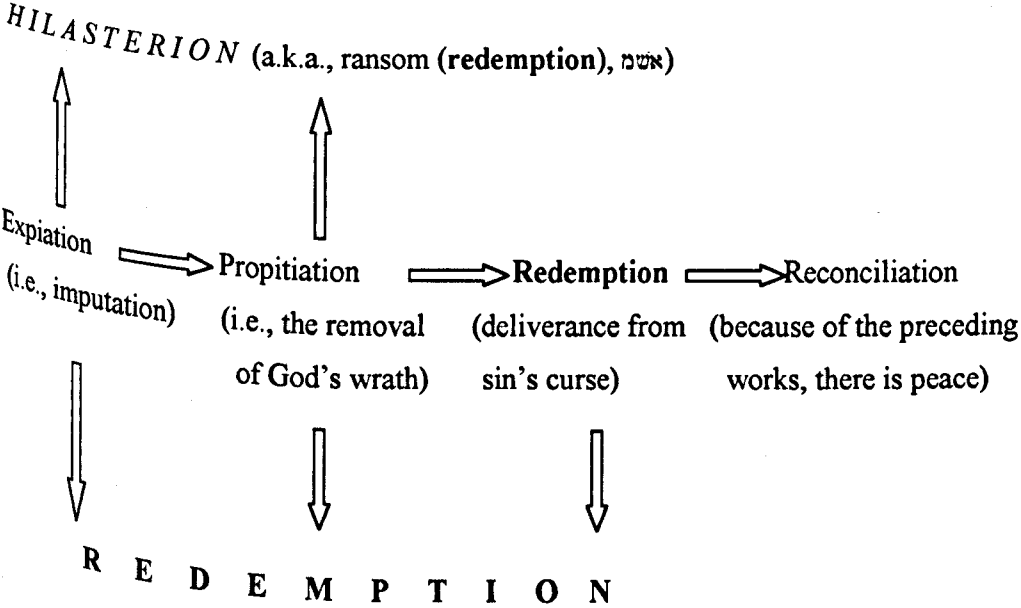
<sup>542</sup> *Inst.* 3:4:30.

<sup>543</sup> *Romans*, p. 76.

<sup>544</sup> *Inst.* 2:16:6.

defines redemption as the result not only of propitiation, but also of purging. It is probable that Calvin simply means that expiation has special reference to imputation: the consequence of imputation or expiation is that God punishes Christ. As a result, redemption is complete, both cleansing and propitiation having been accomplished. God is thereby reconciled to man.

One last point, Calvin considers the term *hilasterion* to denote both expiation and propitiation.<sup>545</sup> We have found that *נשם* means expiation and propitiation, according to Calvin. Further, propitiation is the equivalent to ransom, which is probably the same as saying that ransom equates to *נשם*. Calvin, therefore, has at least three uses of the term redemption: *hilasterion* or ransom; deliverance from the curse; and the process of the removal of the curse.



The striking thing about Calvin's doctrine of the atonement, is how each of the components of atonement depends on the another. Whereas, Murray categorically denies any interdependence. Also, Calvin thinks that *hilasterion* denotes propitiation and expiation; Murray believes it means propitiation only.

Strimple<sup>546</sup> and Berkouwer<sup>547</sup> do not see a great difference between propitiation and reconciliation. To them, the former concerns the removal of enmity and restoration unto peace, and the latter speaks of the removal of God's enmity. Strimple says Murray makes too clear a

<sup>545</sup> Romans, p.75.  
<sup>546</sup> Tape, *Reconciliation* 1 (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1986).  
<sup>547</sup> *The Work of Christ* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1965), pp.255-257.

distinction between reconciliation and propitiation.<sup>548</sup> Murray is warranted, we think, in saying that reconciliation applies to alienation. But then again, none of the above men would dispute this. We take a middle position, along with Calvin: the expiatory and propitiatory death of Christ is the *basis* for reconciliation and redemption. Thus, propitiation and reconciliation are distinct- so Murray- but extremely similar- Strimple, *et al.* To be more precise, the reason why the enmity is removed in reconciliation is due to propitiation. This is no more than to believe that the curse is removed in redemption is due to propitiation, also.<sup>549</sup>

## SATISFACTION

### Satisfaction: traditional approach or not?

It is possible that Murray is using "satisfaction" traditionally as to denote the whole of the atonement. However, this is never made clear by him. Satisfaction is correlated with propitiation, and because propitiation is distinct to expiation, etc., then it is possible that Murray thinks that "satisfaction" refers to the satisfaction of God's justice rendered by propitiation only.

### Calvin

To Calvin, "satisfaction" was given to God's justice by the death of Christ.<sup>550</sup> "Satisfaction" is a redemptive-historical occurrence, 'For had not Christ satisfied for our sins, he could not be said to have appeased God by taking upon himself the penalty which we incurred.'<sup>551</sup> Christ's sacrifice as considered as "redemption" brought satisfaction, 'Accordingly, the same Apostle declares, that "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Col.i.14); as if he had said, that we are justified or acquitted before God, because the blood serves the purpose of satisfaction.'<sup>552</sup> Here satisfaction is said to be the cause of justification or acquittal. Moreover, it is possible that it is synonymous with redemption, because it is correlated with forgiveness. The context gives the impression that satisfaction is also an existential blessing. Calvin also says:

Hence it follows that nowhere but in Christ is found expiation and satisfaction for sin. In order to understand this better, we must first know that we are guilty before God, so that we may be accursed and detestable in his presence. Now, if we wish to return to a state of favour with him, sin must be taken away. This cannot be accomplished by sacrifices contrived according to the fancy of men.

<sup>548</sup> Reconciliation 1.

<sup>549</sup> See Moo, *Romans*, pp.229-230.

<sup>550</sup> *Inst.* 2:16:13.

<sup>551</sup> *ibid.*, 2:17:4.

<sup>552</sup> *ibid.*, 2:17:5.

Consequently, we must come to the death of Christ; for in no other way *can* satisfaction *be given* to God. In short, Isaiah teaches that sins cannot be pardoned in any other way than by betaking ourselves to the death of Christ. [emphasis ours] <sup>553</sup>

Satisfaction is the basis for pardon or justification, says Calvin, and is through the death of Christ. We have already seen that Calvin construed the death of Christ as an expiation. It is possible, therefore, that Calvin is teaching that *existential* satisfaction comes from either the existential application of expiation or existential expiation *per se*.

It was said earlier that that which takes place on the cross is also executed in the believer's experience. The reasoning we gave was that representative theology necessitated this. Calvin did not teach representation in the way we advocate, yet, he taught that what is secured upon the cross by Christ, it is then executed in the lives of believers.

### ***HILASTERION, PROPITIATION AND EXPIATION***

*Hilasterion defined.* Murray's criticism of Barret that *hilasterion* does not denote expiation averting the wrath of God is quite brilliant. What is being praised is the subtle distinction he makes. It would be very easy to be mislead by Barret's words when he says God's wrath is averted. But this is to eviscerate *hilasterion* of the import of the *removal* of God's wrath.

Nevertheless, is there any real difference between expiation and propitiation in Murray's formulations? There are three parallels between both terms: covering of sin; forgiveness and cleansing; and the personal divine wrath. Professor Richard Gaffin writes, 'as I recall from [Murray's] classroom, he made something of a point that propitiation (the term *hilasterion*) does not include the idea of expiation.'<sup>554</sup> If *hilaskesthai* and *hilasterion* denote propitiation only, then what is the New Testament term for expiation? It is not being suggested that they are the same concept, but merely that Murray does not carefully distinguish between them. Further, it may be that his definition of expiation is tantamount to Barret's definition of *hilasterion*. Murray reasons that expiation *per se* removes the *liability* to the divine wrath. Considered as a distinct doctrine, this view of expiation creates the impression that God's wrath is merely averted.

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<sup>553</sup> Isaiah 4, pp.123-125.  
<sup>554</sup> Gaffin was eventually a successor of Murray, at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

In his exegesis of Hebrews 2:17, G. Vos writes that *hilaskesthai*, in context, refers to the covering of sin, and not to the propitiation of God's wrath. *Hilaskesthai* has "the sins" as its object, and means "to expiate".<sup>555</sup> In the views of Murray and Vos, there is a disjunction between expiation and propitiation. Calvin,<sup>556</sup> L. Morris,<sup>557</sup> and some of Murray's predecessors at Princeton Seminary,<sup>558</sup> say that the term *hilasterion* denotes an *expiatory* sacrifice whereby God *propitiates* his own wrath. If *hilasterion* and its cognates are rendered "covering", etc., then it is possible that both expiation and propitiation are present every time in the use of *hilasterion* and its cognates- of course, only when they refer to sacrifice.<sup>559</sup> It would seem that Murray's jealousy for the propitiatory nature of *hilasterion* has landed him in the unfortunate position of denying the expiatory element of *hilasterion*.

Romans 3:25 says, "God presented [Christ] as a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Calvin thinks that *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25 alludes to the Old Testament's mercy seat.<sup>560</sup> It is this imagery that leads Douglas Moo to say that *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25 is the mercy seat upon which God expiated our sin and so propitiated his own wrath. Moo thereby rejects Murray's interpretation of "propitiatory sacrifice". Moo notes that in the one other place where *hilasterion* is used in the New Testament (Heb.9:5), it means "mercy seat". In 21 of its 27 occurrences in the LXX, *hilasterion* is also rendered "mercy seat". However, he believes that *hilasterion* does not mean "mercy seat". In secular Greek and the LXX, *hilasterion* has a range of applications. Because *hilasterion* is anarthrous in Romans 3:25, L. Morris concludes that it does not mean "mercy seat" there, because the majority of uses of *hilasterion* as applying to the mercy seat in the LXX have the article. Moo replies that there are good grammatical reasons for the exclusion of the article.

Calvin

His writings make it clear that God was angry with sinners, 'we are always enemies, until the death of Christ is interposed to propitiate God...it is by the expiation that has been made that God,

<sup>555</sup> *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, editor: J. G. Vos, (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1956), p.121.

<sup>556</sup> Isaiah 4, pp.123-25; Romans, pp.75, 110; *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. & T. F. Torrance, translator: T. A. Smail, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1979), p.78; Inst.2:16:2, 3; 3:4:26.

<sup>557</sup> "Expiation", NBD 2, p.406.

<sup>558</sup> A. A. Hodge, *Atonement*, p.39; C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* 2, pp.508-509; B. B. Warfield, *Person and Work*, pp.417, 420.

<sup>559</sup> Moo, Romans, pp.234-235.

<sup>560</sup> Romans, p.75.



who before was justly hostile to us, is now propitious to us.' <sup>561</sup> 'God, apart from Christ, is always angry with us, and that we are reconciled to Him when we are accepted by His righteousness.' <sup>562</sup>

When did expiation and propitiation take place, according to Calvin? Firstly, they took place upon the cross, 'We were enemies, [Paul] says, when Christ presented Himself to the Father as a means of propitiation. We are now friends by His reconciliation, and if this was accomplished by His death'. <sup>563</sup> Again:

When we say, that grace was obtained for us by the merit of Christ, our meaning is, that we are cleansed by his blood, that his death was an expiation for sin....If the effect of his shed blood is, that our sins are not imputed to us, it follows that by that price the justice of God was satisfied...unless we concede to his sacrifice the power of expiating, appeasing, and satisfying...For had not Christ satisfied for our sins, he could not be said to have appeased God by taking upon himself the penalty which we had incurred. <sup>564</sup>

Secondly, propitiation and expiation take place at the moment of repentance, '[God] may...reconcile us to himself...by means of the expiation...abolishes all evil that is in us, so that we, formerly impure and unclean, now appear in his sight just and holy...Nay, it is because he first loves us, that he afterwards reconciles us to himself...And, therefore, if we would indulge the hope of having God placable and propitious to us'. <sup>565</sup> Calvin is referring to what happens initially in the sinner's experience.

Thirdly, propitiation and expiation are continuous. In Christ 'there is no other satisfaction by which an offended God can be propitiated or appeased. He says not: God was once reconciled to you by Christ'. He is a 'perpetual propitiation by which our sins are expiated.' In John 1:29, 'Christ is here exhibited...as transferring to himself the punishment due to us, and wiping away our guilt in the sight of God.' <sup>566</sup>

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<sup>561</sup> *Romans*, p.110.

<sup>562</sup> *ibid.*, p.76.

<sup>563</sup> *ibid.*, p.110.

<sup>564</sup> *Inst.* 2:17:4.

<sup>565</sup> *ibid.*, 2:16:3

<sup>566</sup> *ibid.*, 3:4:26.

Without argument, we can now add propitiation and expiation to those doctrines that Calvin considered that are not only redemptively-historically conditioned, but that are also experientially conditioned.

### Evaluation of Calvin

Calvin's understanding of expiation and propitiation as having an experiential side is quite correct. We agree with I. H. Marshall when he interprets 1 John 2: 2 in the same fashion.<sup>567</sup> We might say Calvin held to propitiation being definitive and progressive. As we mentioned before in evaluation of his doctrine of union with Christ, Calvin separates between the act of Christ upon the cross and its appropriation by believers- *pro* Murray- yet, the events of the cross are repeated in the existence of the believer- *contra* Murray. If Murray's doctrine of union with Christ is merged with Calvin's, we can say that the events of the cross are realised in the life of the believer because he was in Christ when he died. Moreover, this event continues to outwork itself, progress, in the believer, thus giving us definitive and progressive existential propitiation.

### CONCLUSION

The idea of Christina A. Baxter that Calvin did not teach a doctrine of penal substitution is quite unfounded.<sup>568</sup> Not only did he teach it, but John Murray replicated it. There are three notable differences between him and Calvin, however. First, Murray separates one aspect of the cross from the other, making them independent of one another; Calvin makes each element dependent on the other. This makes for a more wholesome doctrine of propitiation, and brings us to our second point. Murray considers *hilasterion* not to include the idea of expiation, when referring to sacrifices, Calvin did. Lastly, although Calvin did not hold to the representative theology as taught by Murray, he did conclude that satisfaction, expiation and propitiation were not only redemptive-historically conditioned but were also experientially conditioned. More pointedly, Calvin believed in definitive and progressive expiation. We developed his thought in the context of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection: definitive and progressive expiation and propitiation are the realisation of our death upon the cross in union with Christ.

<sup>567</sup> *The Epistle of John*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982), pp.117-119.

<sup>568</sup> Her understanding of penal substitution is that it is an act of revenge. To her, Calvin taught that although man fell, he was still loved by God; we experience God's wrath simultaneously, 'because of our enmity against him.' [emphasis ours] Therefore, Calvin did not advocate a tradition doctrine of penal substitution. ["The Cursed Beloved: A Reconsideration of Penal Substitution", *Atonement Today*, editor: J. Goldingay, (London, SPCK, 1995), pp.54-61.]

## Chapter 7: Reconciliation

In this chapter we will evaluate Murray's statements upon the New Testament terms for "reconciliation", namely, *katallage*, *katallasso*, and *apokatallasso*.

### STATEMENT

#### *KATALLAGE, KATALLASSO*

'Reconciliation presupposes disrupted relations between God and men. It implies enmity and alienation. This alienation is twofold, our alienation from God and God's alienation from us'.<sup>569</sup> God's enmity is righteous; man's is sinful. Five passages between them use *katallage* and *katallasso*: Matthew 5:23-24; 1 Corinthians 7:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Romans 11:15; Romans 5:8-11.

#### **Matthew 5:23-24**

It says, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." This example helps us to understand Murray's overall definition of "reconciliation"; though he does add that Matthew 5:23-24, by itself, does not give us the 'precise force of the word "reconciliation" in reference to our reconciliation with God'.<sup>570</sup> Murray writes:

...the meaning of "be reconciled"...shows that this expression, in this instance at least, focuses thought and consideration not upon the enmity of the person who is said to be reconciled but upon the alienation in the mind of the person with whom the reconciliation is made. And, if the meaning which obtains in this passage is that which holds in connection with our reconciliation to God through the death of Christ, then what is thrust into the foreground when we are said to be reconciled is the alienation of God from us, the holy enmity on the part of God by which we are alienated from him...the ground of God's alienation from us has been removed.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> RA, p.33.  
<sup>570</sup> *ibid.*, p.36.  
<sup>571</sup> *idem*.

The present imperative passive "be reconciled" indicates that not man's, but God's enmity is removed in the reconciliation, Christ's death upon the cross. It secures, is the ground of, God's favour toward sinners. It is not necessarily the case that the offerer had any enmity toward his brother. The repentant sinner receives the reconciliation of God, just as the offerer receives the reconciliation given by the brother.<sup>572</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 7:11

In 1 Corinthians 7:11, Paul exhorts a married woman separated from her husband to either remain unmarried or "be reconciled" to her husband. Reconciliation entails re-entrance upon marriage, and not the putting away of subjective enmity on her part. As a parallel with reconciliation accomplished upon the cross, 1 Corinthians 7:11 reveals how man is not involved in the process of reconciliation, for just as the woman received reconciliation, so sinners are to receive the reconciliation.<sup>573</sup>

### 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Reconciliation is God's work (vv18-19), and therefore excludes human activity. Secondly, the tenses of verses 18, 19, and 21 refer to a past action, namely, Christ's death on the cross, and do not, therefore, allow for man's action. Also, reconciliation is correlated with the non-imputation of trespasses to man, and the imputation of God's righteousness in Christ. This is forensic language. Thus, reconciliation must take place outside man's subjective response. Fourthly, it is the accomplished work of reconciliation that is the message of the preachers (v19), and not some subjective response of man. Lastly, the exhortation "be reconciled" (v20) 'means: be no longer in a state of alienation from God but enter rather into the relation of favour and peace established by the reconciliatory work of Christ.'<sup>574</sup>

### Romans 11:15

It says, "the casting away of the [Jews] is the reconciling of the world". God subjected the Gentiles to *his* disfavour, alienation, and enmity. The Jews are said to be beloved by God. God received them back. It was nothing to do with them; it was God's objective act; *he* laid aside *his* disfavour, alienation and enmity.<sup>575</sup>

<sup>572</sup> idem.

<sup>573</sup> ibid., p.37.

<sup>574</sup> ibid., p.42.

<sup>575</sup> ibid., pp.37-38.

## Romans 5:9-11

Verse 10 reads, "For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son". It is not our enmity toward God that is indicated, but God's enmity toward us. After all, the cross was a historical event outside of man's experience, taking place only in the existence of the historical Christ.

This "objectivity" (which precludes man's subjective response) is bolstered by further arguments. In Romans 5:8-11, "reconciled to [God] through the death of his Son" (v10) is parallel to "now having been justified by his blood" (v9). Because the latter phrase is forensic, due to the presence of justification, then the former phrase is also; and if it is forensic, then it cannot refer to a subjective change in man.<sup>576</sup> Justification (v9), because it is paralleled to reconciliation, is probably not justification by faith, but the objective grounds for justification by faith, namely, the blood of Christ; it equates to the obedience and righteousness of Christ in his death (cf., Is.53:11).

<sup>577</sup> This decision is reached because Murray gives primacy to the idea of reconciliation: he thinks "reconciliation" can only be interpreted in one way, as referring to the work of Christ *upon the cross*; reconciliation is something which is received and therefore cannot include man's subjective activity. Finally, the phrase "when we were God's enemies" has the passive sense as used in Romans 11:28. It says, "As far as the gospel is concerned, [the Jews] are enemies on your account". In the next clause of 11:28, Paul says that the Jews were "beloved". It means beloved by God, and therefore, it is objective love, God's love, and not the love of the Jews toward God. The parallel clause must also refer to objective enmity, therefore. In Romans 5:9-11, the fact that we are enemies does not necessarily imply our enmity toward God; rather, it denotes his enmity toward us.<sup>578</sup>

In case it is thought that the bible actually teaches that the word "reconciliation" can be stretched to include the laying aside of man's enmity toward God, Murray states that 'in the language of Scripture this...work of grace is not represented' by "reconciliation".<sup>579</sup> This conclusively confirms his position that God is the author and initiator of reconciliation, and, that man has no part in it, bar receiving it through the laying aside of his own enmity.

<sup>576</sup> RA, pp.38-39. In RA, p.121, he states that 'justification is forensic. It has to do with a judgement given, declared or pronounced; it is judicial or forensic.' Therefore, according to this criterion, for something to be "forensic" it must refer to judgement.

<sup>577</sup> Romans 1, p.170.

<sup>578</sup> RA, pp.39-40.

## APOKATALLASSO

There are only three texts that use this verb: Ephesians 2:16; and Colossians 1:20, 22.

### Colossians 1:20

Paul says, "it pleased the Father that in him [Christ] all the fullness should dwell and through him to reconcile all things unto himself...through him whether they be things upon earth or things in the heavens". The "reconciliation" took place upon the cross. What is spoken of in Colossians 1:20 is the *fruit* of reconciliation. This fruit evidences itself in three ways. The first being the ending of the curse upon inanimate creation.<sup>580</sup> Sin not only brought alienation between God and man, but between God and inanimate creation (Gen.3:17-19; cf., Rom.8:20; 2 Pet.3:13). When God will remove the curse, which arose from sin, from inanimate creation, he will also remove its alienation from him. Even the pure angels (those who have not sinned) will experience the fruit of the reconciliation, in that the need for them to work within the context of a cursed environment will be removed. Thirdly, Colossians 1:20 has reference to fallen angels, for as the 'consummated order...is one from which all conflict, enmity, disharmony, warfare will be excluded; it will mean the final triumph of righteousness and peace'. The fallen angels will be subjugated to Christ, and surrender to him.<sup>581</sup>

### Colossians 1:22; Ephesians 2:16

Colossians 1:22 says, "And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now did he reconcile in the body of his flesh through death". Murray comments:

Here [Colossians 1:21-22] and in the closest parallel from the companion epistle (Eph.2:12, 13) we have the clearest indication of the aspect of our need arising from sin to which the reconciliation is directed. It is summed up in the term "alienated" (Col.1:21; Eph.2:12; 4:18). It would not be proper to discount or suppress the hostility to God which the alienation involves. This is expressed in the co-ordinate description, "enemies in your mind by wicked words" (Col.1:21). The alienation is conditioned by our enmity and this connection is stated by Paul when he says: "alienated from the life of God, on account of ignorance that is in them, on account of the hardening of their heart" (Eph.4:18; cf. also vv. 17, 18a, 19). But it is a mistake to construe the alienation as consisting in the hostility to God on the part of men. The various expressions point to the exclusion of the

<sup>579</sup> *ibid.*, p.40.

<sup>580</sup> *CW* 4, p.94.

<sup>581</sup> *ibid.*, pp.92-96, 99.

"alienated" from the status, institutions, and relationships which betoken and certify God's favour. "At that time ye were without Christ; alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph.2:12). The thought of being "afar off" in the succeeding verse (cf. also v. 17) is to the same effect. It is this same emphasis that must apply to the term "alienated" in Colossians 1:21. Hence the alienation, thrust into the foreground in these passages as constituting the liability to which the reconciliation is directed, is misinterpreted when it is construed simply or even mainly in terms of man's subjective hostility.<sup>582</sup>

What Murray is doing here is acknowledging that alienation is *caused* and fuelled by man's enmity toward God. Man is afar off because God has exiled him. However, Paul's emphasis is not upon man's enmity being removed in the reconciliation, but upon God's enmity being removed; God actively alienated himself from man, thus the imposition of exile upon him. Until God comes to him, he cannot enter into his commonwealth. That is why Murray divides reconciliation into action and result. "Action" refers to the act of God in Christ upon the cross, in accomplishing reconciliation, the removal of his enmity, and, thus, the removal of 'the alienation characterized as exclusion from the favour of God'. "Result" is concerned with the *application* of that reconciliation to the sinner, removing his subjective enmity, completing the ending of alienation.<sup>583</sup>

And of the phrase "having slain the enmity by it" in Ephesians 2:16, it refers to the anger of God removed upon the cross.<sup>584</sup>

## COMMENT

### WHEN DOES RECONCILIATION TAKE PLACE?

The sinner's initial acceptance of Christ is not his reconciliation, says Murray. In this, he differs from Douglas Moo.<sup>585</sup> In fact, it seems few would agree with Murray.<sup>586</sup> For example, R. Letham, when commenting on 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, says that there are two kinds of reconciliation: objective and subjective. The former is the redemptive-historical reconciliation of God, the removal of his enmity through the death of Christ; the latter is the reception of this

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<sup>582</sup> *ibid.*, p.100.  
<sup>583</sup> *idem.*

<sup>584</sup> *ibid.*, p.103.  
<sup>585</sup> *Romans*, p.320. Cf., John Owen, *Death of Death* (London, BOTT, 1959), p.149.

<sup>586</sup> Strimple takes the same view, [*Reconciliation* 1.]

objective work by sinners who have laid aside their enmity.<sup>587</sup> Interestingly, W. Vangemeren declares of 2 Corinthians 5:5-7 that God 'takes away [the saints'] fear, reconciles them continually to the Father'.<sup>588</sup> R. P. Martin describes the ongoing aspect of subjective reconciliation as the eschatological nature of salvation: reconciliation has *not yet* been consummated. He also thinks that reconciliation took place upon the cross.<sup>589</sup> Calvin believes in existential reconciliation, 'God is reconciled to us as soon as we put our trust in the blood of Christ'.<sup>590</sup>

The question is, how is it possible to have reconciliation with only one party involved? At the historical moment of the cross, only one party is involved, namely, God, says Murray. Those who advocate existential reconciliation teach that only one party is reconciled, namely, man. This is because they consider God to have already been reconciled upon the cross. Calvin is an exception to this position. This is because in his doctrine of the application of the cross, what happens is that the format of the death of Christ is repeated in the life of the believer, so that, in the sinner's experience, Christ is replaced by the sinner, creating the picture of God being reconciled to man. D. Moo writes, 'Reconciliation has two aspects, or "moments": the accomplishment of reconciliation through Christ on the cross...and the acceptance of that completed work by the believer.... Naturally, while the focus can be on one of these moments or the other, the reconciling activity of God is ultimately one act; in the present verse the complete process is in view.'<sup>591</sup>

If reconciliation is the creation of peace between two parties,<sup>592</sup> then how, at the historical moment of Christ's death, can God be reconciled to us, and yet we not be at peace with him? And how, in our experience, are we merely made at peace, and God is not? L. Morris was ready for such a criticism, and he replies that we must distinguish between the English and the Greek meanings behind the term "reconciliation."<sup>593</sup> Nothing is resolved by stating this, however, for it is logical to say that if reconciliation is the establishment of peace between two parties, then both parties must be at peace at the one given moment.

<sup>587</sup> *Work of Christ*, p.145.

<sup>588</sup> *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Grand Rapids, Academie, 1990), p.225.

<sup>589</sup> *Romans*, p.110.

<sup>590</sup> *ibid.*, p.76.

<sup>591</sup> *Romans*, p.311. Cf., John Owen, *Death of Death*, p.149.

<sup>592</sup> *idem.*

<sup>593</sup> *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd edition, (London, Tyndale Press, 1972), p.228. Cf., D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, p.488.



## EXEGESIS

### Matthew 5:23-24

Murray correctly observes that the one who is commanded to be reconciled in Matthew 5 does not necessarily have enmity. It may be conceded, therefore, that "be reconciled" does not necessarily imply enmity on the part of the one exhorted to be reconciled. However, we can say that the offerer does *seek* to bring about reconciliation, and that there is only one "moment" involving *two* parties. It would be nonsensical to say that the offerer was reconciled to his brother, if his brother still harboured enmity. W. J. Woodruff says of Matthew 5:24 and 1 Corinthians 7:11, 'Reconciliation is something done by the one who offers it; it is not just something that happens to the estranged people.'<sup>594</sup> George Smeaton comments, 'When the verb is found in the passive, it either means to give up a quarrel on our side (1 Cor.vii.11), or to induce another to abate his anger and terminate his just resentment against us (Matt.v.24).'<sup>595</sup>

### 1 Corinthians 7:11

Marshall says that in 1 Corinthians 7:11 it is the woman who takes the initiative and lays aside her anger.<sup>596</sup> R. Strimple agrees with Marshall.<sup>597</sup> The one who is subject to the exhortation "be reconciled" (Mat.5:24; 1 Cor.7:11) is active in procuring reconciliation.

### 2 Corinthians 5:20-21

There is reason to believe that the exhortation to the Corinthians to "be reconciled" meant that they had to do something in order to receive God's mercy. The redemptive-historical death of Christ was the putting away of the anger of God against us. But there is an existential anger of God,<sup>598</sup> according to 2 Corinthians 5:20-21, which needs to be avoided.<sup>599</sup> It is in the light of the past-historical reconciliation that *believers* are exhorted to avoid the present anger of God. The

<sup>594</sup> "Reconciliation", *EDBT*, p.663.

<sup>595</sup> *The Apostle's Doctrine of the Atonement* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1991), p.217.

<sup>596</sup> "The Meaning of Reconciliation", *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology*, editor: R. A. Guelich, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978), p.121.

<sup>597</sup> *Reconciliation* 1.

<sup>598</sup> Cf., *Inst.* 3:4:31; Donald Macleod, *Behold Your God* (Christian Focus Publications, 1990), pp.101-102.

<sup>599</sup> Paul was writing to the Corinthians as God's ambassador or representative. 6:1-2 verifies this, being taken from Psalm 95:8 (cf., Is.49:8; Heb.3:8, 15; 4:7). It tells of the time when Israel hardened its heart in its wilderness wanderings and consequently was punished by God. Paul is saying to the Corinthians, "if you don't repent, then God's anger will be consummated in your punishment". Ben Witherington states that the extent to which the Corinthians were alienated from Paul was the extent to which they were alienated from God. [*Conflict in Corinth* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1995), p.397.]

redemptive-historical reconciliation must be *realised* in the lives of the Corinthians, in other words. It is the act of repentance or faith toward God (in order to avoid existential anger) by the Corinthians that is meant by "be reconciled". Once more, reconciliation involves two parties, at the one moment.

The relationship between justification and reconciliation is *very* difficult to express. William Childs Robinson says, 'in Rom. 5 and II Cor. 5, reconciliation so strictly parallels justification that they seem different aspects of the same event.'<sup>600</sup> Douglas Moo remarks, 'Reconciliation is not just another term for justification- *contra* Barret- nor is it a step beyond justification; rather, reconciliation views the new relationship established through Christ with God from a different viewpoint than does justification, from a different conceptual framework: the realm of personal relationships rather than the law court (Althaus).'<sup>601</sup>

Both Robinson and Moo say that one entity, that is a relationship, an event, is spoken of, which has two different nuances. Although, on its own, this is not proof against an *ordo salutis*, it certainly raises questions as to logical stadia as put forward by Murray.

Of 2 Corinthians 5:21, S. Porter comments 'that God's righteousness provides the basis for reconciliation.'<sup>602</sup> In the Pauline theology, we question whether this is the case. Arguably, the doctrine of reconciliation *per se* in Paul's thought always refers to the cross, sin and enmity.<sup>603</sup> But in saying this, we are only partly agreeing with Murray. That is, as demonstrated above, reconciliation is also an existential blessing. This is because the death of Christ is applied to us now: we die to sin in the here and now. This event is the realisation of our death in Christ in his death upon the cross two thousand years ago. In other words, in 2 Corinthians 5:21 it is possible Paul is outlining the two ages of creation: the age of *sarx* and the age of the Spirit.

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In Antioch 6.7.4; 7.8.4; 2 Maccabees 1:5 and 7:37, "be reconciled" (καταλλαγή) is used to describe God's action of removing his own enmity. Admittedly, in all the above instances, God is "manipulated" to remove his anger (cf., 2 Macc.5:11-20; 5:17; 8:29; 4 Macc.7:28-29; 17:22).

<sup>600</sup> "Reconciliation", *BDT*, p.437.

<sup>601</sup> *Romans*, p.321.

<sup>602</sup> "Peace", *DPL*, p.696.

<sup>603</sup> In Isaiah, peace is the 'outcome' of righteousness, says Alec Motyer. [*The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester, IVP, 1994), p.261.]

Sin offering

Impartation of righteousness



Reconciliation

Justification

Destruction of enmity

Peace

(The age of *sarx*)

(The age of the Spirit)

Along with Romans 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21 contains cultic language: Christ is the Servant who was offered up as a sin offering.<sup>604</sup> It is this that provides the basis for reconciliation. That is, by his propitiatory and expiatory sacrifice, Christ has removed God's enmity, thus reconciling us to God. This is also Calvin's view of the atonement (see Propitiation, etc.). In Christ's "body" we were crucified upon the cross.

D. Guthrie notices a connection between 2 Corinthians 5:15, "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again", and 5:21.<sup>605</sup> We would suggest that the formula of death and resurrection in 5:15 is again expressed in 5:21. G. Ladd believes the righteousness of 2 Corinthians 5:21 is eschatological, the righteousness of the new aeon, present today.<sup>606</sup> We tentatively suggest that the righteousness implied in 2 Corinthians 5:21 is the resurrection righteousness of Christ.<sup>607</sup> Our becoming God's righteousness in Christ, is, we would propose, our being conformed to Christ's resurrection righteousness, his image. But Paul does not signify *Christ's* resurrection by the words "so that we might become the righteousness of God". We are suggesting, rather, that it is *our* resurrection that is denoted. Thus, the establishing of peace in the present is the existential intervention of apocalyptic or resurrection righteousness.

<sup>604</sup> R. P. Martin, 2 Corinthians, WBC 40, general editors: D. A. Hubbard; Glenn W. Barker, (Milton Keynes, Word Publishing, 1991), p.157.

<sup>605</sup> New Testament Theology, pp.465-466.

<sup>606</sup> A Theology of the New Testament (London, Lutterworth Press, 1975), p.483. Cf., *Inst.*2:16:13.

<sup>607</sup> Cf., Gaffin, *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.119-124.

### Romans 5:9-11

It is possible, if not probable, that the reconciliation referred to in Romans 5:10-11 is existential. Even so, Romans 5:10-11 probably also reflects the fact that existential reconciliation is the realisation of redemptive-historical reconciliation.

We should notice, first of all, the co-ordination of justification and peace in Romans 5:1. "Justification" in Romans 5:1, says Murray, refers to justification by faith. Thus, it is possible that the parallelism between justification and reconciliation in verses 9-10 is indicative of existential blessing. When we look at 5:9-11, the parallel between verses 9 and 11 is obvious: "we have now been justified", "we have now received reconciliation". According to Murray's translation, we should paraphrase this parallel as saying, "we have now been *the objective, redemptive-historical blood of Christ, which is the foundation of present-existential justification*, by his blood....We have now, presently, received *the reconciliation*." The sentence just does not make sense! For Murray's logic to make sense, he would have to say, "the justification that has been achieved upon the cross, we have now received...the reconciliation that has also been accomplished upon the cross, we have now received." However, the parallel should be constructed along existential lines, "we have presently, in our experience, been justified, by faith, we have received justification....we have also presently received, in our experience, reconciliation, we have been reconciled today." This rendition probably pays more attention to the eschatological "now".

There is another blip in Murray's reasoning. He says that even although "justification" in verse 10 is the basis of justification by faith, and not justification *per se*, it is still forensic because it is the word "justification". Uncharacteristically, Murray is imprecise here, for it cannot be said that "justification" is forensic simply because it is the term "justification".

C. E. H. Whiteley rebukes Murray for arguing that God has enmity towards us, because Romans 5:10 comments that it was in love that God gave his Son.<sup>608</sup> We prefer Dunn's assessment of Murray, however. Dunn criticises Murray for resorting to arguing that in Romans 11:28 "enemies" denotes God's enmity of the Jews because the parallel is that they are beloved of him. In reply, Dunn says that 'we must be careful not to insist on a parallel in meaning where Paul may intend only a parallel form.' For Dunn, this reflects the dual note in Romans of hatred on God's

part (9:13, 17-23; 11:7b-10, 15, 25), and disobedience on Israel's part (9:31-32; 10:3, 14-21; 11:11-12, 20-23, 30-31). Dunn concludes that Romans 5:11 refers to both God's and the sinner's anger.<sup>609</sup> Moo believes that the enmity spoken of in verse 10 is made up of God's *and* man's enmity (cf., v8).<sup>610</sup>

Is not God's anger removed when we come to faith in Christ, and is this not the realisation of that which took place in Christ upon the cross? If so, then is it not possible that in Christ's historical death *our* enmity was "objectively"- to use Berkhof's term- removed in his flesh, which event is then realised in our experience?

### Romans 11:15

Hendriksen records that in 11:7 the enmity of God against Israel was his hardening of them, which in turn was due to their enmity or to the self-induced hardening of their own hearts. Hendriksen then adds that it was through faith that the Gentiles were reconciled to God.<sup>611</sup> The reconciliation is achieved between two parties at one given "moment". Also, the reconciliation is certainly from God, but this does not negate the activity of either Jew or Gentile in fulfilling reconciliation. Reconciliation is two-way, involving the response of man, as we found in 2 Corinthians 5.

In Romans 11:15, reconciliation is paralleled with resurrection. Calvin says that in this case, reconciliation and resurrection treat of the same subject, but point to different nuances.<sup>612</sup> Romans 11:15 gives us grounds, albeit slender, to suggest that reconciliation, as a soteric blessing, should be contrasted to resurrection.

### Ephesians 2:16

In his commentary on Colossians 1:22 and Ephesians 2:16, Murray says that the alienation involved in these verses must include the notion of man's active enmity, though it is God's alienation from man that is in the forefront of alienation. He adds that reconciliation is directed towards God's alienation from man, and the reconciliation which takes place in Colossians 1:22 and Ephesians 2:16 is the objective act of God in Christ upon the cross. How is it possible, we

<sup>608</sup> *The Theology of St. Paul* (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964), p.70.  
<sup>609</sup> *Romans*, pp.258, 730-731.  
<sup>610</sup> *Romans*, p.320.  
<sup>611</sup> *Romans* p.369.  
<sup>612</sup> *Romans*, p.248.

would ask, for the reconciliation of God in Christ at the historical moment of the cross to remove only God's enmity, when, as Murray concedes, man's enmity must also be included within the concept of alienation? If reconciliation removes alienation, then surely it removes all that is meant by alienation. To put it another way, how can God be at peace when man is still at enmity?

Mankind was reconciled in Christ *upon the cross*, and humanity was set at peace with God, says A. Lincoln. He means by this that as Christ was human he represented the human race as its covenant head. Thus, it is said that Christ reconciled "man" to God. However, this is a faulty understanding of Christ's covenant headship: Christ represents "mankind" only inasmuch as he is the head of *his* people, the church. Therefore, we would adjust Lincoln's thesis to say that *the church's* enmity was removed upon the cross, in the body of Christ.

Lincoln arrives at his conclusion by moving from the present-existential to the redemptive-historical. He notes how "put to death the enmity" (v16) is parallel to "abolishing in his flesh the enmity" (Eph.2:15). Also, in the phrase of verse 16, 'the aorist participle involves a backward reference to Christ's action preceding the reconciliation in one body and to God'.<sup>613</sup> The present-existential reconciliation, in other words, is the realisation of the redemptive-historical event. Therefore, it is, to us, consistent to say that if our enmity is removed in the present-existential through Christ's death, then it was also removed in the redemptive-historical act of Christ when he gave up his flesh. This is why the aorist participle reflects the redemptive-historical event.

According to Lincoln's exposition of Ephesians 2:16 reconciliation is dependent upon Christ's resurrection, 'the new humanity is embraced in [Christ's] own person. This notion is itself dependent on Paul's Adamic Christology, with its associated ideas of inclusive representative new order and of believers being incorporated into him'.<sup>614</sup> (It is not our aim to discuss whether he is correct in saying that the body spoken of here is Christ's.)<sup>615</sup> Lincoln says that the one body created (2:15) is the same motif found in 2:10.<sup>616</sup> H. Ridderbos<sup>617</sup> and R. Gaffin<sup>618</sup> believe that Ephesians 2:10 is also indicative of Adamic representative theology. What is interesting is that the creation spoken of in 2:15 is accomplished *through* reconciliation. This raises the question as

<sup>613</sup> Ephesians, WBC 42, general editor: D. A. Hubbard, (Dallas, Word Books, 1990), p.146. Cf., John Stott, *God's New Society* (Leicester, IVP, 1979), p.102.

<sup>614</sup> Ephesians, p.143. Cf., A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, EBC 11, general editor: F. E. Gaebelin, (Grand Rapids, Regency Reference Library, 1978), p.40.

<sup>615</sup> Cf., H. Ridderbos, *Paul*, p.377.

<sup>616</sup> Ephesians, p.143.

<sup>617</sup> *Paul*, pp.63-64.

to whether the creation related in verse 10 is also achieved through reconciliation, especially as we recount that the "new creation" of 2 Corinthians 5:17 is immediately followed by reference to reconciliation (vv18-20). It is preferable to say that resurrection is dependent on reconciliation, rather than argue with Lincoln that reconciliation is dependent on resurrection. Reconciliation is, once more, aligned with Christ's death (2:16).

### Colossians 1:20

Colossians 1:20 refers to cosmic reconciliation. It is questionable whether Colossians 1:20 makes mention of inanimate creation. Even if it is conceded that "creation" in verse 15 includes inanimate creation, it would seem more precise to construe the "all things" that were "created" of verse 16 by that which immediately follows, "things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities". This list, in other words, might be epexegetical of "all things", and, as Murray thinks, refer to animate beings. And, in verse 20, we probably have the same process. Having said this, we would not demur at Murray's *theology*; to use "reconciliation" in reference to inanimate creation, in our estimate, is perfectly reasonable, for the reason he gave.

He talks about *the* reconciliation as act, and the effects of reconciliation as result. This distinction as it goes is fine, because reconciliation in our experience does stem from the cross. However, why does Paul use the term reconciliation of cosmic *reconciliation*, when it is only the *fruit* of the reconciliation, according to Murray?

If cosmic reconciliation is seen as the final stage in the realisation of the redemptive-historical reconciliation, then it must be understood as reconciliation proper. Adam represented the whole of creation; Christ represents the whole of the new creation; he represented the whole of the new creation upon the cross. Thus, cosmic reconciliation is the realisation of what the last Adam did on the cross and in the resurrection. William Hendriksen,<sup>618</sup> N. T. Wright,<sup>619</sup> and P. T. O'Brien,<sup>620</sup> all say that *cosmic reconciliation has begun*, for it began *upon the cross*.

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<sup>618</sup> *Redemption & Redemption*, p.43.

<sup>619</sup> *Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1988), pp.81-82.

<sup>620</sup> *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC, (Leicester, IVP, 1986), pp.76-77, 80.

<sup>621</sup> *Colossians, Philemon*, WBC 44, general editor: D A Hubbard, (Milton Keynes, Word (UK) Ltd, 1987), pp.53, 56.

## Colossians 1:22

P. T. O'Brien makes an extremely interesting comment, when he says of verse 22:

At first sight the aorist tense pointing to Christ's death is rather surprising, for this would suggest, if the time note is pressed, that the Colossians were reconciled to God long before they were historically at enmity with him, or even born! The issue, however, is to be understood in the light of Paul's eschatology, particularly his and the rest of the New Testament's teaching on the two ages. Like the dying and rising with Christ motif, the verb in the indicative is used to denote the decisive transfer of the believers from the old aeon to the new which has taken place in the death of Christ.... The focus of attention here (as well as in the other "once...now" passages) is not simply on what took place in the historical experience of Christ, but also on what happened in the actual life experience of these believers (see especially the discussion of R. B. Gaffin's *The Centrality of the Resurrection*...41-44). But clearly the death of Christ is the basis, the decisive event by which they are reconciled....<sup>622</sup>

Here we have redemptive-historical reconciliation involving two parties: God and the elect in Christ. More specifically, says O'Brien, the dying-rising motif underlies Colossians 1:22. Further, this event is realised in the experience of believers. Christ is the new man representing the new humanity. In opposition to O'Brien, it must be said that our enmity was present upon the cross, inasmuch as Christ was "sin" for us, and we were sin in him.

Already we have discovered Adamic theology and resurrection motif theology in Colossians 1:20, 22. In Colossians 1:22 the purpose of reconciliation is stated, "to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation". This is certainly the language of justification. Already the coupling of reconciliation and justification has been evident. And we have concluded that justification refers to the province of the resurrection.

## ENMITY AND PEACE

In his *Redemption Accomplished*, Murray concentrates upon the term reconciliation. His book was a popular one, of limited scope, meaning he was restricted in what he could cover. Nevertheless, it is our opinion that his exegesis of the theology of reconciliation found in his commentary on Romans and in his *Collect Writings* are inadequate- we are thinking specifically of his understanding of "enmity". It will serve us to see how he also uses "peace".

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<sup>622</sup> *ibid.*, p.67.



"Peace" is said to be the fruit of justification, in Romans 5:1, and not of reconciliation; it denotes objective peace with God, says Murray.<sup>623</sup> To our mind, this creates further doubt as to whether peace is integral to reconciliation. In Romans 5:10 our reconciliation is specifically related to Christ's death. However, there is a major problem with our own thesis. If justification is of the sphere of resurrection theology, then why is it said in Romans 5:9 that we are justified by the blood of Christ? It is to be confessed that there is no easy answer to this question. What we can say is that in the following chapters we will build up our case. It is the theological nature of the preposition in Romans 5:9 that is in question here. The preposition is obviously instrumental in Romans 5:9, and we are questioning the traditional understanding of its instrumentality. It is certainly possible that it denotes the two-age theology we have described. That is to say, it is at the point of the cross, the blood of Christ, that our enmity is dealt with unto reconciliation. The immediate *result* of reconciliation, however, is justification and peace. Thus, justification and peace are said to come "by" the death of Christ *per se*. Another frailty with our view is that there is no explicit mention of resurrection in Romans 5:1, 9-11. The only substantial hope we have of confirming our thesis is to refer to our exegesis of the texts that refer to reconciliation proper.

Murray interprets "peace" in Romans 1:7 as the establishment of a status, and not a feeling; peace is the ending of alienation and God's wrath; peace means unrestrained access into God's presence.

<sup>624</sup> In Romans 2:10 peace equals objective peace with God and subjective peace of heart and mind.<sup>625</sup> Romans 8:6 speaks only of subjective peace.<sup>626</sup> In Romans 14:7 peace is joined with righteousness. Peace pertains to subjective blessing, and righteousness to the ethical quality of doing right. Murray seeks to verify this opinion by noting that the phrase that is co-ordinated with righteousness and peace, "joy in the Holy Spirit", is a subjective blessing. Also, verse 18 pertains to pleasing service to God, and is a continuation of the subject matter of verse 17. Verse 19, which is hortatory in nature, says "follow after the things that make for peace", the promotion of concord. This would strongly suggest that "peace" in verse 17 is of the same character.<sup>627</sup> Romans 15:13 is concerned with subjective peace, because it is co-ordinated with joy.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>623</sup> *Romans* 1, p.159.

<sup>624</sup> *ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>625</sup> *ibid.*, p.67.

<sup>626</sup> *ibid.*, p.286.

<sup>627</sup> *Romans* 2, p.194.

<sup>628</sup> *ibid.*, p.224.

There is no mention of the *eschatological* nature of peace in Murray's thought. Moo believes that peace, in Paul, is the eschatological intervention of God <sup>629</sup> whereby he destroys our enmity. <sup>630</sup> The background to Paul's understanding of peace is probably Isaianic. In Romans 14:17 peace is conjoined with righteousness. In Romans 2:8:10, peace and unrighteousness are contrasted. Further, Romans 5:1 co-ordinates peace with justification (cf., Rom.5:9-11). E. J. Young says the 'combination of *peace* and *righteousness* is Isaianic' (Is.32:17; 48:18; 60:17). <sup>631</sup> Peace in Isaiah is the eschatological blessing of the LORD. <sup>632</sup>

It is clear that the co-ordination of peace and righteousness is prevalent in Paul. Yet, scholarship has not considered the possibility of "peace" being the fruit of justification, and not only the mediate fruit of reconciliation. Scholars face the difficulty of trying to distinguish justification from reconciliation.

The essential element of reconciliation is the removal of enmity. Unrighteousness and peace are found in close proximity in Romans 2:8-10. Romans 8:7 says, "the sinful mind is at enmity with God; verse 6 comments that the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. The natural mind does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so." Two things are prominent in Murray's interpretation: enmity manifests itself in insubjection to the law of God; it is impossible for the natural mind to have a disposition of obedience to God's law. <sup>633</sup> It is our belief that *presupposed* in the uses of "enmity" is that the co-ordinated peace is achieved by reconciliation, and that reconciliation refers only to the removal of enmity and unrighteousness, and peace refers only to the establishing of righteousness.

Both in Romans 2:10 and 8:7 enmity is seen as ongoing, a state of mind against God's law. If deliverance from enmity is integral to, and not merely a fruit of, reconciliation, then we would have to conclude that reconciliation is also *achieved* in our experience. Moreover, every instance of the ending of *insubjection* to the law of God should be classified as reconciliation.

## CONCLUSION

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<sup>629</sup> Romans, p.138.

<sup>630</sup> *ibid.*, p.307. Cf., Willem Vangemeren, *Prophetic Word*, pp.366-367; T. J. Gedden, "Peace", *DJG*, p.604.

<sup>631</sup> *The Book of Isaiah* 2, NICOT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969), p.401.

<sup>632</sup> H. Beck, "Peace", *NIDNT* 2, p.779.

Murray said that reconciliation was achieved only upon the cross. Reconciliation was the moment God's enmity was removed and God was set at peace with man. Reconciliation has repercussions: because of it, the elect's enmity is removed and peace given, but only in their experience; reconciliation is consummated in the removal of enmity from the cosmos and the establishment of peace.

Some theologians reason that the reception of the objective redemptive-historical death of Christ is also to be called reconciliation. These scholars argue that only the sinner's enmity is removed in existential reconciliation. Calvin is an exception. This is because, in his doctrine of the application of the cross, what happens is that the format of the death of Christ is repeated in the life of the believer, so that, in the sinner's experience, Christ is replaced by the sinner, creating the picture of God being reconciled to man.

We argued that it was impossible to have reconciliation without two parties being participants in any given moment, whether the moment of the cross, or the moment of faith. The basis of our theology was traced out from Murray's death and resurrection motif. Reconciliation as achieved upon the cross includes the activity of God and man, because the elect are active *in* Christ's action. His death, and, therefore, their death, is realised in their experience in the form of repentance. Reconciliation, an eschatological blessing, is also ongoing in the believer's experience (2 Cor.5:20-21), and is to be consummated in cosmic reconciliation.

Reconciliation, like all of *Pauline* soteriology, is eschatologically conditioned: it reflects the two aeon motif, or the death and resurrection motif. It was concluded that reconciliation belonged to the aeon of death, the ending of enmity, whilst "peace", as the fruit of justification by faith, was discovered not to be integral to reconciliation, belonging, instead, to the resurrection realm.

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<sup>633</sup> Romans 1, p.286.

## Chapter 8: Redemption

Traditionally within Reformed theology redemption has been given various meanings. The broadest aspect is almost synonymous with the Christian faith. Another view is that it indicates the purpose of God to save, with its accomplishment and application. This view combines the third and fifth points listed below. A third plane is the objective foundation of the elect's salvation as discovered in the person and work of Christ. Fourthly, it may concern Christ's work as distinct from his person. Or again, it may indicate the application of salvation to the sinner. Finally, it pertains to the ultimate consummation of creation: cosmic redemption.<sup>634</sup> When Murray refers to redemption he is more concerned with the use of "redemption" as found in the Old and New Testaments.

Murray's teaching on redemption is easy to categorise: redemption in the Old Testament; and redemption in the New Testament.

### STATEMENT

#### REDEMPTION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

<sup>635</sup> The two main verbs for "redemption" in the Old Testament are גָּאֹל and פָּדָה, with their cognates.

##### Sanctification

The first born males of humans and animals were not to be sacrificed upon the altar (Ex.13:2, 12; 22:29f). An ass, for example, was redeemed by a clean or sanctified lamb, whose neck was broken for the ass. This act was the ransom price of the ass (Ex.13:13; 34:20). The firstborn human male was redeemed (ransomed) from death by the payment of a ransom of five shekels (Nu.18:15f.; cf., 3:44-51).<sup>636</sup>

##### Land and property

<sup>634</sup> Roger Nicole, "The Nature of Redemption", *Christian Faith and Modern Theology*, editor: C. F. Henry, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1971), pp.193-194.  
<sup>635</sup> "Redeemer", *ISBE* 4, fully revised, p.62.  
<sup>636</sup> idem.

A poor Israelite who had to sell his land and property always had the opportunity to redeem them (Lev.25:26f). Normally, however, a kinsman, (גל) on behalf of the poor Israelite, would buy back the land (Lev.25:25; Ruth 2:20; 3:9, 12f.; 4:1, 3, 6, 8, 14).<sup>637</sup> If neither of these options were available, then the land would be restored to the poor man in the year of Jubilee (Lev.25:10, 28).

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### Dwellings

Those who had sold their homes could redeem (buy back) them. For a city home, the individual had only one year in which to redeem the house. A home outside the city could be redeemed at any time, and would certainly be returned at Jubilee. The Levites could redeem their homes at any time (Lev.25:29-34). A land or house that was consecrated to the Lord could also be redeemed (Lev.27:14-25).<sup>639</sup>

### Salvation

God's salvation of his people is often called "redemption" (cf., גאל in Ex.6:6; 15:13; Ps.107:2; 130:8; Is.43:1; 44:22; 63:9; Jer.31:11; Mic.4:10; and פדה in Dt.7:8; 9:26; 13:5 [MT 6]; 15:15; 24:18; 2 Sam.7:23; Ps.49:7, 15 [MT 8, 16]; Hos.13:14; Mic.6:4). This "redemption" was by means of a ransom. The idea of recovery by purchase, which is integral to the Mosaic legislation for the redemption of persons and things, must have influenced the soteric uses of the terms. The stress frequently falls upon the power exerted by God in accomplishing deliverance and on the gratitude and devotion consequently owed by Israel (cf., Ex.6:6f.; 10:1f.; 13:3, 14f.; 19:4-6; 20:22; Dt.5:6). קנה ("purchase") is used in relation to soteric redemption (cf., Ex.15:16; Dt.32:6; Ps.74:2; Is.11:11). In Isaiah 43:3f, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba were pronounced as the substitutionary ransom for the redemption of Israel from bondage (cf., Ps.49:7 [MT 8]).<sup>640</sup>

As noted above, the intermediary who secured redemption for a poor Israelite was a גל. God is named the גל ("kinsman redeemer") of Israel (Job.19:25; Ps.19:14 [MT 15]; Isa.41:14; 43:14;

<sup>637</sup> The גל could redeem his relative from slavery to a foreigner (Lev.25:25-28). He was also a "redeemer of blood", avenging the murder of a relative (Nu.35:16-21). He would receive any monetary compensation owed to a dead relative for a crime committed against him (Nu.5:8). Plus, he would aid his relatives in securing justice at a lawsuit (cf., Job.19:25; Ps.119:154; Prov.23:11; Jer.50:34; Lam.3:58).

<sup>638</sup> "Redeemer", p.62.

<sup>639</sup> idem.

<sup>640</sup> ibid., pp.61-62.

44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 60:16; 63:16; Jer.50:34). Also, the Messianic Redeemer is called  $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma$  (Is.59:20; cf., Rom.11:26).<sup>641</sup>

To summarise, redemption of firstborns, land or property, and dwellings was only accomplished by a ransom or payment of price. And soteric redemption wrought by God always included the notion of ransom.

## REDEMPTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### Soteric redemption

Redemption in the New Testament is mainly soteric in nature.  $\lambda\upsilon\tau\omega\varsigma$  and its derivatives convey the central notion of ransom, with the exception of Acts 7:35; Ephesians 5:16; and Colossians 4:5, whilst  $\epsilon\lambda\gamma\omega\pi\alpha\zeta\omega$  and  $\alpha\gamma\omega\pi\alpha\zeta\omega$  denote "to purchase" (1 Tim.2:6; Mt.20:28; Mk.10:45; Lk.24:21; Tit.2:14; 1 Pet.1:18; Lk.1:68; 2:38; Heb.9:12; Lk.21:28; Rom.3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor.1:30; Eph.1:7, 14; Col.1:14; Heb.9:15; 11:35; Gal.3:13; 4:5; 1 Cor.6:20; 7:23; 2 Pet.2:1; Rev.5:9; 14:3f.). Redemption is deliverance by a ransom price, namely, the death of Christ. Early on in the New Testament, redemption in Christ is expressed as the fulfilment of the Old Testament hope (Lk.1:68; 2:38).<sup>642</sup>

### Redemption is objective

Redemption was accomplished by God through Christ's death upon the cross. This act was objective to man and did not involve him. In virtue of his work, Christ is not merely the one who secured redemption, he is also the depository or embodiment of it, so that in him 'redemption resides in its unabbreviated virtue and efficacy.'<sup>643</sup> He provides, through his mediacy, the virtue that is resident in himself. Man receives this virtue in the form of justification by faith<sup>644</sup> and sanctification.<sup>645</sup>

### Eschatological redemption

The "firstfruits of the Spirit" (Rom.8:23) is *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament. The phrase is not to be constructed appositionally to denote the Spirit as being himself the firstfruits. It is to

<sup>641</sup> *ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>642</sup> *ibid.*, p.61.

<sup>643</sup> *Romans* 1, p.116.

<sup>644</sup> *idem.*

<sup>645</sup> *RA*, pp.46-47.

be conceived partitively: we have received the firstfruits of the Spirit (Rom.8:23), 'the pledge of the plenitude of the Spirit to be bestowed at the resurrection.' Paul defines this fuller reception of the Spirit as the redemption of our body, our adoption. The believer groans to be released from bondage, to partake of the Spiritual body, the body 'fully conditioned by the Holy Spirit' (Rom.8:23; 1 Cor.15:44; cf., vv48-50). "Adoption", "redemption", "salvation" are used in Romans 8:23 to describe the consummation of salvation at the resurrection (Rom.13:11; Phil.2:12; Lk.21:28; Eph.1:14; 4:30; cf., Rom.1:16; 11:11; 3:24; Eph.1:7). Specifically, the resurrection is called our redemption, and our adoption is identified with our resurrection; adoption is 'when the sons of God will be clothed with the immortal and incorruptible body'.<sup>646</sup>

Redemption presupposes bondage. It is mankind that is in bondage. This bondage has two elements: law and sin.

*Law.* Although man is in bondage to the law, the law by nature is not evil. The law is the expression of God's being, and is holy, therefore (Rom.7:12; cf., v7). 'It becomes the occasion of sin only because of the contradiction which inheres in sin both as principle and as principle incited to action.'<sup>647</sup> Neither is the law abrogated due to the super abundance of grace in the salvation wrought by God through Jesus Christ. Rather, salvation is unto the observance of the law; its fulfilment is love (Rom.13:10; cf., Matt.22:40).<sup>648</sup>

In Galatians 3:13, it says that Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made a curse for us". We are not redeemed from the law *per se* but its curse.<sup>649</sup> The curse of the law is the wrath of God that comes upon every infraction of his holy will (Gal.3:10). To deliver us from this curse, Christ took it upon himself, and exhausted it. This action is the grounds or purchase price (ransom) for the release of believing sinners. Those who accept Christ are delivered from the curse of God.<sup>650</sup>

<sup>646</sup> Romans 1, pp.306-308. Cf., Moo, *Romans*, p.558.

<sup>647</sup> *ibid.*, p.253.

<sup>648</sup> *RA*, pp.43-44.

<sup>649</sup> Robert Strimple says that Murray is incorrect in saying that the sinner is not redeemed from the law. He points out that Romans 7:6 teaches that the believer was "delivered" (*katergethemen*) from the law, and that the same verb is used in Hebrews 2:14 to describe the annulment of Satan's power. Strimple carries on, stating that in Galatians 3:13, Paul is referring to justification, but in Romans 7:6 to sanctification. Thus, in Romans 7:6, Paul can say the believer has been delivered from the law, that is, from its power. [Tape, *Redemption*, (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1987).]

<sup>650</sup> *RA*, p.44.

The Old Testament people of God were under the tutelary regime of the Mosaic economy. The law oversaw the Old Testament believers in such a manner that they were deemed, by Paul, as children under a tutor (Gal.4:2). However, Christ came, born under the law, subject to its conditions, and fulfilled them. 'In him the Mosaic law realized its purpose, and its meaning received in him its permanent validity and embodiment.' The New Testament believer is delivered, through faith in Christ, from the tutelary nature of the law, and receives full liberty and the privileges as God's son (Gal.4:5). <sup>651</sup>

Christ has redeemed us from the necessity of attaining to justification through adherence to the law. The obedience of Christ was the price paid to secure our release (Rom.5:19), for his obedience takes the place of our unrighteousness. <sup>652</sup>

*Sin.* The redemption that was wrought upon the cross is executed in time, in the sinner's experience, as justification and sanctification. Redemption deals with the guilt of sin. Therefore, justification is the existential counterpart of redemption (Rom.3:24; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14; Heb.9:15). Redemption also copes with the power of sin. Therefore, sanctification is also the existential counterpart of redemption (Tit.2:14; 1 Pet.1:18). Redemption from the power of sin especially finds its grounds in Romans 6:1-10 (cf., 2 Cor.5:14-15; Eph.2:1-7; Col.3:1-4; 1 Pet.4:1-2). <sup>653</sup>

Redemption from sin necessitates redemption from Satan's mastery (Lk.22:53; Jh.12:31; Eph.6:12). A ransom price was not paid to Satan; we were merely delivered from Satan. <sup>654</sup>

As we have already seen in the chapter on substitution, Murray believed that when Christ accomplished redemption, the elect were with him in his death and resurrection. However, the existential application of this blessing he names sanctification. <sup>655</sup>

## COMMENT

### EXISTENTIAL REDEMPTION

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<sup>651</sup> *ibid.*, pp.45-46.

<sup>652</sup> *ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>653</sup> *ibid.*, pp.46-49.

<sup>654</sup> *ibid.*, pp.49-50.

<sup>655</sup> *Romans 1*, pp.211-238; *CW 2*, pp.285-293.



Calvin

It was shown in the chapter on propitiation that Calvin did believe that redemption was achieved upon the cross by the death of Christ. The historical death of Christ, his being made a curse, is the basis for deliverance from the powers of sin, the curse, and the law.

In addition, Calvin also taught existential redemption, 'In order, therefore, that Christ may be appreciated by us, let every one consider and examine himself, so as to acknowledge that he is ruined till he is redeemed by Christ.' <sup>656</sup>

For Calvin, redemption in the experience of the sinner is the application of the ransom on the cross, and has a three-fold effect. The ransom of Christ delivers us from Satan, 'This is the first fruit which his death produced *to us*.' [emphasis ours] <sup>657</sup> Secondly, redemption delivers us from death. Deliverance from death has two facets, namely the mortification of sin and victory over death at the resurrection:

[God] mortifies our earthly members, that they may not afterwards exert themselves in action, and kills the old man, that he may not hereafter be in vigour and bring forth fruit. An effect of his burial, moreover, is, that we are engrafted into the likeness of Christ's death, and that we are buried with him unto sin, that by his cross the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world, and that we are dead with him....Accordingly, in the death and burial of Christ a twofold blessing is set before us-viz. deliverance from death, to which we were enslaved, and the mortification of our flesh'. [emphasis ours] <sup>658</sup>

When we come to Calvin's interpretation of 1 Corinthians 1:30, "[Christ] has become for us wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption", he numbers redemption as an existential blessing. He interprets "righteousness" as justifying righteousness, "sanctification" as spiritual regeneration or moral transformation that results in holiness of life, and "redemption" as deliverance from slavery to sin, which is consummated in the redemption of our bodies. <sup>659</sup>

<sup>656</sup> Isaiah 4, p.117.

<sup>657</sup> Inst.2:16:7; cf., Hebrews, pp.31-32..

<sup>658</sup> Inst. 2:16:7.

<sup>659</sup> *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, editors: T. F. Torrance & D. W. Torrance; translator: J W Fraser, (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1960), p.46. Calvin's interpretation of "redemption" in 1 Corinthians 1:30 is probably correct. Gordon Fee believes that "righteousness", "holiness", and "redemption" do not refer to three different steps in the saving process. He does not accept that justification as a doctrine is said to be logically followed by holiness in 1 Corinthians 1:30. The three terms are, rather, representations of three different aspects of wisdom. [*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1991), p.86.] This strongly suggests that there are no logical or chronological steps between redemption, justification and sanctification.

Elsewhere, Calvin says that renewal 'consists of two parts- viz. the mortification of the flesh, and the quickening of the Spirit.'<sup>660</sup> Unsurprisingly then, Calvin, in another place, manages altogether to drop "redemption" from the list of 1 Corinthians 1:30:

[Christ] is given to be our wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification. And how for wisdom? In order that our whole mind may rest upon him and not wander from him on this side or that. Again, he is given us to be our righteousness, in order that there should not be spot or wrinkle in us when we appear before the face of our God, but that the blood of Jesus Christ should suffice us for the whole of our uprightness. Also he is given to us for our sanctification, in order that we should be renewed by his Holy Spirit.'<sup>661</sup>

Thirdly, redemption is made synonymous with justification:

And he says that by the blood of Christ we obtain redemption, which he immediately calls the forgiveness of sins. By this he means that we are redeemed because our sins are not imputed to us. From this comes the free righteousness by which we are accepted by God, and freed from the bonds of the devil and death. We must note carefully the opposition which defines the manner of our redemption; for so long as we remain liable to the judgement of God, we are bound in wretched chains. Therefore release from guilt is an inestimable freedom.<sup>662</sup>

In short, existential redemption by the blood of Christ is deliverance from the bondage of guilt and condemnation. Again Calvin writes, 'First [Paul] says that we have redemption, and immediately explains it as *the remission of sin*; for these two things belong together by apposition. For, without doubt, when God remits our sins, He exempts us from condemnation to eternal death.'<sup>663</sup>

In summary, to Calvin, the death of Christ, his redemptive sacrifice, is existentially realised in two ways: first, it deals with the power of evil in the experience of the sinner, by the destruction of Satan, death, and sin; secondly, it provides the basis for, or is synonymous with, justification by faith. That is, Christ's redemptive death is applied forensically to the believer: our sins are not imputed to us, for they have been imputed to Christ in his redemptive sacrifice. In reference to justification and sanctification, diagrams might help to understand Calvin.

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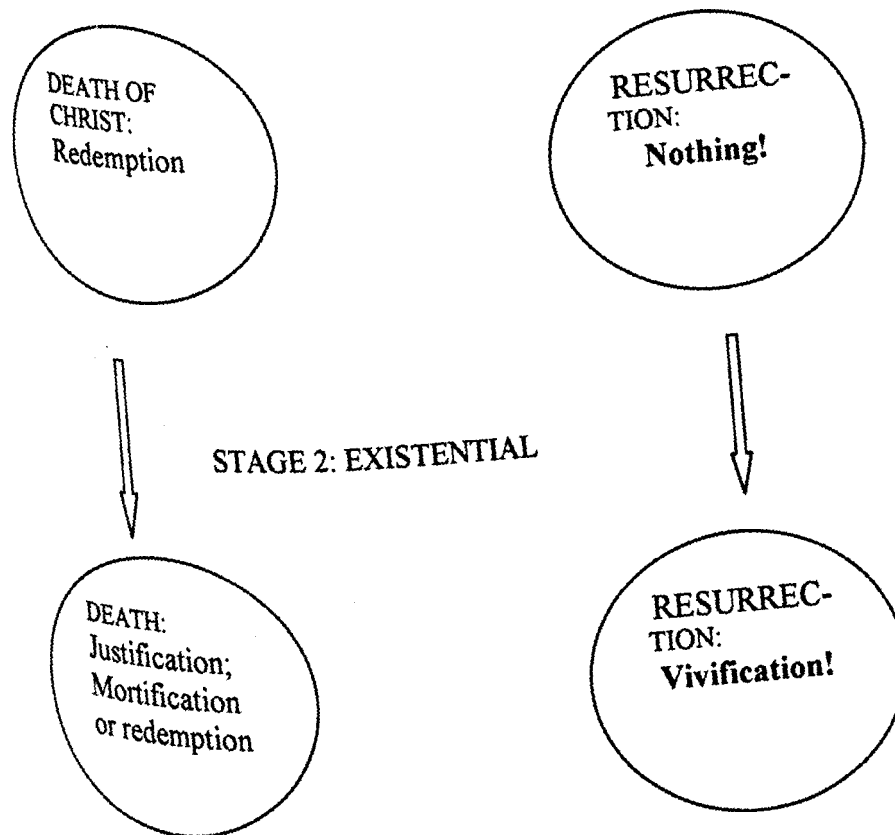
<sup>660</sup> *Inst.* 3:2:8.

<sup>661</sup> *John Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1973), p.588.

<sup>662</sup> *Ephesians*, p.128.

<sup>663</sup> *ibid.*, p.308.

## STAGE 1: REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL



For Calvin, sanctification consists of redemption (or mortification) and revivification; to Murray sanctification consists of mortification and vivification. For both Calvin and Murray, union with Christ in his resurrection is fundamental to vivification. Also, notice how Calvin does not extend redemption into the "positive" or resurrection realm. It is our estimate that he is correct in doing this. More on this will be said later.

If, as Murray argues, redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, expiation are all distinct blessings, and are not to be confused with one another, and if propitiation is the removal of God's wrath, then how can Murray say that it is also through redemption that God's wrath is removed? He could only say this if he took Calvin's position that propitiation is central to reconciliation and redemption, but Murray does not do this.

### Evaluation

The teaching of existential redemption by Calvin is right. Douglas Moo writes of "redemption" in Romans 3:24:

The attributive prepositional phrase της εν Χριστω Ιησου... "which is in Christ Jesus"... indicates that this "liberation by payment of a price" takes place "in Christ." This same qualification of *apolytrosis* occurs also in Eph.1:7 and Col.1:14. It is not clear whether Paul means by it that the liberation was accomplished by Christ at the cross or that the liberation occurs in relation to Christ, whenever the sinner trusts Him. Favoring the latter, however, is the connection of *apolytrosis* with the forgiveness of sins in Eph.1:7 and Col.1:14, the present of *dikaionomenoi*, and 1 Cor.1:30: "Christ was made...our *apolytrosis*." While, then, the price connoted by *apolytrosis* was paid at the cross in the blood of Christ, the redeeming work the payment made possible is, like justification, applied to each person when he or she believes.<sup>664</sup>

Moo divides between the price paid, the blood of Christ upon the cross, and the redeeming work, when the person believes- "*like justification*." As far as Moo is concerned, the redeeming work of Christ in Romans 3:24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14 is a present reality. We, however, would like to qualify Moo's position- though it is possible that he might wish to make the same emphasis. It seems that what we have in these texts is the pattern that we found in reconciliation: Paul is referring to the existential application of the redemptive-historical event. There must be room for saying that present-existential redemption is not merely based upon Christ's historical act of making ransom, but that it is also the mysterious realisation in the believer's experience of his union with Christ in his redemptive-historical death.<sup>665</sup>

## ESCHATOLOGICAL REDEMPTION

### Final redemption

'Adoption, like redemption in Rom.8:23, is put [*sic*] for actual possession. For as, at the last day, we receive the fruit of our redemption, so now we receive the fruit of our adoption', says Calvin.<sup>666</sup> The redemption that we receive now is that which is from the age to come, the age inaugurated by the resurrection. This is, properly speaking, eschatological redemption. Calvin

<sup>664</sup> Romans 1, p.231.

<sup>665</sup> There are other texts in the New Testament, Colossians 1:13-14; [James Dunn, *The Epistle to the Colossians and Philemon*, NIGTC, editor: I. H. Marshall, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1996), p.80] and Hebrews 2:14-15; [Simon J. Kistemaker, *Hebrews* (Welwyn, Evangelical Press, 1984), p.75] and Revelation 14:3-4, that do not explicitly mention the term redemption, but support the view the redemption is wrought not merely upon the cross, but at a point after the cross. [P. E. Hughes, *The Book of Revelation*, (Leicester, IVP, 1990), p.171; R. H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, TNTC, revised edition, (Leicester, IVP, 1978), p.269. Cf., R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p.422.]

<sup>666</sup> Galatians, p.74.

does not merely say that the redemption of our bodies is a logical consequence of the ransom, for to him the redemption of our bodies is expressed in the here and now.

Murray is adamant that the redemption of the saints took place once-for-all in Christ's death. So, in what sense are their bodies to be *redeemed* at the resurrection? Murray cannot conclude that the *redemption* of the resurrection incorporates the notion of ransom *within its definition*, because Christ's ransom was a historical act in the past. Murray can only say that eschatological redemption is the *inevitable fruit* of Christ's redemptive death.<sup>667</sup>

Why, then, did Paul use ἀπολυτρώσις, if he did not mean actual redemption? "But", someone says, "if we insist that he meant redemption *per se*, then we would have to argue that Christ dies a second time." Not if the redemption of our bodies is considered as the final stage in the realisation of our redemption upon the cross.

### Christ's death and resurrection

Redemption in the Pauline writings is probably a metaphor that has as its province the cross of Christ. In Paul, the only use of "redemption" without reference to the death of Christ is found in Romans 8. There are two things to consider. The redemption of the last day is the existential and final fulfilment of the redemption procured by Christ upon the cross. Also, redemption is always from the realm of sin and death. Murray said that the resurrection of the saints' bodies will be their redemption. This might not be perfectly accurate. It is undeniable that the moment of the redemption of our bodies is said to be the moment of the resurrection. Yet, all Paul may have in mind by the use of "redemption", in this context, is to magnify the finality of our deliverance from death *per se*. In other words, the emphasis is not so much upon new life, that is, resurrection or immortality, but upon the complete ending of death. It was Murray himself who implied that this redemption was the basis for the adoption of our bodies and our final glorification. Our proposal makes that dependence even more acute.

The nexus between redemption and adoption is further evident in Galatians 3:13-4:7. The fruit of redemption, its *logical* succedent, is adoption.<sup>668</sup> To it might be added justification by faith. The Abrahamic blessing (3:14) is, says Fung, justification by faith.<sup>669</sup> He adds:

<sup>667</sup> For this view, see B. B. Warfield, *Person and Work*, pp.465-466.

<sup>668</sup> Ronald Y. K. Fung, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NICNT, general editor: F. F. Bruce, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1988), p.183.

<sup>669</sup> *ibid.*, p.157.

In the original promise to Abraham there was no mention of the Spirit but only the blessing of justification by faith, and yet here Paul conceives of the fulfilment of that promise as constituted above all in the bestowal of the Spirit upon those who have faith. It is thus manifest that in Paul's thinking the blessing of justification is almost synonymous-it is certainly contemporaneous- with the reception of the Spirit.<sup>670</sup>

What interests us is that redemption is completed by adoption and justification. That is, redemption is considered as incomplete. Tim Trummer writes:

The nexus between redemption and adoption takes on a real significance when we bear in mind that McIntyre describes redemption as an 'incomplete symbol'. It cannot, he says, answer the question as to what was given and what was received at Calvary. If the cross is perceived solely in terms of redemption the question arises what status was secured for those looking to it for redemption. While the Bible as a whole provides a multi-perspectival answer, Paul's main response was to present adoption as that gained by Christ's redemptive death.<sup>671</sup>

We do not know of any modern theologian who perceives of the cross solely in terms of redemption. That it is complemented by adoption is surely the thrust of Galatians 4:3-6. This enhances the possibility that to the cross belongs redemption, and to the resurrection belongs adoption. The development of adoption as belonging to the province of the resurrection will be discussed in the chapter Adoption.

Even Murray defines redemption as deliverance from negativeness, that is, from death, sin, Satan and the law. And we are convinced that his exegesis of the texts that he cites is perfectly in order in respect of deliverance from this negativeness. Calvin was correct to deposit redemption in the province of the cross. Moo saw a connection between *apolutrosis* and the forgiveness of sins, the removal of negativity (see also Faith, etc.) in Ephesians 1:7 and Colossians 1:14.

### CONCLUSION

The doctrine of redemption in Calvin's and Murray's teachings is almost identical. To them, redemption was wrought by Christ's death on the cross, and brought deliverance from sin, the curse of the law, Satan and death. Redemption is executed in the existential realm in the form of sanctification, justification, and the redemption of the elects' bodies, say both men.

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<sup>670</sup> *ibid.*, p.152; cf., p.136.

However, Calvin did believe in existential redemption *per se*; Murray did not. Firstly, Calvin named mortification as redemption *per se*. Murray refers to the redemption of our bodies, but this is a redemption in name only, for it is merely *the fruit* of the redemption accomplished on the cross. It is probable that Calvin thought that the resurrection of our bodies was a redemption in its own right. Indeed, he considered present-existential redemption to be the realisation of apocalyptic redemption, the redemption of our bodies in the day of the resurrection of all men.

Even although Calvin does think that there is existential redemption, and that the redemption of our bodies is a proper redemption, he does not provide the necessary link between Christ's redemptive-historical redemption and its existential realisation. We argued that the link was the fact that we were in Christ in his death, and this event is then realised in our experience. Thus, we were redeemed in Christ upon the cross, and this act is then realised in our experience in various stages: at the point of faith; throughout our Christian life; and at the moment of the resurrection of our bodies.

Calvin thought that redemption was a negative term, that is, redemption dealt with sin. We argued that in Pauline thought, redemption belongs to the province of negativity, the cross. Thus, there is some agreement with us and Murray, for we do believe that redemption is a blessing inextricably bound to the cross.

From the nature of the atonement, we move on to its extent.

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<sup>671</sup> "The Metaphorical Import of Adoption", *SBET* 15:2 (Aug., 1997), pp.109-110.

## Chapter 9: Limited Atonement

Murray is said to be 'probably the last of the great American theologians' - even although he was Scottish!! Although he did not write a systematic theology, he made a contribution to two doctrines in particular: the free offer of the gospel; and limited atonement. The latter is controversial among evangelicals.<sup>672</sup> Indeed, of the five points of Calvinism, probably the one teaching that comes under the greatest scrutiny is limited atonement.<sup>673</sup>

### STATEMENT

#### THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL

Using the doctrine of limited atonement as our basis for preaching means that that which is offered to the sinner *is* salvation, and not merely the possibility of salvation, 'Every believing sinner will infallibly be saved, for the veracity and purpose of God cannot be violated.'<sup>674</sup> This does not mean that Christ's death had an additional effect of somehow storing up value for the non-elect or unbelievers. Nevertheless, the death of Christ is perfectly adapted, and infinitely sufficient, to cover the needs of *all who believe, of all who will definitely trust*. Further, the gospel is the overture of God, an offer springing from, and of, limited atonement. The salvation accomplished by the death of Christ is infinitely sufficient and universally suitable, and it may be said that its infinite sufficiency grounds a *bona fide* offer of salvation to all without distinction. The doctrine of limited atonement, any more than the doctrine of sovereign election, does not raise a fence around the offer of the gospel. The overture of the gospel offering peace and salvation through Jesus Christ is to all without distinction, though it is truly from the heart of sovereign election and limited atonement that this stream of grace universally proffered flows. If we may change the figure, it is upon the crest of the wave of the divine sovereignty and of limited atonement that the full and free offer of the gospel breaks upon our shores. The offer of salvation to all is *bona fide*. All that is proclaimed is true.<sup>675</sup>

#### UNIVERSAL DENOTATIONS

<sup>672</sup> Mark Horne, *Why Will You Die? A Brief Defense of John Murray's "The Free Offer of the Gospel," & A Question About the Extent of the Atonement* (Internet, 1997).

<sup>673</sup> Donald Macleod, "Misunderstandings of Calvinism II", *TBT* 53 (February, 1969), p.18.

<sup>674</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes IV", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 1 (1935), p.201.

<sup>675</sup> *idem*. Cf., *CW* 1, pp.69-74.



The conclusion that the denotations "all" (Is.53:6), "world" (Rom.11:12; 1 Jh.2:2), "every man" (Heb.2:9), "every one" and "all men" (Rom.5:18), must apply to all men individually, must be rejected. For example, Romans 11:12 reads, "For if their trespass is the riches of the world...how much more their fullness". It would be nonsensical to suppose that "world" here means all men who have or will ever exist, because this would entail "world" denoting Israel, also. The "world" is therefore the world of the Gentiles. Again, in 1 Corinthians 6:12, Paul says that "all things were lawful" for him. This does not mean that 'every conceivable thing is lawful for him', because he could not transgress the commandments of God. Hebrews 2:9 pronounces that Christ died for "every one". But the context must determine the scope of the phrase. Verses 10-13 announce that it is every son that is brought to glory for whom Christ died, and these ones represent "every one".<sup>676</sup>

## THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

It is extremely important for us to note, that it was fundamental for Murray in discussing the extent of the atonement to firstly lay the foundation of the nature of the atonement. Upon this foundation he placed his exegetical evidence. In *Redemption Accomplished*, he starts by describing his view on the nature of the atonement. He then writes, 'is there not also more direct evidence provided by the Scripture to show the definite or limited extent of the atonement?' At this point, he brings in his exegetical proof.<sup>677</sup>

If Christ did not *fully* secure salvation upon the cross, then he could not save anyone. Christ's atoning sacrifice *did* expiate sin and propitiate God's wrath; it *did* secure redemption, reconciliation, and obedience. It therefore *did not merely* purchase the possibility of these things (Rev.5:9; Heb.9:12; Tit.2:14; Heb.1:3). This is just to say, the atonement is efficacious; it is saving. Whomever Christ secured these things for will be saved, and whomever he has not secured these things for will not be saved.<sup>678</sup> The criticism, by Murray, of general redemption is that it puts redemption into a vacuum: Christ is said only provisionally to have died for *all* men,

<sup>676</sup> RA, pp.59-61.

<sup>677</sup> RA, p.64. The same order is also found in his article "Atonement." [*The Encyclopaedia of Christianity*, 1, general editor: Edwin H. Palmer, (Delaware: U.S.A., The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1964), p.480.] Predestination was basic to Murray's thinking on limited atonement. However, in his teaching, it is not the point from which he starts. Although, in his mind, the fact that redemption *is* redemption, can only mean that a certain number were chosen to be saved, and that Christ died only for them.

yet the redemption has effect or power toward only *some* of them; it is in a vacuum, therefore, abstract, until appropriated by faith.

## EXEGESIS

Murray resorts to two lines of argumentation. Firstly, there are those texts that delineate the design of the atonement (Lk.2:11; 19:10; Jh.3:17; 6:39; 10:10-29; Rom.8:31-39; Eph.1:25-27; 5:25-27).<sup>679</sup> Secondly, texts such as Romans 6:1-11 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (cf., Eph.2:4-7; Col.3:3) reveal that those whom Christ died for, died existentially in union with him.<sup>680</sup>

### The design of the atonement

There are three prominent texts: John 10:10-29, Romans 8:32, and Ephesians 5:25-27.

*Romans* 8:32. It says, "he that spared not his own son but delivered him up for us all". Verse 31, "What will we then say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?", is curbed by verses 28-30. They teach that the "us" of verse 31 cannot have a universal denotation, because verses 28-31 refer to the elect.<sup>681</sup> The "us" of verse 32 cannot refer to anyone else other than those of verse 31. In turn, the "all" of verse 32 cannot have a wider significance than the "us" of verse 32. Thus, "all" in verse 32 denotes a limited number of persons, those whom Christ died for. The orbit of reference in verse 33 is the justification and election of men. Both election and justification hark back to verses 28-30 where they are specified. Verse 34 says that it those who are condemned by others whom Christ died for. Those condemned ones refer to the elected and justified of verse 33. Verse 34 also says that Christ intercedes "for us". This goes back to the argument given in verse 31, and shows that only the elect are denoted. Christ intercession is efficacious, and must be restrictive, therefore. Also, the co-ordination of the death, resurrection and intercession of Christ, make it unwarranted to give Christ's death a more expansive scope than that of his intercession. Finally, verses 35-39 record the love of God. It cannot exceed the love of God in the giving of his Son for sinners, as mentioned in verse 32, which love was for the elect.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> *ibid.*, pp.61-65.

<sup>679</sup> *CW* 1, pp.74-77.

<sup>680</sup> *RA*, p.65.

<sup>681</sup> *RA*, p.66; *Romans* 1, pp.313-321.

<sup>682</sup> *RA*, pp.65-69.

*John 10:10-29.* Jesus holds a relationship to his sheep whereby they know him (v14) and his voice, and follow him (v27). He gives his life for them (v15), and gives to them eternal and inextinguishable life (v28). There are those who are not his sheep (v26), and they are distinguished by not believing in the Shepherd Christ. Jesus has other sheep that belong to his other flock. Both his flocks will join to make one flock (v16). The purpose of Jesus laying down his life was that his sheep may have indestructible life (vv28-29); it is abundant life (v10), that cannot fail of its design (Jh.6:39; 10:10; 28-29). The means of achieving this purpose is the giving of his life, which has no less an import than the giving of his life for a ransom (Mat.20:28; Mk.10:45) implying the full biblical interpretation of atonement. The mere statement that Christ laid his life down for his sheep does not by itself obviate the interpretation that he also gave his life for those who are not his sheep. Yet, the correlation of the statement that Christ laid down his life for his sheep with the purpose and design of his death, entail that we interpret his death as being only for his sheep. All those who receive eternal life must be included in those who are his sheep.<sup>683</sup>

*Ephesians 5:25-27.* Verse 25 says "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it". This is a reference to Christ's substitutionary blood-shedding death. It is a differentiating love, since it applies only to the church. The design of this sacrificial love is the church's sanctification (vv26-27). The extent of the love of Christ must be co-ordinated with its design, and with nothing else. If we universalise the sacrifice, then we must universalise its effects. As with John 10:10-29, formal logic might dictate that we say that Christ did lay down his life down for others apart from his church. However, we again must negotiate the context, which leaves no option but to admit that Christ died only for the church.<sup>684</sup>

### Union

Those who "died to sin" (Rom.6:2), spiritually died; they have been raised to spiritual life from spiritual death. Now, because not all men evince the fruit of spiritual life, when Paul says that "all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death", by "all" he does not mean every single man, but all who have been raised to newness of life. Murray then connects Romans with 2 Corinthians, 'The analogy of Paul's teaching in Romans 6:4-8 must be applied to 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.'<sup>685</sup> Thus, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 also teaches that Christ died and rose only

<sup>683</sup> CW 1, pp.74-76.

<sup>684</sup> *ibid.*, pp.76-78.

<sup>685</sup> *ibid.*, p.71.

for the elect. 'Corroboration is derived from the concluding words of verse 15, "but to him who died for them and rose again." ' <sup>686</sup>

### "World"

We might have subsumed this section under Murray's exegesis of the design of the atonement, however, due to the crucial nature of the term "world" to the whole extent debate, we preferred to give it separate treatment.

*Christ did die for the world.* There is a sense in which Christ has died "for" the world. The blessings that come to mankind from the cross, flow indirectly from it. 'The difference can be stated bluntly', 'to be that the non-elect do not participate in the benefits *of* the atonement and the elect do. The non-elect enjoy many benefits that accrue *from* the atonement but they do not partake of the *atonement*.' [emphasis ours] <sup>687</sup> Murray expands what he means:

Non-elect are said to have been sanctified in the blood of Christ, to have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, to have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, and to have known the way of righteousness (cf. Heb.6:4; 10:29; 2 Pet.2:20,21). In this sense, therefore, we may say that Christ died for non-elect persons. It must, however, be marked with equal emphasis that these fruits or benefits all fall short of salvation, even though in some cases the terms used to characterize them are such as could properly be used to describe a true state of salvation. <sup>688</sup>

Unfortunately, Murray did not develop his teaching, so we do not know how he explicated Hebrews 6:4; 10:29; and 2 Peter 2:20-21.

*John 3:16.* 'The atonement in none of its aspects can be properly viewed apart from the love of God as the source from which it springs'. <sup>689</sup> This love is a differentiating love, rooted in the eternal decree of God. The love of God manifested at Calvary, in other words, is God's love for his elect (Rom.5:8; 8:31-32; Eph.1:4-5). <sup>690</sup> Of John 3:16, Murray writes, 'No treatment of the atonement can be properly oriented that does not trace its source to the free and sovereign love of God. It is with this perspective that the best known text in the Bible provides us...(John 3:16).' <sup>691</sup>

<sup>686</sup> *ibid.*, p.72.

<sup>687</sup> *ibid.*, p.69.

<sup>688</sup> *ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>689</sup> *ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>690</sup> *RA*, pp.9-10.

<sup>691</sup> *ibid.*, p.9.

The "world" that God loves is not to be construed distributively, that is by numbers, but qualitatively, that is by ethical status or character (Jh.12:31; 14:27, 30; 15:18): God loved an *evil* world, and so he sent his Son.<sup>692</sup> This world is sometimes contrasted with believers (Jh.14:17; 15:19; 16:11; 1 Jh.2:15-16; 3:1; 4:5; 5:4, 19).

Also, Murray repudiates the account that believes that the execution of the love of God upon the world is the salvation of every single man who has lived, does live, and will live.<sup>693</sup> God gave his Son to make something infallibly sure, that whoever believes in the Son should not perish. This, thinks Murray, is indicative of limited atonement.<sup>694</sup>

<sup>696</sup> 1 John 2:2. In 1 John 2:2, John says Christ is the "propitiation for...the world". The "world" here, believes Murray, is the world of 'all in every nation who...came to have fellowship with the Father and the Son....Every nation and kindred and people and tongue is in this sense embraced in the propitiation....It is highly necessary that John...should stress the ethnic universalism of the gospel... "not for our sin only but also for the whole world." ' <sup>695</sup> The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ cannot have a wider scope than his intercessory activity, which is solely for the righteous.

## THE DECLARATORY STATEMENT

Part of the Declaratory Statement's section on the decree of God, found in the *1903 Revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith*, by the Presbyterian Church of America, runs:

With reference to Chapter III of the confession of Faith: that concerning those who are saved in Christ, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of his love to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and his readiness to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it. That concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the gospel to all; that men are fully responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; that his decree hinders no

<sup>692</sup> CW 1, p.79.  
<sup>693</sup> *ibid.*, p.80.  
<sup>694</sup> *idem.*  
<sup>695</sup> RA, p.73.  
<sup>696</sup> *ibid.*, pp.74-75.

man from accepting that offer; and that no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin.<sup>697</sup>

The *Statement* is 'evil', thinks Murray.<sup>698</sup> In his article "Shall We Include the Revision of 1903 in Our Creed?", his polemic against the *Statement* reads:

It is true of course, that there is an important sense in which we may speak of God's love to all mankind. It is true also that we must speak in the language of 1 John 2:2 of Christ as the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. But when, as in the Declaratory Statement, it is said that "the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of His love to *all mankind*, His gift of His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of *the whole world*"...then the manifest implication is a doctrine of universal atonement, and universal atonement is in direct conflict with the teaching of the Confession. So what in view of the construction of the sentence and the collocation of the clauses is the straightforward interpretation of the Declaratory Statement cannot be held in harmony with the teaching of the Confession, and in particular with the teaching of Chapter III. [emphasis his]<sup>699</sup>

#### MURRAY'S REVIEW OF VAN BUREN ON CALVIN

Murray notes that Paul van Buren [*Christ in Our Place. The Substitutionary Character of Calvin's Doctrine of Reconciliation* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1957)] states how Calvin often uses universalistic expressions. Van Buren concludes that according to Calvin the work of Christ is for all men, and that Calvin did not resolve the tension between the universal offer of the gospel and the unbelief of many by resorting to limited atonement.<sup>700</sup>

Murray accepts that Calvin used universalistic expressions. But Murray advances four arguments to contest van Buren's claim. Although Calvin speaks of the universal offer of the atonement, 'the universal offer is not tantamount to universal atonement.'<sup>701</sup> Also, Calvin makes a clear distinction between the reprobate and the elect. This is clear from 'his tract *The Eternal Predestination of God* and his commentary on Romans 9'.<sup>702</sup> Further, the following comments by Calvin on 1 John 2:2, effectively reveal that he limited Christ's propitiatory sacrifice to the elect:

<sup>697</sup> Warfield, *Shorter Writings* 2, p.375.

<sup>698</sup> "Shall We Include the Revision of 1903 in Our Creed?", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 2 (1936), p.249.

<sup>699</sup> *ibid.*, p.251.

<sup>700</sup> *CW* 4, p.311.

<sup>701</sup> *ibid.*, p.311.

<sup>702</sup> *ibid.*, p.312.

'Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect....Although I allow the truth of this, I deny it fits the passage...under the word 'all' [John] does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those scattered through various regions of the earth. For, as it is meet, the grace of Christ is really made clear when it is declared to be the only salvation of the world.' <sup>703</sup>

'Hence we see the childish folly of those who represent this passage to be opposed to predestination. "If God," say they, "wishes all men indiscriminately to be saved, it is false that some are predestinated by his eternal counsel to salvation, and others to perdition." They might have had some grounds for saying this, if Paul were speaking here about individual men (*singulis hominibus*); although even then a solution would not have been wanting; for, although the will of God ought not to be judged from his secret decrees, when he reveals it to us by outward signs, yet it does not therefore follow that he has not secretly determined what he wills to do to each individual man. But I pass over the subject because it has nothing to do with this passage. For the apostle simply means that there is no people or rank in the world that is excluded from salvation, because God wills that the gospel should be proclaimed to all without exception' (*ad* 1 Tim. 2:4). 'The universal term ought always to be referred to races of men, not to persons; as if he had said, not only Jews, but Gentiles also, not only common people, but princes also, were redeemed by the death of Christ' (*ad* 1 Tim. 2:5; cf. also *ad* 1 Tim. 2:6 and *The Eternal Predestination of God*, E. T., London, 1927, pp. 105 f.). <sup>704</sup>

Fourthly, because Calvin explicitly states that universal terms are to be restricted to race or class, and not each individual distributively, then whenever such terms are used, we must superimpose this definition. Also, we must never forget the crucial part election played in Calvin's thought. To use Murray's words, 'if we do not appreciate the orientation afforded by predestination to life, we are not in a position to interpret correctly Calvin's view of substitutionary atonement.' <sup>705</sup> Murray argues that Calvin held to particular election. <sup>706</sup>

## COMMENT

### THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL

Matthew 5:44-48 figures only once in David Engelsma's criticisms of Murray. Engelsma holds that the text has nothing to do with the free offer of the gospel. Horne quotes Engelsma:

<sup>703</sup> *idem*.  
<sup>704</sup> *ibid.*, pp.312-313.  
<sup>705</sup> *ibid.*, p.313.  
<sup>706</sup> *CW* 1, pp.191-204. See, An Evaluation of Murray's Theological Method, etc..

'Men simply cannot escape the overpowering testimony of Scripture that the grace of God is one, not two, and that this grace is the glorious favor of God towards damnable sinners that will their deliverance from sin and death, provides redemption for them in the cross of the Beloved, and manifests itself in the gospel. If, then, there is a grace of God for all, men must conclude that the grace of God in Christ Jesus is for all...The only safeguard against universal, saving grace is the complete repudiation of Kuyperian common grace.'<sup>707</sup>

We agree with Horne when he concludes, 'this statement *strongly supports* the use of Matthew 5:44,45 to defend the genuine offer of the Gospel!' [emphasis his] This is because Engelsma says God is gracious toward the reprobate.<sup>708</sup>

John Gerstner reasons that texts such as Ezekiel 33:11; 18:23, 32 must be seen as mere anthropomorphisms. God's desire or will is his decree. God did not decree that all men will be saved. Thus, God does not desire all men to be saved.<sup>709</sup> Both G. H. Clark<sup>710</sup> and H. C. Hoeksema<sup>711</sup> argue that Murray does not explain how God can foreordain the death of the wicked and yet not desire it. Perceptively, Horne writes, 'Anthropomorphisms...are supposed to communicate truth; but Gerstner leaves this passage without admitting that it contains any message for us whatsoever.'<sup>712</sup>

## THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT

Both Calvinists and Arminians assent to the intrinsic efficacy of Christ's death; it has infinite value, due to his person, writes N. F. Douty. The Calvinist's view, according to him, is contradictory: God desires all men to be saved, yet does not apply the intrinsic efficacy of Christ's death to all men. Those who believe in a "general redemption" have no such problem, says Douty, for Christ died for all men, the infinite sufficiency of his sacrifice is pertinent to all, therefore. Yet, only some will realise the truth of this and be saved; they are the elect.<sup>713</sup>

<sup>707</sup> *Hyper-Calvinism & the Call of the Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1980). Cited by Mark Horn, *Why Will You Die?*, p.3.

<sup>708</sup> *idem.*

<sup>709</sup> John H Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism* (Brentwood: TN, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991). Cited by Horne, *ibid*, p.6.

<sup>710</sup> *Atonement*, pp.89-90.

<sup>711</sup> "The Simplicity of God's Will and the 'Free Offer' ", *Protestant Reformed Theological Journal* (1977), pp.25-35.

<sup>712</sup> *Atonement*, pp.89-90.



D. MacLeod thinks that it is inconceivable, that God would allow his Son to procure salvation vicariously for all men, having punished his Son for them, and then re-punish them if they do not believe.<sup>714</sup>

## THE DESIGN OF THE ATONEMENT

### Sailor's criticism of Murray

Robert Strimple quotes William Sailor, a former student of Murray, as someone who does not accept Murray's conclusions on the extent of the atonement:

'It is undeniable that there are passages in the New Testament which describe the beneficiaries of the atonement in something less than universal terms.' He means John 10:15, Ephesians 5:25-27. 'Reformed exegetes rely heavily upon these passages, in order to maintain a particularised view of the intent of the atonement. If these references were the only indices to the extent of the atonement, it would be poor and unnecessary inference to assert a universal atonement. If, however, the bible speaks of atonement in universal terms, as well as in restricted terms, then the situation is quite different; then references couched in more particular terms would cause no embarrassment for the Wesleyan position. If Christ died for "all", it is quite proper to state that he died for some. If passages speaking of Christ dying for a particular be pressed to indicate limited atonement a *reductio ad absurdum* is encountered in Galatians 2:20: "He loved me, and gave himself for me."<sup>715</sup>

If we were to push Calvinistic thinking to its logical terminus, then it must be said that Christ died only for Paul, continues Sailor. This is absurd, he concludes, because Christ died for the church, also. By extension, when it says that Christ will die for his sheep, this does not mean that he will not die for those who are not his sheep. Sailor accepts Murray's premise of redemption as actual redemption. Strimple asks whether Sailor wants to say that what happened to the church is an example of what happened to the world, for if so, then he must accept that just as the church was redeemed, so also was all the world.<sup>716</sup>

### N. F. Douty's criticisms of Murray

Douty criticises Murray's exegesis of Romans 6 and 2 Corinthians 5. Douty presents two major objections. Firstly, both Romans 6 and 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 teach that "all" died "legally", not

<sup>713</sup> *The Death of Christ* (Swengel, Reiner Publications, 1972), p.42.

<sup>714</sup> "Misunderstandings of Calvinism II", p.22.

<sup>715</sup> Robert Strimple, Tape, *The Atonement: Extent/ Intercessory* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1987).

<sup>716</sup> *idem*.

spiritually, when Christ died; their death was a judicial death. Christ satisfied the law of God for them; it was an objective act that did not secure subjective, ethical, or spiritual change. 'In both places then, the death attributed to men is not experiential in character, but judicial.' In 2 Corinthians 5, it is not mentioned whether some have appropriated the redemption that has been legally accomplished; what is conveyed is the fact of Christ's legal representation and identification with all men, 'So in 2 Cor.5, their death in Him results in redemption accomplished, through His identification with them.' [emphasis his] Romans 6, on the other hand, shows us that some have appropriated the legal death of Christ, through being united with him in baptism, 'Although they had judicially died in His death, yet they were unrelated to that death until they had been united to ("grown together with"- v.5) Him. So, in Rom.6., their death in Him results from redemption applied, through their identification with Him.' [emphasis his] <sup>717</sup> "All" in Romans 6:3, refers only to believers. Secondly, to quote Douty, 'seeing Christ Himself is said to have "died to sin" in Rom.6:10, to die unto sin cannot refer to our ceasing from sin.' <sup>718</sup>

To be baptised into someone means to come into union or fellowship with them (cf, 1 Cor.10:2; 1:13; Matt.28:19), maintains Murray. <sup>719</sup> When Paul says that believers were baptised into Christ, he means that they were baptised into his person and work, 'it means union with him in all that he is and in all phases of his work as Mediator.' <sup>720</sup> Murray then makes a most apposite comment, 'Christ Jesus cannot be contemplated apart from his work nor his work apart from him. Neither can one phase of his redemptive accomplishment be separated from another.' <sup>721</sup> To us, this is where Douty comes undone. If Christ died legally for every single man, then every single man also lives legally; for we cannot separate the death of Christ from his life or resurrection. Neither Douty or Murray would claim that the life that we receive is "legal". On the other hand, if we wish to say that all legally died with Christ, this would entail, due to baptism, that *all* will ethically live with him.

Christ did not spiritually die to sin, claimed Douty. Murray shows our guilt was imputed to Christ upon the cross: he was legally accounted as guilty, in our place. Yet, throughout his humiliation, Christ was under the power of sin, for example, feeling its grasp in death. Murray writes, 'It was by dying that [Christ] destroyed the power of sin, and in his resurrection he entered

<sup>717</sup> *Death of Christ*, p.73.

<sup>718</sup> *ibid.*, pp71-72.

<sup>719</sup> *Romans* 1, p.214.

<sup>720</sup> *idem.*

<sup>721</sup> *idem.*

upon a state that was not conditioned by sin.' <sup>722</sup> We agree with Murray. Christ died as the guilty one (see Union with Christ). His death was the evidence of *his* and his people's guilt- an ethical dimension.

Concerning 2 Corinthians 5, Ralph Martin believes that the background for the phrase "Christ died for all", in verse 15, is found in the Servant Song of Isaiah 53. He says, 'If [verse 15] reflects missionary preaching...and has in view Christ's role as fulfilling the *ebed Yahweh* destiny as his people's mediator and deliverer, who "bore their guilt" (Isa. 53:5, 10, 11) as their proxy, then the "all" who benefit are clearly the people of God, and the servant Christ both acted *for* them and *in their place*.' [emphasis his] <sup>723</sup> Martin refutes the position that says "the living" of verse 15 refers to all of mankind that is alive. The reason for its untenability is because 'it is not consistent with our understanding of death, as given in 5:14d. Rather, the οἱ ζῶντες appear as those who are spiritually alive as people, freed from the bondage to sin.' [emphasis his] <sup>724</sup> Crucially, Martin then comments that Christ died and rose only for the same people:

There is some question as to whether the construction of 5:15b suggests both participles are to be connected with τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν. If the second participle is not related to τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν, then the flow of the sentence is broken, leaving us with a translation "he died for them and rose" (for his own benefit)....If Jesus has not risen for the benefit of "them", then it seems unlikely that the concept of a "renewed" life would be on Paul's mind. More natural is the suggestion to associate both participles with τῷ ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν and thus preserve the apostle's argument. [emphasis his] <sup>725</sup>

## THE DECLARATORY STATEMENT

### The difference described

There was a difference of opinion between Murray and B. B. Warfield (1851-1921) over the Declaratory Statement and its reference to the extent of the atonement. <sup>726</sup> According to Iain Murray, in a reply to a letter from Gresham Machen concerning the 'difference of opinion between Warfield and Murray as to the significance of the 1903 revision and amendments',

<sup>722</sup> *ibid.*, p.225.

<sup>723</sup> 2 Corinthians, p.131.

<sup>724</sup> *ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>725</sup> *idem.*

<sup>726</sup> The Declaratory Statement was part of a revision of the *WCF* made in 1903.

Caspar Wistar Hodge said, ' "I imagine B. B. W. would unearth authorities to get the better of John." ' 727

Their difference in perspective is seen most clearly in their separate interpretations of the Statement. Warfield makes comments about one Dr. Webb's exegesis of it. Warfield affirms that the Statement itself declares that the doctrine of God's eternal decree "is held". The Statement therefore accepts the *Confession's* teaching located in Chapter III. Secondly, the logic of Dr. Webb's position is wrong. He argued that the premises of the Statement deny the "particularity" of the *Confession*. Warfield concedes that, taken by themselves, these statements do evince a doctrine of universal atonement. However, this is to overlook the companion premise of the Statement, namely, that the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held. In other words, the premises of the Statement, to use Warfield's words, 'do not stand by themselves!' 728 Also, Dr. Webb wrongly applies the distinction between God's love for the elect and His love of benevolence toward all men- Dr. Webb would 'perhaps...call it "pity" '. 729 Webb argues that the Revised *Confession* is stating that God loves all men complacently. 'But,' as Warfield says, 'beyond all doubt, it is just God's love of benevolence which the Revised *Confession* signalizes when it says God loves the world, or all mankind...that it is out of this love that God is represented as wishing and doing good to its objects, that is to say, as acting benevolently toward them.' 730

Warfield also cites a number of Reformed theologians to the end of proving that the death of Christ was the fruit of God's love for every man. Warfield quotes those who say the death of Christ is sufficient for all men, and that his death, therefore, has reference to the world (every man). It is upon this truth that the free offer can be made to every single man. 731 The genus mankind is *saved*, and so God saves the world. This is what Paul and John mean by the salvation of the world. 732

In his book *The Saviour of the World*, in the chapter "The Gospel of Paul", Warfield unequivocally states that the *Pauline* usage of "all" in reference to atonement *merely* denotes all kinds of men or races. 733 Further, in the preceding chapter, "God's Immeasurable Love (John

<sup>727</sup> *CW* 3, p.63.

<sup>728</sup> *Selected Writings* 2, p.401.

<sup>729</sup> *ibid.*, p.403.

<sup>730</sup> *idem.*

<sup>731</sup> *ibid.*, pp.378-380.

<sup>732</sup> *ibid.*, pp.404-406. Cf., *Saviour of the World* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1991), pp.123-130.

<sup>733</sup> *Saviour of the World*, pp.133-162.

3:16),” he denies frankly the Arminian doctrine that Christ died to save all men: the love of God does not prepare the way for full salvation, but, it, according to John 3:16, secures salvation. Therefore, whoever believes will be saved.

Also, Warfield states:

Evidently [John 3:16] envisages the world, of which it speaks in the concrete, as a whole. The world is made up of parts, no doubt, and the *differing destinies* that await the *individuals* which compose it are adverted to. But the *emphasis* does not fall upon its component elements, as if their number, for example, could form the ground of the divine love.... [emphasis ours] <sup>734</sup>

So, Warfield determines that “world” in John 3:16 does mean every individual. This, however, is not the denotation of the term. We should note how he includes within this noisome and disgusting group- his terms- Satan, a specific *individual*, who is definitely not, nor will be, one of the saved. <sup>735</sup>

Further, Warfield reasons that “world” in John 3:16 does not connote the world of the elect or believers; <sup>736</sup> “world” refers to all kinds of men. <sup>737</sup> Specifically, the emphasis of the term is that it denotes an evil entity. <sup>738</sup>

It is difficult to know what was the difference of opinion between Murray and Warfield. Comparing and contrasting their respective views may help.

#### Comparison and contrast

1. “World”. Both agree that “world” denotes an evil entity. Warfield also says that the destiny of every man is alluded to in “world”. How it, as meaning an evil entity, describes the different destinies of every man is never made clear by him. It seems to us that if “world” denotes the evil world, there is only *one* destiny that can be implied from this concept- damnation.

Both Warfield and Murray teach that “world” means all races.

<sup>734</sup> *ibid.*, pp.105-106.

<sup>735</sup> *ibid.*, p.119.

<sup>736</sup> *ibid.*, p.111.

<sup>737</sup> *ibid.*, p.112.

<sup>738</sup> *ibid.*, pp.118-119.

The difference between them concerning "world" might be found in reference to election. Murray argues that "world" in 1 John 2:2 denotes the righteous. It is possible that his use of "world" in John 3:16 refers to the elect who, prior to conversion, are evil. This certainly harmonises both texts. However, as Warfield says, "world" in John 3:16 does not denote or connote the elect or non-elect. We assent to Warfield's position. In John 3:16, Jesus' death is an advertisement of God's love to all of mankind; if they believe in him, they will be saved. In that sense, he is upon the cross *for* all men. This is to say that, *the cross per se is an offer of the gospel*. We are not saying that limited atonement is fundamentally erroneous, but merely that there is another angle to understanding Christ's death. From the decretive or secret angle, Christ died for the elect only. Yet, we must not read this theology into John 3:16. Neither must we read neo-Calvinistic theology in John 3:16. "World" denotes an evil entity *in the present*: it was the present evil world for whom Christ suffered. John 3:16 does not mention what he procured for the elect, but merely that he was on the cross suffering *for the sake of* the world.

2. "Loved". The difference between Murray and Warfield is brought out most conspicuously in their understandings of "love" in John 3:16. Murray says it denotes elective love; Warfield argues that it does not. If "world" denotes the reprobate, an evil entity, to say that God loves that evil entity with elective love is to imply that the entity is the elect. This is the logic of Murray's view. To continue, he categorically rejects a general love of God for every single man *in Jesus' death*. Warfield argues the opposite. In fact, Warfield never distinctly admits to elective love in Christ's death, and if he does, it is cloaked in ambiguity. Concerning the *theology* of Murray, we agree with him: Christ's sacrifice was for the elect; therefore, the cross displays elective love. It is probable that Warfield would agree with our own view, but as has just been said, it is never made all that clear by him.

3. *Sufficiency*. Warfield thinks Christ's death is sufficient to save every man. Thomas J. Nettles lists two different interpretations of limited atonement within Calvinism. The first is the view of most Calvinists, for example, of A. A. Hodge, A. Fuller, J. P. Boyce, Calvin, W. G. T. Shedd, H. C. Fish, J. H. Hinton, and J. Owen, that the atonement is sufficient to save all men but limited in its intent, due to the decree of God. Secondly, there is the view of Nettles, Abraham Booth and J. L. Dagg that states that because the atonement is limited in its intent, then it is also limited in its sufficiency. Nettles accuses Calvin, *et al*, of general redemption, because to posit an all-sufficient death is to lay a stage, like that posited in general redemption, which only becomes applicable

upon the sinner's faith.<sup>739</sup> It is probable that Murray belonged to the second group. He does refer to the infinite sufficiency of Christ's death, but only as it applies to the "all" who will believe. That is, it is limited in its extent, but infinite in its application to the believer.

Nettles' critique is based upon Christ's death being only for the elect. However, even the infinite application that the atonement has for the believer must be considered in the context of the visible church. This is to say that, Christ is covenanted to the visible church, and represents it, and not merely the elect. We proposed before (see Union with Christ), that Christ's death has two levels: "true" redemption is for the elect only, and the whole visible church is brought into the external representation of the covenant. Nettle would have been fully correct had he considered the visible aspect of the church.

There is another problem with Nettle's and Murray's views. If the elect are *not actually saved* in Christ upon the cross, then his atonement is only provisional, and he does not actually save them. Christ may have procured full salvation- to use Murray's words- but it is utterly impotent until the exercise of faith. Thus, Murray's Calvinistic position is open to the same criticism as the Arminian/neo-Calvinistic notion of a provisional salvation. Unless we see that the believer was with Christ in his historical death and resurrection, and that his death and resurrection was their death and resurrection, their salvation, then, will always have a provisional element.

## CALVIN

Where does one begin in evaluating Calvin's view of the extent of the atonement? Many approaches have been used to evaluate his doctrine of the extent of the atonement. Some begin with union with Christ, others with predestination, and yet others the heavenly intercession of Christ. We will not use these angles, but stick to Calvin's comments on the atonement's extent. In doing so, we will interact with Alan Clifford's book *Calvinus*. Of course, it would take a whole book to answer him, so this section is limiting itself to interacting with some of Calvin's texts that he cites. Even so, we do not believe that we have avoided the more controversial texts.<sup>740</sup>

<sup>739</sup> *By His Grace, and for His Glory* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1990), pp.302-304, 306, 316, 319.

<sup>740</sup> This section on Calvin's view of the extent is extensive simply because we need to spend time developing the intricacies of his *quid-qualis* distinction in his doctrine of the extent of the atonement. Some of Calvin's more "controversial" comments will be discussed in Perseverance of the Saints.

### "Canon" of interpretation

We have chosen to begin with Calvin's own "canon" of interpretation mentioned by Murray, 'The universal term ["all"] ought always to be referred to races of men, not to persons; as if he had said, not only Jews, but Gentiles also, not only common people, but princes also, were redeemed by the death of Christ'. Of 1 Timothy 2:4, Calvin writes:

Now let Pighius asseverate that God wills all to be saved, when not even the external preaching of the doctrine...is made common to all...Paul anticipates their difficulties, declaring that God wills all men to be saved. Who does not see that the reference is to orders of men rather than individual men? Nor indeed does the distinction lack substantial ground: what is meant is not individuals of nations but nations of individuals. At any rate, the context makes it clear that no other will of God is intended than that which appears in the context of the external preaching of the Gospel. Thus Paul means that God wills the salvation of all whom He mercifully invites by preaching to Christ.<sup>741</sup>

Notice, first of all, that Calvin utterly repudiates the notion that all men will be 'saved'. Secondly, "all" denotes all nations, not all individuals. Calvin concludes by saying that God wills the salvation of all whom he mercifully invites to Christ by preaching. What is meant by "wills" in this context? In the chapter evaluating Calvin's methodology, we saw how Murray pointed out that Calvin's use of "will" is that it refers to the efficacious will of God, and not merely God's desire. Thus the sentence, 'God wills the salvation of all whom He mercifully invites by preaching to Christ', refers to salvation proper. In the chapter concerning Calvin's methodology, we noted that, according to Calvin, the *quiddity* of the will of God is that it is for the elect, whereas its expression or *qualis* is that it is variegated. This is the same method Calvin employs in the sentence under scrutiny. The willing of salvation is a reference to God's determinate purpose to save the elect. However, in the offer of the gospel that same determination is given a variegated appearance in that it is offered to all who hear, whether truly elect or no.

It is proper procedure in interpreting any given writing to let the text itself determine the canons of interpretation that must be used to unlock it. Therefore, when Calvin says that the universalistic expression "all" *must always* refer to *all* kinds of people, then in any exposition of that term we must give priority to this canon. If he *seems* to contradict himself, he either wants to add another angle to the term, or he is actually inconsistent. The issue we are seeking to drive home is this: in examination of Calvin's expositions of the term "all," it must be evident to the reader that the above canon has been negotiated. Clifford regularly fails to do this.



### Calvin's interpretation of "world"

When any neo-Calvin scholar cites any usage of "all" or "world" by Calvin, he must prove beyond all reasonable doubt that each usage of these terms *by itself* describes what Christ has done for every single individual. "World" means various things to Calvin. In John 17,<sup>742</sup> it always denotes the reprobate *as distinguished from* the Son's disciples, according to Calvin.<sup>743</sup> In John 8:23, 26; 12:33, 48; 14:17, 19, 22; 15:18-19; 16:20, 33; 18:36; 1 John 3:1; 5:19, the whole world is evil, and is *contrasted* to those who believe.<sup>744</sup> According to 1 Jh.2:15-17; 4:4-5, 17; 5:4-5, the world is the realm of evil enticements, sin, and evil.<sup>745</sup> Calvin's comments on John 4:42<sup>746</sup> and 8:12<sup>747</sup> tell us only that Christ is the Saviour of Jews and Gentiles. The references above hardly accommodate Clifford's thesis that Calvin believed in general redemption.

### Illegitimate citations

*Christ representing his people.* It is not proper procedure for Clifford to cite comments of Calvin that only demonstrate that Christ represented his people.<sup>748</sup> Clifford cites Exodus 39:1, but in it, Calvin refers only to the church.<sup>749</sup> A glaring failure of Clifford is his misuse of Calvin's comment found in *Sermons on Timothy and Titus* (pp.1181-1182);<sup>750</sup> all Calvin says is that by faith God the Father accepts the believer as righteous.

*Inconclusive reasoning.* Clifford categorically states that Calvin 'affirms a conditional salvation for all (#22, 74).'<sup>751</sup> # 22 is Calvin's comment from *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (pp.105-106):

'I contend that, as the prophet [Ezekiel] is exhorting to penitence, it is no wonder that he pronounces God willing that all be saved. But the mutual relation between threats and promises shows such forms of speech to be conditional....So again...the promises which invite all men to salvation...do not simply and positively declare what God has decreed in His secret counsel but what he is

<sup>741</sup> *Predestination*, p.108.

<sup>742</sup> Clifford cites Calvin on John 17:1, 'by the expiation of sins the world has been reconciled to God', as verification of an Arminian view. [*Calvinus*, p.50.]

<sup>743</sup> John 11-21, p.148. Clifford cites John 17:9. [*Calvinus*, p.50.]

<sup>744</sup> John 1-10, pp.215, 217; *John 11-21*, pp.42, 53, 82, 84, 86, 104-105, 124, 133, 166, 266, 313.

<sup>745</sup> John 11-21, pp.252-254, 287-288, 295, 301-302.

<sup>746</sup> John 1-10, p.110.

<sup>747</sup> *ibid.*, p.210.

<sup>748</sup> Further on, we will examine the implications of this teaching by Calvin.

<sup>749</sup> *Why Will You Die?*, pp.41.

<sup>750</sup> *Calvinus*, p.57.

<sup>751</sup> *ibid.*, p.14.

prepared to do for all who are brought to faith and repentance....Now this is not contradictory of His secret counsel, by which he determined to convert none but His elect. He cannot rightly on this account be thought variable, because as lawgiver He illuminates all with the external doctrine of life. But in the other sense, he brings to life whom He will, as Father regenerating by the Spirit only His sons.<sup>752</sup>

Where, in this quotation, does it refer to the redemption of every single individual upon the cross? It does not.

Further, we see no virtue whatever in Clifford citing texts by Calvin that refer to the free offer of the gospel to all men, for every evangelical theological group, bar Hyper-Calvinism, demands the free offer of the gospel to all men.

There are texts of Calvin that, *by themselves*, indicate either a Calvinistic or Arminian interpretation. For example, Calvin's construction of John 6:51<sup>753</sup> and 14:31.<sup>754</sup> Clifford cites numerous interpretations by Calvin that *at face value* could equally serve an Arminian or Calvinistic attitude: comments on Leviticus 16:3, 7; 21:17; Psalm 51:9, 16; Isaiah 45:22; 53:12; Ezekiel 18:23; *Sermons on 2 Samuel* (pp.66, 357, 576); *Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy* (pp.136, 141-142); comments on Matthew 1:1-17; 17:5; 20:28; 26:1-2, 24, 39; 27:12, 15; Luke 3:23-28; 23:42; John 4:42; 17:1; 18:11; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 6:2; Galatians 2:20; 5:12; 1 Timothy 2:4-6; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 8:4; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 4:10; *Sermons on Ephesians* (p.55); *Sermons on Christ's Passion* (pp.48, 95, 123, 151, 155-156); *Forms of Prayer for the Church* (2:102); *Institutes* 2:13:3; 16:3, 5, 6; and *Letters on John Calvin* (p.29).<sup>755</sup> The point is, that neo-Calvin scholars must not cite the above texts taken by themselves as proofs.<sup>756</sup>

<sup>752</sup> *ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>753</sup> *ibid.*, p.168.

<sup>754</sup> *John 11-21*, p.92.

<sup>755</sup> *Calvinus*, pp.40-61.

<sup>756</sup> Clifford quotes Calvin from his *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* (Art.16), ' "We believe that God, in sending his Son, intended to show his love and inestimable goodness towards us, giving him up to die to accomplish all righteousness, and raising him from the dead to secure for us the heavenly life." ' Clifford is convinced that the article teaches general atonement. What he ought to have immediately "sussed" was that the Articles are a *Confession of faith*. The "us" referred to are believers! Just as the text stands, it is simply impossible to derive from it, with any definiteness, unlimited atonement. Yet, how does Clifford prove that the text does refer to unlimited atonement? He does so by pointing to other texts. And on each occasion, the texts that Clifford cites include the phrase "human race" in relation to Christ's death. ["John Calvin and the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana*", *EQ*, p.199.] This is extremely weak reasoning. It is not inconceivable that by "human race" Calvin merely meant every kind of person, rich or poor, small or great, etc..

Universal 'salvation'? There are texts which Clifford cites, which, if he traced them out, would result in him concluding that Calvin was a universalist. *Sermons on Job* (p.751) says, "Let us fall down before the face of our good God...that it may please Him to grant His grace, not only to us, but also to all people and nations of the earth, bringing back all poor ignorant souls from the miserable bondage of error and darkness, to the right way of salvation....".<sup>757</sup>

How is it possible to take from this quotation that Christ died for *every single* man? If we take Clifford's position, then he is saying that Calvin actually taught that Christ saved every man upon the cross, because- to use Clifford's reasoning- Calvin says 'bringing back...to...salvation'. Calvin, we saw earlier, utterly repudiates such a notion.

Clifford cites Calvin on Genesis 12:3, concerning his words that the blessing of Abraham will flow down to all people.<sup>758</sup> In the first place, it is quite reasonable to suggest that Calvin might have meant by "world" only all kinds of men. Secondly, and crucially, it is obvious from Calvin's other comments on the Abrahamic blessing that it was justification by faith and the reception of the Holy Spirit.<sup>759</sup>

The thought of a provisional salvation is sunk by the following quote:

[Paul] clearly proves the stupidity of the argument of certain interpreters who maintain that all are elected without distinction, because the doctrine of salvation is universal, and because God invites all men to Himself without distinction. The general nature of the promises does not alone and of itself make salvation common to all. Rather, the peculiar revelation which the prophet has mentioned restricts it to the elect.<sup>760</sup>

In reply to our objections, it might be said that Clifford did not want to present Calvin as saying that all men will be saved, but merely the grounds of salvation have been laid down for all men. Then Clifford should have made a clear distinction between *expiation* as *obtained* for every man as the *grounds* of salvation, and *salvation* being *possible* for every man.

<sup>757</sup> Calvinus, p.43.  
<sup>758</sup> *ibid.*, p.41.

<sup>759</sup> Genesis, pp.348-349, 404-410, 448-452, 572-573; Romans, pp.82-102, Galatians, pp.49-69.  
<sup>760</sup> Romans, p.232. We agree with Helm, [*Calvin and the Calvinists*, p.39] that for Kendall [*Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979), p.15] to say that this quote proves that Christ expiated the sins of every man 'is not easy to see'.

Other instances of a generalising of Calvin's comments on salvation are found in Clifford's citations of Calvin in *Institutes* 2:16:3, 5, 6:<sup>761</sup>

'For God, who is perfect righteousness, cannot love the iniquity which he sees in all. All of us, therefore, have that within which deserves the hatred of God....Our acquittal is in this- that the guilt which made us liable to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God [Isa.53:12]....For, were not Christ a victim, we could have no sure conviction of his being...our substitute-ransom and propitiation.'<sup>762</sup>

We would be wise to fully quote 2:16:3:

Though this is said in accommodation to the weaknesses of our capacity, it is not said falsely. For God, who is perfect righteousness, cannot love the iniquity which he sees in all. All of us, therefore, have that within which deserves the hatred of God. Hence, first, of our corrupt nature; and, secondly, of the depraved conduct following upon it, we are all offensive to God, guilty in his sight, and by nature the children of hell. But as the Lord wills not to destroy in us that which is his own, he still finds something in us which in kindness he can love. For though it is by our own fault that we are sinners, we are still his creatures; though we have brought death upon ourselves, he had created us for life. Thus, mere gratuitous love prompts him to receive us into his favour. But if there is a perpetual and irreconcilable repugnance between righteousness and iniquity, so long as we remain sinners we cannot be completely received. Therefore, in order that all ground of offence may be removed, and he may completely reconcile us to himself, he, by means of expiation set forth in the death of Christ, abolishes all the evil that is in us, so that we, formerly impure and unclean, now appear in his sight just and holy. Accordingly, God the Father, by his love, prevents and anticipates our reconciliation in Christ. But because the iniquity, which deserves the indignation of God, remains in us until the death of Christ comes to our aid, and that iniquity is in his sight accursed and condemned, we are not admitted to full and sure communion with God, unless in so far as Christ unites us. And, therefore, if we would indulge the hope of having God placable and propitious to us, we must fix our eyes and minds on Christ alone, as it is to him alone it is owing that our sins, which necessarily provoked the wrath of God, are not imputed to us.

From 'Though...' till '...life', it is possible that Calvin is speaking only of the elect. But let's for arguments sake say this is not so. Let us argue that he is denoting every single man. He then comments, 'Thus, mere gratuitous love prompts him to receive us into his favour. But if there is a perpetual and irreconcilable repugnance between righteousness and iniquity, so long as we remain sinners we cannot be completely received.' Presumably, according to a neo-Calvin

<sup>761</sup> Calvinus, pp.44, 47.  
<sup>762</sup> *ibid.*, p.44.

construction, this prompting is merely God's desire to receive every man, and does not actually mean he receives them. Calvin goes on, 'Therefore, in order that all ground of offence may be removed, and he may completely reconcile us to himself'. Again, this must denote Christ's death for all men, which secured eternal salvation for them, but that they need to be reconciled in their experience. However, the neo-Calvin interpretation is blown away by Calvin's next words, 'he, by means of expiation set forth in the death of Christ, abolishes all the evil that is in us, so that we, formerly impure and unclean, now appear in his sight just and holy.' How does Christ abolish evil in us, every man, upon the cross? Does every man appear just in God's sight? See how Calvin is so sure- these ones 'now appear' as just. There is no hint of some not appearing as just. This will not submit to a neo-Calvinistic construction. Calvin exhorts the believer to know God as propitious toward him. Yet this is no contradiction, for even today a preacher may exhort believers to make their calling and election sure.

Clifford gets it wrong again when he cites *Institutes* 2:16:5. Throughout, Calvin is referring to the same "we" and "all." Those "we", says Calvin, are those who have been "justified by [Christ's] blood....". Does Clifford honestly think every man was justified? Further, his citation is open to question. Calvin says, 'Our acquittal is in this- that the guilt which made us liable to punishment was transferred to the head of the Son of God [Isa.53:12]....'. Who is acquitted in this text, is it some or every one? According to Clifford's interpretation, it must be everyone.

This same connection is found in *Institutes* 2:16:6. Calvin, referring to the same "us" as Clifford, writes, 'and in return clothed us with his purity.' Christ clothed every single man with his purity, and, moreover, he did it at the cross, implies Clifford. But Calvin goes on to utter, 'faith apprehends acquittal in the condemnation of Christ....'. Thus, our acquittal comes from faith in the condemned Christ. Clifford's quotation of Calvin on *Institutes* 2:16:7 is immediately followed by the statement, 'And hence mention is always made of blood whenever Scripture explains the mode of redemption: although the shedding of Christ's blood was available not only for propitiation, but also acted as a laver to purge our defilements.' Once again, Calvin, according to Clifford, promulgates that Christ actually purged every man's defilements upon the cross. Calvin, here, is not referring to what happened to believers on the cross, but only to their appropriation of that which Christ achieved on the cross for them.

Commenting on the *Institutes* 2:13:3, 3:1:1, *Sermons on 2 Samuel* (p.66), *Sermons on Job* (p.751), *Forms of Prayer for the Church*, Tracts, (2:102), *Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God* (pp.102-103, 109), *Sermons on Galatians*, (pp.106-107), *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, Tracts (2:47), Matthew 26:12, 14-20; John 4:42; Galatians 2:20; 5:12; 1 Peter 1:20, Calvin pronounces that salvation is common to the whole human race.<sup>763</sup> He also voices that Christ's death was life for the whole world.<sup>764</sup> On each occasion, Clifford fails to prove that by "salvation", Calvin meant a conditional entity. Already it has been demonstrated that the connection between universal salvation and Christ's death is utterly rejected by Calvin. Moreover, if Calvin does not qualify the above texts by saying that they refer to conditional salvation, then they imply that the "world" is saved.

#### Controversial texts<sup>765</sup>

Calvin's interpretation of 1 John 2:2 is perfectly plain:

But here the question may be asked how the sins of the whole world have been propitiated. *I pass over the dreams of the fanatics, who make this a reason to extend salvation to all the reprobate and even to Satan himself...Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect....Although I allow the truth of this, I deny it fits the passage...under the word "all" [John] does not include the reprobate, but refers to all who would believe and those scattered through various regions of the earth. For, as it is meet, the grace of Christ is really made clear when it is declared to be the only salvation of the world. [emphasis ours]*<sup>766</sup>

1 John 2:2 is one of the texts that seem to relate Calvinistic theology, concedes Clifford.<sup>767</sup> Even with the best will in the world toward him- no pun intended- the last sentence of the quotation can only be interpreted in the light of its antecedent, and it describes how the elect are the "world." It is this formula that is behind the first sentence of the quotation. If it is protested that the omnissufficiency of Christ's death is an Arminian doctrine, Calvin says that it does not fit 1 John 2:2.

<sup>763</sup> *ibid.*, pp.41-42, 47, 50, 54, 56, 58, 60.  
<sup>764</sup> *ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>765</sup> M. Charles Bell quotes Calvin in the context of favouring unlimited atonement, 'It was Christ's own will to appear before God's judgement seat "in the name and person of all sinners", [*Deity of Christ*, p.52] and in doing so, God 'took Him as being there in the place of all sinners' [*Sermons on Isaiah's Prophecy*, p.70]. ' [Calvin and Scottish Theology (Edinburgh, The Handsel Press, 1985), p.14.] This seems an open and shut case. The problem with Bell's confidence, however, is that these texts can quite naturally be taken in another sense. We would plead with him, is it possible that all Calvin meant was that when Christ suffered and died upon the cross he was doing so for "all kinds" of sinners? That is, is it theoretically possible that the elect, whom he represented on the cross, are from "all" types of social and ethical backgrounds?

<sup>766</sup> John 11-21, p.244.

Calvin also writes:

'It is true that Saint John saith generally, that [God] loved the world. And why? For Jesus Christ offereth himself generally to all men without exception to be their redeemer.... Thus we see three degrees of love that God hath shewed us in our Lord Jesus Christ. The first is in respect of the redemption that was purchased in the person of him that gave himself to death for us, and became accursed to reconcile us to God the Father. That is the first degree of love, which extendeth to all men, inasmuch as Jesus Christ reacheth out his arms to call and allure all men both great and small, and to win them to him. But there is a special love for those to whom the gospel is preached: which is that God testifieth unto them that he will make them partakers of the benefit that was purchased for them by the death and passion of his Son. And forasmuch as we be of that number, therefore we are double bound already to our God: here are two bonds which hold us as it were strait tied unto him. Now let us come to the third bond, which dependeth upon the third love that God sheweth us: which is that he not only causeth the gospel to be preached unto us, but also maketh us to feel the power thereof, so as we know him to be our Father and our Saviour, not doubting but that our sins are forgiven us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who bringeth us the gift of the Holy Ghost, to reform us after his own image.

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This is a text cited by Clifford to prove that Calvin believed in unlimited atonement. The first sentence merely says that Christ offers himself to all men to be their Saviour. So far, "all men" could have a neo-Calvinistic or Calvinistic meaning. Then the three degrees of love are stated. The first is that on the cross *per se*, Christ's death was a call to all men to himself. What is meant by "all men"? Taken by itself this phrase, once more, could yield either an Arminian or Calvinistic meaning. However, Calvin says 'all men both great and small'. It is reasonable to assume that in some manner "all men" is qualified by 'both great and small'. Thus, it is also reasonable to assume that 'all men' equates to 'both great and small'. The second level of love is given only to those who hear the gospel preached. Notice the definition of this love: God *will* make those who hear the gospel partakers of eternal life. This is unconditional salvation. The third love is dependent on the second. It might be assumed, therefore, that this love will reflect the doctrine of salvation secured and not merely conditional salvation. But what does Calvin say? This love is regeneration or salvation through the gospel. In other words, the second love is viewing salvation from the point of view of the gospel *per se*. That is, the hearing of the gospel, for those who will be saved, is a proof that he will save them. The third love concentrates upon

<sup>767</sup> Calvinus, p.13.  
<sup>768</sup> *ibid.*, p.42.

the individual who hears the gospel: that one will not only be saved, but is saved. In summary, the difference between the first and second loves is the distinction between salvation about to be participated in, and salvation participated in.

Calvin's three loves are 1) love knows no prejudice 2) love brings sure salvation 3) love seals salvation.

On John 1:29, Calvin says:

And when [John] says the sin of the whole world, he extends this favour indiscriminately to the whole human race, that the Jews might not think that he had been sent to them alone...John, therefore, by speaking of the sin of the world in general, wanted to make us feel our own misery and exhort us to seek the remedy. Now it is for us to embrace the blessing offered to all, that each may make up his mind that there is nothing to hinder him from finding reconciliation in Christ if only, led by faith, he comes to Him.<sup>769</sup>

Clifford is not correct to say that John 1:29 denotes general redemption because every man is alluded to.<sup>770</sup> The 'whole human race' is qualified by the idea that Jesus did not come only for the Jews. This is no ground for saying that Christ died for every single man. Also, to say that it is up to us to embrace Christ and to find reconciliation in him is perfectly Calvinistic- it is the free offer of the gospel. To underline the last point, Calvin is not referring directly to the atonement, but to its reception. This is certainly a strong argument against neo-Calvinistic interpretations of John 1:29.

On John 16:8, Calvin comments:

I think that under the word *world* are included both those who were to be truly converted to Christ and hypocrites and reprobates. For the Spirit convicts men in the preaching of the Gospel in two ways. Some are touched seriously and humble themselves of their own accord and assent willingly to the judgement which condemns them. Others, although they are convinced of guilt and cannot escape, do not yield in sincerity or submit themselves to the authority and control of the Holy Spirit....<sup>771</sup>

<sup>769</sup> John 11-21, pp.32-33.  
<sup>770</sup> Calvinus, p.65.

<sup>771</sup> John 11-21, p.116. Of John 12:46 Calvin comments, 'The universal particle ["world"] seems to have been put in deliberately, partly that all believers without exception might enjoy this in common and partly to show that unbelievers perish in darkness because they flee from the light of their own accord.' [St. John



Without a doubt, Calvin has just taught that "world" connotes the ungodly and denotes believers to be. Yet Calvin does not say that every man has had his sins expiated. What is happening? It is this: in his use of "world", there is evident the secret and revealed distinction that we found throughout his theology. That is, the world as open to the human eye is a world that is an evil entity. This "world" is irrespective of the elect or non-elect. However, the world from the secret perspective is a world of elect and non-elect, the reprobate and those to be converted. Earlier it was revealed how "world" in John, when used in a soteric context, refers to an evil entity, regardless of the doctrine of election. In effect, Calvin contradicts himself. He is trying to retain John's emphasis of "world" not referring to election, and to balance this with the thought that the cross is for the elect only. Now, both angles taken separately are perfectly correct, but the rub is that "world" or "love" cannot refer to both perspectives at the same time:  $a$  cannot be  $a + b$ .

In his interpretation of 1 John 2:2 in his *Eternal Predestination*, Calvin writes:

Wherever the faithful are dispersed throughout the world, John extends to them the expiation wrought by Christ's death. *But this does not alter the fact that the reprobate are mixed up with the elect in the world.* It is incontestable that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world. But the solution lies close at hand, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but should have eternal life (Jh.3:15). For the present question is not how great the power of Christ is or what efficacy it has in itself, but to whom He gives Himself to be enjoyed. If possession lies in faith and faith emanates from the Spirit of adoption, it follows that he is reckoned in the number of God's children who will be a partaker of Christ. The evangelist John sets forth the office of Christ as nothing else than by His death to gather the children of God into one (Jh.11:52). Hence, we conclude that, though reconciliation is offered to all through Him, yet the benefit is peculiar to the elect.... [emphasis ours] <sup>772</sup>

He starts by saying that the expiation of Christ is applied only to the faithful. Continuing the "faithful" theme, Calvin then says that the elect are mixed with the non-elect in the world. Once more, "world" is being defined as comprising elect and non-elect. Then Calvin says that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world. Having just said that the world was made up of reprobate and elect, it would seem that Calvin is teaching that Christ died for elect and non-elect. But is this really so? All Calvin says is that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world. This statement, as it stands, could be taken in either a neo-Calvin or Calvinistic

11-21, p.52.] Of John 9:38, Calvin writes, 'Christ is by nature the light of the world, it is accidental that some are made blind by His coming.' [John 1-10, p.254.]  
<sup>772</sup> *Eternal Predestination*, pp.148-149.

light. In the light of the previous sentence, the burden of proof lies with Calvinism, though we must bear in mind the sentences previous to that one. Calvin explains himself in the rest of the quotation, 'the solution lies close at hand'. What is the solution to the concept of Christ coming to expiate the sins of the whole world? The solution is faith (Jh.3:15). What does Calvin mean? He is not interested in the cross *per se*. Immediately, we must sit up and take notice. Christ as a complete Saviour, one who has died and risen, the powerful Christ, is not the subject of debate. The issue is, to whom will Christ give himself? who will believe in him? Calvin concludes, saying that Christ is offered to all, but is received only by the elect. What is meant by "all"? It would seem that it must refer to every single man, but not necessarily so. It may simply mean that Christ is offered to all kinds of men; out of all the various kinds of men, only the elect receive Christ.

Thus, from the beginning of the quotation, to its end, the subject is not Christ's cross, but faith. Calvin categorically denies that he is referring to the cross. He is merely referring to those who will receive the gospel. Further, Calvin says, 'It is incontestable that Christ came for the expiation of the sins of the whole world.' The expiation referred to may have the connotation of being existential: expiation through faith- a doctrine we recorded that Calvin believed in. This is probably the case, because we saw that in his commentary on 1 John 2:2, the expiation Christ offers, says Calvin, is present and ongoing (see Propitiation, etc.).

However, the fault with Calvin's interpretation is that he again mixes the visible and invisible perspectives.

Calvin says that Christ's death 'is salvific for all' (*Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God*, pp.102-103).<sup>773</sup> The context says, 'But the solution of the difficulty lies in seeing how the doctrine of the Gospel offers salvation to all. That it is salvific for all I do not deny. But the question is whether the Lord in His counsel here destines salvation equally for all.'<sup>774</sup> In this quote, "all" in the last sentence is being used to refer to every single man. This does not necessitate, however, that "all" in the previous sentences means every man. It is probable that the text is merely saying that the gospel comes to all kinds of men, and is salvific for all kinds of men. But it does not come to every single man.

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<sup>773</sup> *ibid.*, p.53.  
<sup>774</sup> *idem*.

Next, we come to another controversial text, Romans 5:18. It says, "Consequently, just as the result of the one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of the one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men." To properly understand Calvin's exegesis of 5:18, we need to quote him, 'Paul makes grace common to all men, not because it in fact extends to all, but because it is offered to all. Although Christ suffered for the sins of the world, and is offered by the goodness of God without distinction to all men, yet not all receive Him,' <sup>775</sup>

The first sentence of the quotation cannot by itself prove the neo-Calvin theory, for the sentence deals with the preaching of the gospel and not with Christ's death. The second sentence overtly states that "grace" is found in the offer of the gospel. Also, those who hear the gospel do not amount to every single person. The second sentence then says that Christ died for the world. What "world" is being referred to? If "all" in the previous sentence is the control, then "world" might refer to every single man. That Christ suffered for the sins of every man goes against all that we have argued thus far from Calvin. It is possible that he is merely saying that Christ suffered for all kinds of men, and therefore, by implication, for the elect, and that he is, therefore, offered to all kinds of men, regardless of election, yet not every single man receives him. This would be another case of Calvin crossing his secret and revealed perspectives.

"Grace" needs more explanation. In Romans 5:18, Paul is referring to actual salvific grace. How, then, can Calvin say that "grace" refers merely to the preaching of the gospel? What must be recalled is Calvin's doctrine of the will of God. He argued concerning Ezekiel 18:23; 20:44 that the will of God is efficacious but that it also has an incidental aspect to it: its *quiddity* is that it is for the elect; its *qualis* is that it is variegated. Thus, in the preaching of the gospel, it *seems* as though God wills to save every man, however, he only wills the salvation of the elect through the preaching of the gospel. The same method is concealed in Calvin's commentary on Romans 5:18. God's "grace" is for every man. How can this be, if "grace" is saving grace? It is so because grace must come through preaching, and in this indirect manner grace "touches" upon the non-elect who hear.

The difficulty with this view, a difficulty Murray identified in Calvin's interpretation of God's will, is that it eradicates the distinction between what is certain and what is merely offered: if

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<sup>775</sup> Romans, pp.117-118.

grace is saving grace, then it cannot also be grace in the form of the preaching of the gospel to any man. Yet again, Calvin is guilty of combining the visible and invisible approaches of his theology.

We will look at one more controversial text: John 3:16. A "Murray" approach is evident in Calvin's comments on John 3:16:

This way of speaking...may seem to conflict with many testimonies of Scripture, which place the first foundation of the divine love towards us in Christ and say that outside Him we are detested by God. But we should remember, as I have already said, that the secret love in which our heavenly Father embraced us to himself is, since it flows from His eternal good pleasure, precedent to all other causes; but the grace which He wants to be testified to us and by which we are stirred to the hope of salvation, begins with the reconciliation provided through Christ. For since He necessarily hates sin, how shall we be convinced that He loves us until those sins for which He is justly angry with us have been expiated? Thus before we can have any feeling of His fatherly kindness, the blood of Christ must intercede to reconcile us to God.<sup>776</sup>

Calvin's logic is that many texts say we are not loved by God until we repent and believe in Christ. However, there are also texts that reveal that there is a hidden or secret love that is behind the love that is expressed in our *coming to faith* in Christ; this secret love is 'precedent to all other causes'. It is vital to comprehend that Calvin believed that God is the Father only of those who believe. Thus, in his interpretation of John 3:16, when Calvin says 'how shall we be convinced that [the Father] loves us', he cannot mean that he loved all men, every individual; Calvin means, rather, that God as Father revealed his *selective* love in the crucifixion of Christ.

Calvin also pronounces:

And He has used a general term ["whomever"], both to invite indiscriminately all to share in life and to cut off every excuse from unbelievers. Such is also the significance of the term "world" which He had used [in 1:29]. For although there is nothing in the world deserving of God's favour, He nevertheless shows He is favourable to the whole world when He calls all without exception to the faith of Christ, which is indeed an entry into life.<sup>777</sup>

"World" is said by Calvin to be used as it was before in John 1:29 to refer to elect and non-elect. Yet, we concluded that "world" in John 1:29 does not necessarily refer to elect and non-elect.

<sup>776</sup> *ibid.*, pp.73-74.  
<sup>777</sup> *ibid.*, p.74.

Are we wrong? Possibly, but probably not, because Calvin does have the habit of switching from one perspective to the other without any warning, from the visible to the invisible. Moreover, he has the habit of mixing them. So it is possible that our interpretation of Calvin's comments on John 1:29 are quite correct and do not contradict what he says of John 3:16.

Further, as with John 1:29, the quotation is not referring to the cross *per se* but to the offer and reception of the gospel. It is more than possible that when Calvin says, 'For although there is nothing in the world deserving of God's favour', he is referring to the world as an evil entity comprised of various nations. *This* world he is favourable to by calling it to faith in Christ.

### CONCLUSION

It is argued by some that the key to the Calvinist's view of the extent of the atonement is the doctrine of predestination. 'The basis of [limited atonement]', writes Alister E. McGrath, 'lies in the Reformed doctrine of predestination'.<sup>778</sup> T. C. Hammond comments, 'The question [of limited atonement] does not concern the nature and efficacy of the atonement. It concerns the purpose of his sufferings'.<sup>779</sup> But we have seen that Murray reasons from the nature of the atonement to predestination. It is possible that only in this sense did he view predestination as basic to limited atonement. This is not to say that the doctrine of predestination is not, by itself, or in connection with other arguments for limited atonement, a legitimate means of disproving general redemption.

As for Calvin's view of the atonement, William Cunningham,<sup>780</sup> Archibald A. Hodge,<sup>781</sup> Frederick S. Leahy<sup>782</sup> and Paul Helm<sup>783</sup> point out that Calvin was not taken up in exhaustive debate on the subject of the extent of the atonement.<sup>784</sup> Nevertheless, Calvin's doctrine of the extent of the atonement was developed in the atmosphere of perfecting a doctrine of the atonement in the context of clashes with Roman Catholic and errant interpretations of the atonement. If Calvin's doctrine is almost identical to Murray's, then we find no reason to say that Calvin's doctrine of the extent of the atonement was undeveloped. He says, ' "I should like to

<sup>778</sup> *Christian Theology*, p.367.

<sup>779</sup> *In Understanding Be Men*, revised and edited by David F. Wright, (Leicester, I.V.P., 1979), pp.124-125.

<sup>780</sup> *Theology of the Reformation*, p.397.

<sup>781</sup> *Atonement*, p.388.

<sup>782</sup> "Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement", *The Reformed Theological Journal* 8 (1992), p.61.

<sup>783</sup> "Calvin and Calvinism", *Evangel* (Winter, 1984), p.8.

<sup>784</sup> Robert Letham believes that Calvin's position is ambiguous, [*Work of Christ*, p.266.]

know how the wicked can eat the flesh of Christ which was not crucified for them? and how can they drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins.”<sup>785</sup> General atonement says that Christ did expiate the sins of all men. Leahy concludes, ‘That statement may well stand alone in Calvin’s writings, but it is hard to see how he would have made it had he believed in universal atonement.’

Murray’s understanding of salvation is central to his doctrine of limited atonement. Christ did not procure a provisional salvation but full salvation. Therefore, those whom Christ died for must be saved. We said that this theology is partly correct. Murray’s theology is perfectly accurate if we consider Christ’s death upon the cross as being a death for the elect only. However, Christ also died for the non-elect, inasmuch as he died redeeming the visible church. This was Calvin’s view. Yet he never developed this thought. We said that the salvation that Christ procured has two stages: he secures entrance into the covenant community for all those who believe in him; he secures salvation into the elect community for the elect.

Furthermore, we said that Murray’s doctrine of limited atonement was in actual fact, from one perspective, a doctrine of provisional atonement. He said that Christ procured salvation for his people. Yet, according to Murray’s system, no one was actually saved at the moment of the cross. It was said in response to this, that Christ could only have procured full salvation for his people, if they were indeed with him upon the cross, and were actually saved upon the cross. This is then realised in the lives of believers.

Calvin had a propensity for combining the revealed aspect of the atonement with the unrevealed or secret. It is his doctrine of the monadistic will of God that dominates his interpretation of the atonement’s extent: the atonement is only efficacious because it is “controlled” by the secret or decretive aspect. Roger Nicole says that ‘Calvin’s distinction between the “secret” and the “revealed” will of God, strongly emphasised by Armstrong<sup>786</sup> as establishing a point of correspondence between Amyraut and Calvin, does not provide support by logical inference in favor of universal atonement’.<sup>787</sup> However, in his exegesis of “all” and “world”, Calvin sometimes combines both the visible and the invisible angles. Thus, his understanding that “world” in John 3:16 is an evil entity is correct, but to say “love” is elective love is discordant with the theology of the text. He says that “world” in John 3:16 also denotes only the elect. He

<sup>785</sup> *Tracts and Treatises* 2, p.527. Cited by Leahy, “Calvin and the extent of the atonement”, p.61.  
<sup>786</sup> Nicole is referring to Brian G. Armstrong’s *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*.

cannot have it both ways: it either refers to the elect or it does not. Murray arrives at a similar understanding of John 3:16 to Calvin, although in a slightly different manner. Murray is slightly more consistent; he implies that the world referred to in John 3:16 is solely an evil entity but that it turns out to be the elect, for only they will believe. He, also, cannot have it both ways.

We went one step further than Calvin and Murray, and said that the meaning of John 3:16 is that Christ's death is an advertisement to all men, every single man, proclaiming that God loves them.

It is preferable, therefore, not to read into texts on the death of Christ, as Murray and Calvin have done. The doctrine of limited atonement is perfectly right, if only it is not restrained by the exclusion of the concept of Christ's death for the visible church, and by the fear of saying that Christ died for all men (as an advertisement).

This chapter finishes our evaluation of Murray's doctrine of the atonement. In the next section, we will proceed to look at Murray's conception of the application of the atonement.

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<sup>787</sup> "John Calvin's View of the Extent of the Atonement" *WTJ* 47 (1985), p.202.

*Section 2:*

*Redemption Applied*



## Chapter 10: Effectual Calling

In Murray's *ordo salutis* the effectual call of God is the first blessing that the believer receives. According to Murray, effectual calling is to be distinguished from the general and universal call of the gospel (Prov.8:4; Matt.22:14), a call that is to all men without distinction, but that is not considered to be effectual or saving.<sup>788</sup> The effectual call is the call of God through the preached word, 'addressed to sinners in trespasses and sins', which 'ushers them into fellowship with Christ and into the possession of the salvation of which he is the embodiment' (Rom.8:30; 1 Cor.1:9).<sup>789</sup>

Murray examines effectual calling under the headings of the priority, author, character, pattern, *terminus ad quem*, and obligations.<sup>790</sup>

### STATEMENT

**Priority**  
Effectual calling is the sovereign act of God alone, and cannot therefore be construed as the act of man.<sup>791</sup> This is the natural extension of Romans 8:30, for foreknowledge and foreordination are acts of divine monergism, and, to be consistent, so also are effectual calling, justification and glorification.<sup>792</sup> There is no co-operation on man's part in effectual calling; God sovereignly calls the passive individual, ushering him into salvation. Effectual calling carries within its bosom the 'appropriate response on the part of the person called....And, this response must enlist the exercise of the heart mind and will of the person concerned.' Thus, effectual calling precedes regeneration.<sup>793</sup> If regeneration were before calling, we would expect to find it in Romans 8:28

<sup>788</sup> RA, p.88. Murray cites another use of the term "call": call to office. [CW 2, p.161.]

<sup>789</sup> Calvin argues that there are two stages to the call of God: a universal call, whereby all men, Jews and Gentiles, are invited to accept the promises of scripture; and a special call. It has two sides: the Holy Spirit illumines the sinner through the word, but only for a time, and the sinner is never truly regenerated; second, where the Holy Spirit not only illumines the mind of the sinner but transforms his heart. [Inst.3:24:8-12.] Calvin, says Kevin Vanhoozer, 'applies Aristotle's analysis of causation to the biblical teaching about salvation and argues that the efficient cause of our justification is the love of God the Father, the material cause the obedience of Christ, the instrumental cause the Spirit's illumination (faith), and the final cause the glory of God's generosity (III.xiv.21).' ["Effectual Call or Causal Effect?", *Tyndale Bulletin* 49:2 (1998), p.217.]

<sup>790</sup> CW 2, p.165.

<sup>791</sup> *ibid.*, pp.161-165. We prefer this order, because it is more extensive than the order given in RA, of author, nature, pattern, and, priority. [CW 2, pp.88-94]

<sup>792</sup> *idem.*

<sup>793</sup> Romans 1, p.320.

<sup>794</sup> RA, pp.93-95.

instead of calling. Particularly, it is the call of God, and not any other blessing, which is in accordance with God's eternal purpose. Therefore, this indicates 'that the initial act of application proceeds from the eternal purpose of God's grace.'<sup>794</sup> However, 'Regeneration is the beginning of the inwardly operative saving grace.'<sup>795</sup>

### Author

God the Father is the author and agent of effectual calling (1 Cor.1:9; 2 Tim.1:8-9; Rom.8:30; 1 Jh.3:1; cf., Gal.1:15; Eph.1:17-18). The Shorter Catechism is wrong in stating that effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit. Effectual calling is not the 'subjective effects wrought in us by the Spirit and of response on our part in the embrace of Christ by faith'.<sup>796</sup> Regeneration is the exclusive work of the Spirit.<sup>797</sup>

### Character

*An Act.* Calling is an act not a process; it designates a 'status constituted', (Rom.1:7; 1 Cor.1:2, 9; 1 Pet.2:9; 1 Thess.2:12).<sup>798</sup>

*Effective Summons.* God's call is his 'action and cannot be frustrated.'<sup>799</sup>

*Immutability.* Romans 8:28-30 teaches that God's call is according to his purpose, which is said to issue in glorification. In this manner his faithfulness is highlighted, for he will not repent of his calling (1 Cor.1:8-9; 1 Thes.5:23-24).<sup>800</sup>

*High, holy, heavenly.* It is these things in its origin, character and destiny (Phil.3:14; 2 Tim.1:9; Heb.3:1).<sup>801</sup>

### Pattern

*Determinate Purpose.* 'God's thought has been occupied with the effectual call from times eternal. Hence the moment and all the circumstances are fixed by his own counsel and will.'<sup>802</sup>

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<sup>794</sup> *ibid.*, pp.93-94.

<sup>795</sup> *ibid.*, p.93.

<sup>796</sup> *CW 2*, p.165.

<sup>797</sup> *ibid.*, p.166.

<sup>798</sup> *ibid.*, p.163.

<sup>799</sup> *idem.*

<sup>800</sup> *idem.*

<sup>801</sup> *idem.*

<sup>802</sup> *RA*, p.92.

*Eternal Purpose.* The purpose of God to call (Rom.8:28-29) was from eternity (2 Tim.1:9).<sup>803</sup>

*"In Christ".* It was before the foundation of the world when God devised his purpose to call us in union with Christ Jesus (2 Tim.1:9).<sup>804</sup> It is not merely that God's eternal purpose to call was somehow in Christ Jesus, but that the grace that was eternally determined by God in his purpose was 'given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal.' [emphasis his] The call ushers into fellowship with Christ.<sup>805</sup> That is, 'calling...is represented in Scripture as that act of God by which we are actually united to Christ (cf. 1 Cor.1:9). And surely union with Christ is that which unites us to the inwardly operative grace of God. Regeneration is the beginning of the inwardly operative saving grace.' [emphasis his]<sup>806</sup>

### *Terminus ad quem*

Its end is:

The fellowship of Christ (1 Cor.1:9), the fellowship of the saints (Col.3:15), the peace of God and good will to all men (1 Cor.7:15; Gal.1:15-16; 1 Pet.3:9), holiness (1 Thess. 4:7; 5:23, 24), light (1 Pet.2:9), liberty (Gal.5:13), hope (Eph.1:18; 4:4), patient endurance of persecution (1 Pet. 2:20, 21), God's kingdom of glory (1 Thess.2:12), eternal life and glory (2 Thess.2:14; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Pet. 5:10; Heb.9:15; Rev.19:9).<sup>807</sup>

### *Obligations*

Because it is a high, heavenly, and holy calling, 'the obligations correspond with the dignity involved in these characterizations. We are to walk worthily of it'.<sup>808</sup>

## COMMENT

### EFFECTUAL CALLING, REGENERATION AND UNION WITH CHRIST

Strictly speaking, there is no *effectual* call, if we take Murray's view. The call is completely God the Father's work, says Murray, and regeneration is the Spirit's work. It is regeneration that

<sup>803</sup> CW 2, p.164.  
<sup>804</sup> RA, p.93.

<sup>805</sup> CW 2, p.164.  
<sup>806</sup> RA, p.93.

<sup>807</sup> *ibid.*, pp.164-165.

transforms the believer, according to Murray's system, and not the calling. So how can he speak of an *effectual* calling? Admittedly, he is keen to emphasise that effectual calling carries within it the power to transform. We assent to this, but do not agree with the depositing of a different doctrine, namely regeneration, to explain the actual accomplishment or working of this power. Murray would probably say that the "effective" element of effectual calling is that it 'actually' unites us to Christ. But, once more, his view is faulty. If union is established at the point of effectual calling, then what need is there to be united to Christ by faith? As Murray says, fellowship (union) 'is always mutual', and necessitates the exercise of faith on the part of the sinner.<sup>809</sup>

## WHO CALLS?

### The Spirit

Some Reformed theologians say that effectual calling is by the Spirit. Certain seventeenth-century theologians equated regeneration with calling.<sup>810</sup> Calvin writes, 'the nature and dispensation of the calling, which consists not merely of the preaching of the word, but also of the illumination of the Spirit.'<sup>811</sup> He goes on to name "calling" as 'the effectual agency of the Spirit.'<sup>812</sup> There is no explicit statement in the New Testament saying that the Spirit calls. However, if Christ's glorification is regarded as his calling- see later in chapter- then the Spirit is possibly party to effectual calling: the Spirit who raised Christ from the dead realises his resurrection in the experience of believers by raising them from spiritual death.

### Son

As for the Son's part, John 10:3, 16, and 27 combined give us ample reason for believing that the Son is an agent of effectual calling, "The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out....I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice....My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me." Of John 10:3, Calvin says that the Spirit mediates

<sup>808</sup> *ibid.*, p.165.

<sup>809</sup> *ibid.*, p.95.

<sup>810</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p.470; J. I. Packer, *God's Word* (Leicester, IVP, 1981), p.148; *Among God's Giants* (Eastbourne, Kingsway Publications, 1993), pp.236-240; S. Ferguson, Tape, *Westminster Standards: Free Will* (Westminster Media, 1990); *John Owen*, pp.32-33.

<sup>811</sup> *Inst.* 3:24:2.

<sup>812</sup> *idem.*

the call of the teacher (shepherd) to the disciples (sheep).<sup>813</sup> He writes of John 10:27, 'God effectually calls those whom he has elected'.<sup>814</sup>

However, to Murray's credit, he does partly counterbalance the *WCF*'s overemphasis of the call as the Holy Spirit's work only.<sup>815</sup>

## THE NATURE OF EFFECTUAL CALLING

### The call of Israel

Murray says that Romans 9:24 teaches that God has effectually called his people from the Jews and Gentiles. The preparation for glory mentioned in verse 23, does not, as E. H. Gifford [*The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, ad.9:24*] thinks, precede the call; rather, the call is the inception of the process toward glory, says Murray. The true Israel, its children and seed (Rom.9:6-9, 27, 29; 11:5, 7), comprise Jews and Gentiles. Verses 25-26 are an exposition of effectual calling from Hosea 2:1; 1:10.<sup>816</sup>

The question is, is Paul arguing that to be made "sons of the living God" (Rom.9:26) is part of the calling of God, or merely a logical step following it, as Murray argues? If Romans 9:25-26 are an exposition of effectual calling from Hosea 2:1; 1:10, the New Testament effectual calling is probably another way of describing the Lord's salvation, and is therefore not a logical step in an order. Moreover, the calling of Israel was not a subconscious, undisclosed matter. It was, rather, fulfilled by faith. That is, the call of God was coterminous with Israel coming out of bondage. In other words, Israel's call did not lead to faith, but it was expressed in faith. The whole event of bringing Israel from darkness to light was designated God's calling. From one perspective, this movement is seen exclusively as God's work, his call, his power. However, from the human perspective, it is Israel that comes forth by faith.

For Murray, the act of Paul being "set-apart" (*αφορίζω*) (Rm.1:1; cf., Acts 13:2; Gal.1:15) was equivalent to his call (*κλητος*) to the apostleship.<sup>817</sup> In the LXX, *αφορίζω* is used to describe Israel's call from Egypt (Lv.20:26), and in Isaiah 52:11; 56:3, it refers to Israel's need to be holy

<sup>813</sup> *St. John 1-10*, p.259. For same view, T. Robinson, *Studies in Romans* (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 1982), p.498; S. Ferguson, *Christian Life*, pp.28-29.

<sup>814</sup> *ibid.*, p.272. Cf., *Romans*, p.381.

<sup>815</sup> Cf., S. Ferguson, *John Owen*, p.33.

<sup>816</sup> *Romans 2*, pp.38-39.

or separated from those who are unclean (cf., Eze.45:1, 4). Paul cites Isaiah 52:11 in 2 Corinthians 6:17, in order to exhort the Corinthians to be set-apart (ἀφορίζω) from idols (cf., Mt.13:49; 25:32; Lk.6:22; Acts 19:9; Gal.2:12). Thus, ἀφορίζω is used in the New Testament to refer to sanctification. Because of the close connection between being called and being “set-apart”, this suggests that we should not make an *ordo salutis* between calling and sanctification, but that we should consider them as facets of salvation.

Calvin equates God’s call of Israel with its redemption, which in turn equates to Israel’s resurrection, new birth<sup>818</sup> and adoption.<sup>819</sup> These find their antitypes in new Israel’s union with Christ in his resurrection.<sup>820</sup> If the call of Israel is the type of the church’s call, then it would seem that, to extend Calvin’s theology, the call of the saints, in the New Testament, is logically and chronologically the same moment as their resurrection, new birth, redemption and adoption.

### The call of Jesus

E. H. Merrill expresses the opinion that servitude for Israel equated to being a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.<sup>821</sup> The servant of Isaiah 49:1 is Christ, remarks Calvin; it is Christ’s appointment to office that is being referred to when it is said he was called (Heb.5:4-5).<sup>822</sup> Hebrews 5:4-6 says, “No-one takes this honour upon himself; he must be called by God, just as Aaron was. Christ did not take upon himself the glory of becoming a high priest; but God said to him, ‘You are my Son: today I have become your Father.’ And he says in another place, ‘You are a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek.’” The time of the naming of Jesus as Son was at his exaltation and enthronement.<sup>823</sup> The collocation of priesthood and Sonship strongly suggest that Christ’s priesthood was also established at his exaltation.<sup>824</sup> That is, Christ’s exaltation was the moment of his calling, it was the moment of his investiture as Son.<sup>825</sup> Hebrews 7:28 reads, “For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for ever more” (KJV) The terms “high priest” and

<sup>817</sup> Romans 1, p.43.

<sup>818</sup> *Harmony of Matthew, Mark & Luke*, Calvin’s Commentaries 16, translator: W. Pringle, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1970), 1, p.157; *Hosea*, p.385.

<sup>819</sup> *Hosea*, p.388.

<sup>820</sup> *Harmony* 16, vol. 1, p.157; *Hosea*, p.385.

<sup>821</sup> *Kingdom of Priests* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1988), p.80.

<sup>822</sup> Isaiah 4, pp.8-9.

<sup>823</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NICNT, (Edinburgh, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1964), p.13;

William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC 47a, editor: D. A. Hubbard, (Dallas, Word Books, 1991), p.26; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, NIGTC, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1993), pp.113-114.

<sup>824</sup> Bruce, *Hebrews*, p.13; Lane, *Hebrews*, p.118.

<sup>825</sup> Cf., R. Gaffin, *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.98-113, 117-119.

"Son" are not merely parallel; the term high priest is replaced with the thought of Son, suggesting that both terms are correlative, though not necessarily synonymous. The sum is this: when Christ was called to Sonship, at that same moment he was also called to priesthood; moreover, his investiture constituted his call and the call was not merely the process leading to investiture.

### The call of the church

1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." E. Clowney declares that as Israel was called out of darkness into God's glory, so the people of God were brought from darkness into the light of eternal morning at Jesus resurrection. This call is from darkness unto light; we who were formerly darkness are made light.<sup>826</sup> The calling of God's people is their redemption, and their calling is patterned after the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, says Wayne Grudem.<sup>827</sup> J. N. D. Kelly sees the redemption of Israel from Egypt as *the* redemptive act of God in the Old Testament; *the* redemptive act of God in the New Testament is the calling of Christ, his resurrection from the dead and his glorification, whereby the New Israel are saved.<sup>828</sup> Calvin says that the calling of the believer is his resurrection.<sup>829</sup> H. Ridderbos roots the call of the saints (Rom.1:6-7; 8:28; 1 Cor.1:2, 24; cf., Is.41:9; 42:6; 43:1; 45:3; 48:12; 51:2; also, Ex.12:16; Lev.23ff (LXX)) in the call of Israel to be holy.<sup>830</sup> In 1 Peter 2:9, the call of the saints whom Peter is speaking to, is parallel to the calling of the nation of Israel. He is teaching that God's call is of his elect as a body- a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The call of the church can hardly be patterned after Israel's call, if the church's call is, strictly speaking, a sub-conscious deliverance, merely uniting us with Christ in an initial sense. Israel's call terminated with its deliverance; its call did not merely result in deliverance. If the church's call is "in" Christ's call, then it is coterminous with the church's investiture as sons and priests. In Romans, Paul thinks sonship and calling are coterminous. In Hebrews, Christ's calling, sonship and priesthood are also coterminous. The church is called to priesthood and holiness. There is no indication, in the above cases, that there are any logic stages, therefore, between calling, sonship, priesthood and holiness.

<sup>826</sup> *The Message of 1 Peter*, BST, editor: J. Stott, (Leicester, IVP, 1988), p.97.

<sup>827</sup> *1 Peter*, TNTC, (Leicester, IVP, 1988), p.111.

<sup>828</sup> *The Epistles of Peter and of Jude*, BNTC, (London, A & C Black, 1990), p.99.

<sup>829</sup> *Inst.3:14:5*.

<sup>830</sup> *Paul*, pp.332-333.

Murray listed the various goals of calling. In *Paul*, the believer is called *into* fellowship with Christ (1 Cor.1:9), and the fellowship of the saints (Col.3:15). He is also called *to* the peace of God (1 Cor.7:15). We saw in Reconciliation, that in Pauline thought, peace is a doctrine that belongs to the province of the resurrection. God called us to holiness (1 Thes.4:7); and, as we will see in Sanctification, *for Paul* holiness or sanctification belongs to the resurrection realm. He says that we were called to be free (Gal.5:13). In Adoption, freedom will be described as a "resurrection" doctrine. The saint is also called to hope (Eph.1:18; cf., 4:4). It is equated with the inheritance of the saints. Once more, in Adoption the inheritance is shown to be located in the resurrection realm. The saint is also called to the kingdom of God's glory (1 Thes.2:12). God's kingdom and the inheritance of the saints are the same concept. It is said in 2 Thessalonians 2:14 that the believer was called to faith and sanctification, and will ultimately be called to glory. All of these concepts belong to the resurrection realm in Pauline thought (see, Faith, etc.; Sanctification). The saint is called to eternal life, another resurrection blessing (see Justification by Faith 2). There are two texts that give no indication as to whether they belong to the realm of the cross or the realm of the resurrection: Galatians 1:15-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 24.

It would seem, therefore, that Paul taught that the believer is not called from something but to something- the resurrection realm.

### CONCLUSION

Murray said that God the Father calls the sinner by uniting him to Christ, bringing the sinner from spiritual darkness into spiritual light.

Murray's view of calling was imperfect, in that it entailed that God's calling does not really transform the sinner, for it is the power of the Spirit- to use Murray's doctrine- that transforms in regeneration. Also, he argued that calling was the first movement of union with Christ; but this created a contradiction, for Murray also said that union was effected when the sinner exercised faith.

The calling of Israel from Egypt was the pattern for Christ's call and the church's, said Calvin. In Israel's call and Christ's call, there was no indication of logic stages, we said. The church's call was "in Christ". We concluded that the church's call was, as his, and after the pattern of his,



coterminous with faith, sonship, priesthood and holiness. Effectual calling is God's activity of bringing sinners from spiritual darkness into spiritual light, however, this process is, from the human perspective, fulfilled in faith; it is the proof that we have been adopted, sanctified, glorified, etc..

Having said this of Calvin, he does not escape an *ordo salutis*. To him, regeneration is the equivalent of effectual calling, and regeneration is a logic stage before faith (see Regeneration).

Central to the calling of the saints is their resurrection in Christ's resurrection. The Spirit raised Christ from the dead. His resurrection was the moment of his calling. Therefore, it is possible that the Spirit called Christ. Because of the saints' union with Christ in his call, the realisation of his call in their existential spiritual resurrection should probably be denominated as a call, and the Holy Spirit should probably be taken as the co-author of this call. Calvin did not hesitate to say that the Spirit called the church. We also saw that he was right to conclude that the Son calls the church.

Continuing the theme of union with Christ in his resurrection, according to Paul, effectual calling is located within the two aeon distinction: it refers to a calling into the resurrection realm, and not a calling from the province of the cross.

Now to embark upon an evaluation of Murray's doctrine of regeneration.

## Chapter 11: Regeneration

S. Ferguson writes, 'To have clear views [on regeneration], is to pave the way for all the other doctrines of the Christian life; to mistake the way here, conversely, will mean that the whole of our understanding is seriously at fault.'<sup>831</sup> Murray's teaching on regeneration divides into three: the prerequisites and definition of regeneration; the Old Testament evidence of regeneration; and the New Testament evidence of regeneration.

### STATEMENT

#### THE PREREQUISITES AND DEFINITION OF REGENERATION<sup>832</sup>

There are prerequisites to understanding regeneration. First, there is total depravity. Every aspect of man's being or constitution has been corrupted by sin and is against God (Gen.6:5; Jer.17:9; Rom.8:6-8; 2 Pet.2:19). Second, there is universal sinfulness. Every man and all kinds of men have sinned against God (Rom.3:10-12). Therefore, it is impossible for a man to approach God by his own strength or volition (Jh.6:44, 65; Rom.8:8; 1 Cor.2:14). The *habitus*, or subjective disposition, of man needs to be renewed or recreated. Regeneration is not an awakening or resuscitation of a dormant or latent principle of life. Regeneration is the impartation of a new principle in the subjective disposition, the 'governing disposition, the character, the mind and will' of man. Consequently, 'sin and pollution are dethroned in the citadel of man's being, and righteousness takes its place.' Having been renewed, the sinner can now respond to the gospel's call.<sup>833</sup>

Regeneration is the resurrection of the soul from death to life by the power of the Holy Spirit. The new principle imparted must be distinguished from an activation of it by man in the form of faith, repentance and conversion. 'To be born is one thing; to be active as a new-born child is another.' Activation follows immediately upon impartation. Murray cites S. Charnock, J.

<sup>831</sup> *Christian Life*, p.47.

<sup>832</sup> See *RA*, pp.95-105; *CW* 2, pp.77-92; *Romans* 1, pp.34-107; "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes V", pp.27-29.

<sup>833</sup> *CW* 2, pp.168-171.

Edwards, and B. B. Warfield as those who support the same doctrine.<sup>834</sup> 'Regeneration effects that principal conformity to the image of God in righteousness and holiness.'<sup>835</sup>

Arminianism teaches that the ability to believe resides within all men, either through a gracious bestowal or by natural possession. It is said that this explains the difference of response by men: it is the free will of man that decides whether to utilise the resident grace. God regenerates those who believe. The Arminian doctrine is aberrant, asserts Murray, because it demands that there is a vestige of goodness within man, but there is no such vestige. Arminian logic is in direct confrontation with the *Confession*, and is 'a position that leads to the wreck and ruin of true evangelicalism.'<sup>836</sup>

Regeneration and conversion must be distinguished:

In later Reformed theology, the term *regeneration* has been chosen to designate the initial act, that act in which God alone is active, while conversion is frequently used to designate the logically subsequent phase in which the person is active as a result of the grace which in regeneration has been imparted to him, and in connection with which the person's consciousness is engaged in the exercise of faith and repentance.<sup>837</sup>

Regeneration and adoption must also be differentiated. Regeneration is not adoption. Regeneration is the act of God wherein he gives the *nature* of a son to the sinner. By regeneration the people of God are made members of God's kingdom (John 3:3, 5), by adoption members of his family (Gal. 4:5-6; Jh.1:12-13).<sup>838</sup> Murray notes, 'Sonship, [John] indicates [in John 1:12], is instituted by the bestowment of a right and this is to be distinguished from the regeneration spoken of in verse 13...regeneration (v. 13), the reception of Christ, the bestowal of authority, and becoming thereby children of God (v. 12)...'.<sup>839</sup> Even the Old Testament refers to Fatherhood by adoption (Mal.2:10; Is.43:1, 7, 9; cf. 64:8, 9).<sup>840</sup>

## OLD TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

<sup>834</sup> Ibid., pp.171-172.

<sup>835</sup> Ibid., p.228.

<sup>836</sup> "The Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes V", pp.28-29.

<sup>837</sup> CW 2, p.172.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid., p.229.

<sup>839</sup> Ibid., pp.228-229.

<sup>840</sup> Ibid., p.227.

Circumcision of the heart is evidence of regeneration (Dt.10:16; 30:6). God wrote his law on the Israelites' hearts (Jer.24:27; 31:33; cf., 32:39). Verse 27 of Ezekiel 36:25-27 also pertains to regeneration, "And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgements and do them", (cf., 11:19). In support, Murray cites Warfield [*Biblical Doctrines*, p.445], "The recreative activity of the Spirit of God is made the crowning Messianic blessing (Isa.32:15, 34:16, 44:3, 59:21, Ezek.11:19, 18:31, 36:27, 37:14, 39:29, Zech.12:10)....".<sup>841</sup> Exodus 6:12, 30; Leviticus 19:23;<sup>842</sup> 26:41; Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 6:10; 9:25 reveal that circumcision has the import of the removal of defilement.<sup>843</sup>

## NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

### The teaching of John

John 1:12-13. '*Tekna theou* ("children of God"). *Tekna* comes from *tektein* which means "to beget". *Teknon* probably implies therefore a real communication of life from God.'<sup>844</sup>

"Bloods" (*haimaton*) is variously defined as the two sexes (Augustine), as the numbers in our lineage who have participated in our nature and position, as the constituent parts of blood (Godet, Meyer, and Bernard), and as the material out of which the body is formed (Westcott). Whatever "bloods" meaning, John wants to show that generation is not by 'natural physical procreation, descent or heredity.' Human generation has no part whatever in spiritual generation.<sup>845</sup>

"Not by the will of the flesh (*sarx*)". 'Not by physical instinct, not by sexual desire, not by impulses that spring from the operation of the flesh, not by human volition or purpose, whether with or without ethical depreciation.'<sup>846</sup>

"Not of the will of man". '*Aner* is used of the male in distinction from the female. It is not even by the volition and purpose of man.'<sup>847</sup>

<sup>841</sup> *ibid.*, pp.173-174.

<sup>842</sup> These three texts have nothing at all to do with circumcision.

<sup>843</sup> *Christian Baptism*, p.47.

<sup>844</sup> *CW* 2, p.191.

<sup>845</sup> *ibid.*, p.192.

<sup>846</sup> *idem.*

<sup>847</sup> *idem.*

John 3:3-8. Verse 3. *Anothen* can be taken to mean either "from above" or "anew". Meyer and Bernard opt for the former. Meyer argues that John sees regeneration as a divine birth (Jh.1:13; 1 Jh.2:29; 3:9; 4:7, 18; 5:1). "Anew" is endorsed by Alford. He observes how the linguistic origin of *anothen* is Syriac for "anew". The Lord does use *deuteron* ("the second time", v4). But this might refer to a clarification given to Nicodemus, and *anothen* might mean "from above".<sup>848</sup>

The preponderant usage of *anothen* is "from above" (Mat.27:51; Mk.15:38; Jh.3:31; 19:11; Jm.1:17; 3:15, 17). The only instance of it meaning "again" in the New Testament is found in Galatians 4:9, where it appears in conjunction with *palin* ("again"). In Luke 1:3 and Acts 26:5, *anothen* means "from the beginning". (*Ano* always has the meaning of "from above" or "up".)<sup>849</sup>

Because new birth is from God and from the Spirit, there is a strong argument for "from above". If the meaning is "again", the context also wants to imply that it connotes "from above", because of *gennethe*.<sup>850</sup>

*Gennao* ("born") might mean "to beget" or "to bear". The former relates to the male act in procreation, the latter to the female act. Both senses are found in the New Testament.<sup>851</sup> *Gennao* means both when speaking of regeneration.<sup>852</sup>

The import of *gennao* in John 3 is significant, implying three things. (1) in natural birth, there is a new individual created, a new life formed, so in regeneration, a new life form is started which has no past. Thus, man possesses an inherent ability or capacity to be manipulated or nurtured, and to accomplish transformation. (2) the new thing is life. (3) the person begotten is passive. We did not decide to be born; nor did we decide to be spiritually born, for it is the exclusive work of the Spirit (cf., Jh.1:13), 'Not by synergism or co-operation do we enter into the kingdom of God.'<sup>853</sup>

<sup>848</sup> *ibid.*, pp.176-177.

<sup>849</sup> *ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>850</sup> *ibid.*, pp.177-178.

<sup>851</sup> Murray gives the following list: "to beget" (Mat.1:2-16a; Acts 7:8, 29; 13:33; 1 Cor.4:15; Heb.1:5; 5:5; 1 Jh.3:9; cf., 1 Jh.5:1); "to bear" (Lk.1:13, 57; 23:29; Jh.16:21; cf., Gal.4:23); and a figurative rendering of *gennao*, (and therefore open to meaning) (Jh.1:13; 3:3, 5, 6, 8; 1 Jh.2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). [CW 2, p.178.]

<sup>852</sup> CW 2, p.178.

<sup>853</sup> *ibid.*, pp.178-179.

The person who is born again, regenerated, "sees", understands, appreciates, "enters into", and participates in, the kingdom of God. <sup>854</sup>

Verse 5. "Except one be born of water and of Spirit". Are the two genitives *ex hudatos kai Pneumatos* hendiadys, one idea, as Calvin says? Murray quotes him, "By water, therefore, is meant nothing more than the inward purification and invigoration which is produced by the Holy Spirit." Or are the two phrases distinctive? There is a very close co-ordination between the two phrases, but Christ wanted to stress some peculiar aspect by "water". <sup>855</sup>

What is meant by *hudor* ("water")? Some say it refers to baptism. There are three variations of this view. There is the opinion that says baptism is indispensable to regeneration. Secondly, the conviction of Meyer, that baptism is the appointed means of regeneration, but only in conjunction with the Spirit who works efficiently and efficaciously through baptism. <sup>856</sup> Finally, the belief of some, for example, Alford, that baptism is the outward sign and confirmation of an inward spiritual change wrought by the Spirit. This view is not inconsistent with the context, nor with scripture, as in Acts 2:38, when Peter exhorted many to repent and be baptised. But baptism presupposes faith. <sup>857</sup>

If *hudor* means baptism, then "Spirit" must bear the same import. But this 'does not do justice to the expression' *hudor*; the text says "water", and there, therefore, must be some compelling reason for construing it as "baptism". Christian baptism was not established when Jesus met Nicodemus. 'Christian baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration rather than the means of effecting it.' The central significance of baptism is union with Christ, of which regeneration is an aspect. <sup>858</sup>

We should ask the question, what did Nicodemus believe "water" represented? It is reasonable to assume that Nicodemus came to Christ for a religious conversation. Water symbolised purification, according to Jewish thinking. Nicodemus needed cleansing from the impurity of self-righteousness, and purifying from the pollution and defilement of sin. The Old Testament often used "water" to mean 'washing and purification from the pollution of sin (cf. Psalm 51:2, 3;

<sup>854</sup> *ibid.*, p.179.

<sup>855</sup> *ibid.*, pp.179-180.

<sup>856</sup> In *Soteriology II*, p.5, Murray reasons that "washing of regeneration" (Tit.3:5) is referring to a figurative use of water-washing which is regeneration.

<sup>857</sup> CW 2., pp.180-181.

Isa.1:16; Jer.33:8; Ezek.36:25; Zech.13:1)'. Baptism accompanied Jesus, and implied purification (Jh.3:22, 26; 4:2).<sup>859</sup> John's baptism was unto repentance, and the remission and purification of sin (Jh.3:23).<sup>860</sup>

*Pneumatos* must refer to the Holy Spirit (cf., v.8; Jh.1:13; 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18), and corresponds to the new birth being "of God".<sup>861</sup>

Purification is the negative side of regeneration; the positive is the impartation of the Spirit. Nicodemus probably understood "water" to denote purification, and "Spirit" to mean the impartation of the Spirit. The two elements "born of water" and "born of the Spirit", found in John 3:5, correspond to Ezekiel 36:25-26, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from your impurities and from your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh", (cf., Ps.51:2, 7, 10).<sup>862</sup>

Verse 6. "That which is born of the flesh (*sarx*) is flesh (*sarx*)." This construction may connote that human nature cannot give rise to anything other than itself; and because human nature is born under the dominion of sin, then anything propagated by human nature will also be under the dominion of sin. Or *sarx* might refer to sinful human nature (Jh.6:63; 8:15). It is possible that the first use of *sarx* in John 3:6 equates to a non-ethical operation of the term, and the second an ethical, "that which is born of the Spirit [non-ethical use] is spirit [ethical]".<sup>863</sup>

Verse 8. "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Alford comments that *pneuma*, out of its 370 occurrences in the New Testament, only in John 3:8 means "wind", and that this is a conclusive argument for not translating it "wind". Origen, Augustine, Bernard and Bengel all adopt the same rendering.<sup>864</sup> The outcome of this interpretation is to say that "The Spirit breathes where he wills". The generic work of the Spirit- you hear his voice, but know not

<sup>858</sup> *ibid.*, p.181.

<sup>859</sup> *ibid.*, pp.181-182.

<sup>860</sup> Murray does not agree with Calvin [*Inst.*4:15:17-18] when he says that John's baptism was the same as that enjoined by Christ. John and Christ had different missions, therefore their baptisms signified different things. [*Christian Baptism*, pp.1-2.]

<sup>861</sup> *CW* 2, p.183.

<sup>862</sup> *ibid.*, p.184.

<sup>863</sup> *ibid.*, pp.184-186.

<sup>864</sup> *ibid.*, p.186.

where he comes from, or where he goes- is compared to the specific work of the Spirit- the Spirit giving birth. This argument is feasible. However, there are other considerations that lead to a different construction.<sup>865</sup> First, the analogy of scripture supports the view that the Spirit's work is regularly compared to something. Also, to argue that *pneuma* is wind is in alignment with our Lord's use of natural phenomena in order to illustrate spiritual truths.<sup>866</sup> The wind *blows*- reinforcing the efficacy and irresistibility of the Spirit's work. It blows where it *will*- emphasising the sovereignty of the Spirit. Its origin and destination are unknown- pointing to the invisibility and mysteriousness of the Spirit's work. You hear its sound- the Spirit's work or fruit is observable, 'that which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*'. [emphasis his]<sup>867</sup>

1 John. The concomitants of regeneration, as taught in 1 John, are inseparable from it. They are doing righteousness (2:29), love (4:7), believing in Jesus Christ (5:1), overcoming the world (5:4), not sinning, and immunity to the evil one (5:18). These verses are merely indicative of a concomitant relationship. 5:18 says the believer who is begotten does not sin; 3:9 tells us that it is *because* the believer is begotten he cannot sin, and 3:9 also expresses a causal relation between regeneration and its concomitant of not sinning. There is the suggestion, therefore, that the other verses cited also bear a causal meaning. 'As B. B. Warfield says, the "new life will necessarily bear the lineaments of his new parentage".'<sup>868</sup>

#### Pauline teaching

Man is bound over to Satan, to the lusts of his own heart, and is at enmity with God (1 Cor.6:9, 10; Gal.5:19-21; Eph.2:1-3, 11-13; 4:18, 22). Regeneration's source is traced to the grace, mercy and love of God (Tit.3:5; Eph.2:4-10). The agent of regeneration is God and more specifically the Spirit (Eph.2:10; 1 Cor.6:11; Rom.8:2; 2 Cor.3:16, 18; 1 Cor.15:45). Christ is the mediator of regeneration (Eph.2:10; 2 Cor.5:17). The nature of the operation and product of regeneration is that it is a new creation (Eph.2:10; 4:24; 2 Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15), a new life (Eph.2:1-5), and a new man (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10). The internal sphere of operation in regeneration is the spirit of the mind (Rom.12:2; Eph.4:23). The pattern of this renewal is God's image (Col.3:10; Eph.4:24; 2 Cor.3:18). The *terminus ad quem* of renewal is knowledge and good works (Col.3:10; Eph.2:10). The initial renewal of regeneration leads to active renewal on our part in sanctification (Eph.4:22-

<sup>865</sup> *ibid.*, pp.186-187.

<sup>866</sup> *ibid.*, p.187.

<sup>867</sup> *ibid.*, pp.187-188.

<sup>868</sup> *ibid.*, pp.193-194.



23; Col.3:8-9). The indwelling Spirit that initiated renewal in regeneration enables us to continue this process in sanctification (Phil.2:12-13).<sup>869</sup>

### Conclusion of biblical evidence

'Regeneration is the beginning of all saving grace in us'. [emphasis his]<sup>870</sup> Regeneration is not mediated through the word in the sense of the gospel preached to our consciousness. Murray cites Warfield [*Biblical Doctrines*, p.956] as commenting that regeneration is the immediate act of God upon the nature of man, in the subconscious. Both Murray and Warfield think that regeneration as an act of God in making a new creation. Regeneration is upon the subconsciousness of man's nature; faith and repentance are the acts of a regenerated mind, through its consciousness. Faith is the fruit of the newly implanted new creation. It is the Holy Spirit who effects change by regeneration because he is its source of it, author and agent.<sup>871</sup>

James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23. If God's word plays no part in regeneration, how do we understand James 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth", and 1 Peter 1:23, "being born

not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God"?<sup>872</sup>

By *apokueo* ("begat"), James may or may not be speaking of regeneration, because *apokueo* means emergence from the womb; it is probably is God's regenerative act that is meant. Birth is "from above" (v17; cf., Jh.3:3), and is of God's sovereign pleasure (v18; cf., Jh.3:3-8). In 1 Peter 1:23, regeneration is definitely meant, yet in a wider sense that includes the instrumentality of the word.<sup>873</sup>

"Regeneration" is used in two different senses. It is used:

- (1) in the restricted sense of recreative action on the part of God in which there is no intrusion in contribution of agency on our part; (2) in a more inclusive sense, that is to say, a sense broad enough to include the saving response and activity of our consciousness, a saving activity which is always through the Word of the truth of the gospel. In this sense it is virtually synonymous with the word conversion.<sup>874</sup>

<sup>869</sup> *ibid.*, pp.189-190.

<sup>870</sup> *RA*, p.103.

<sup>871</sup> *CW* 2, pp.195-196.

<sup>872</sup> *ibid.*, p.196.

<sup>873</sup> *ibid.*, pp.196-197.

### The corollaries of the causal priority of regeneration

*Regeneration and conversion.* Murray comments on the connection between faith and regeneration, 'But it may be objected that if regeneration precedes faith, then the person is saved before he believes... The answer to this objection is simply that there is no such state or condition of regeneration without faith always coincident; the priority of faith is logical and causal, not chronological.' <sup>875</sup>

Of the relationship of faith, repentance and regeneration, Murray comments:

Repentance consists essentially in change of heart and mind and will. The change of heart and mind and will principally respects four things: it is a change of mind respecting God, respecting ourselves, respecting sin and respecting righteousness. Apart from regeneration our thought of God, of ourselves, of sin, and of righteousness is radically perverted. Regeneration changes our hearts and minds; it radically renews them. Hence there is a radical change in our thinking and feeling. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. It is very important that the faith which is unto salvation is accompanied by that change of thought and attitude.... The emphasis upon repentance and upon the deep-seated change of thought and feeling which it involves is precisely what is necessary to correct this impoverished and soul-destroying conception of faith. [emphasis ours] <sup>876</sup>

*Regeneration and responsibility.* We can never make our own depravity and inability an excuse for not believing the gospel. God commands us to repent, and therefore we must. <sup>877</sup>

*Regeneration and free agency.* Our free agency is maintained in regeneration. The free agency of man is freed from serving sin in order to serve righteousness. <sup>878</sup>

*Regeneration and infancy.* Murray does not defend baptismal regeneration. Baptism does not convey the grace it signifies. <sup>879</sup> An infant may be regenerated, 'even though intelligent faith cannot be in exercise, nevertheless there is that which we may and must call the germ of faith. It is impossible for us to determine the extent to which regeneration affects the rudimentary consciousness of the infant... the heart and mind... are turned... towards God, towards faith in him,

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<sup>874</sup> *ibid.*, pp.197-198.  
<sup>875</sup> *ibid.*, p.262.

<sup>876</sup> *RA*, p.114.

<sup>877</sup> *ibid.*, pp.198-199.  
<sup>878</sup> *ibid.*, p.199.

<sup>879</sup> Murray therefore disagrees with 'Reformed theologians of the highest repute'. ['The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Salvation of Infants,' *The Presbyterian Guardian* 3 (1936), p.121.]

love and obedience to him.<sup>880</sup> If a child is regenerated, it is because the infant participates in the 'everlasting covenant'.<sup>881</sup>

The assurance of salvation in infants who have been regenerated and baptised<sup>882</sup> is obtained at a later date, namely, at the point of the exercise of faith in God's covenant.<sup>883</sup>

### Regeneration, baptism and circumcision

For both adults and infants, water baptism signifies, and is the seal of, three things: union and communion with the Godhead (cf., Jh.14:16-17, 23; 17:221-23);<sup>884</sup> regeneration; and justification by faith.<sup>885</sup> Four texts are central to understanding this teaching: Romans 6:3-6; 1 Corinthians 12:13;<sup>886</sup> Galatians 3:27-28;<sup>887</sup> and Colossians 2:11-12.<sup>888</sup>

Baptism is the new covenant's equivalent of circumcision (Col.2:11-12). Baptism 'represents purification from the defilement of sin, that is to say, regeneration' (Jh.3:5; Tit.3:5; 1 Cor.6:11). The spiritual washing with water is indispensable for union with Christ.<sup>889</sup> In Romans 2:28-29; 3:1, circumcision signifies the work of purification and renewal in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Spiritual circumcision 'is that work of grace in the heart which the external rite signifies.' In terms of the Old Testament, "circumcision" denotes 'renewal and purification of the heart (Deut.10:16; 30:6; Jer.44; 9:25, 26)' by the Holy Spirit.<sup>890</sup>

<sup>880</sup> CW 2, pp.199-201.

<sup>881</sup> *Christian Baptism*, p.87.

<sup>882</sup> According to Murray, only children of believing and communicant parents can be baptised. [*Christian Baptism*, pp.80-81.]

<sup>883</sup> *Christian Baptism*, pp.83-84, 86-89. Baptism is the consummation of discipleship, and is a mark of the church, reasons Murray. If someone is not baptised, then he cannot be accepted as a member of the church. [*Christian Baptism*, pp.42-43.]

<sup>884</sup> It is recognised by Murray that Calvin [*Inst.*4:15-16] does not consider this doctrine central to the significance of baptism; instead, the foundation of baptism is the purgation of sin by Christ's blood. Nevertheless, Calvin [*Inst.*4:15:1-6] does list union with the Godhead as an advantage of baptism. [Murray, *Christian Baptism*, p.3.]

<sup>885</sup> *Christian Baptism*, p.46-48.

<sup>886</sup> "For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free- and we were all given one Spirit to drink."

<sup>887</sup> "...for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

<sup>888</sup> "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised you from the dead."

<sup>889</sup> *Christian Baptism*, pp.4-5.

<sup>890</sup> Romans 1, pp.88-89, 91.

Circumcision also signifies cleansing from sin, the forgiveness of sins (Mt.3:6; Mk.1:4; Lk.3:3). Christian baptism is co-ordinated with the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet.3:21) and therefore denotes justification by faith.<sup>891</sup>

Writing on Romans 4:11-12, Murray reasons that circumcision signifies *faith*. He writes, 'As the sign and seal of the covenant [circumcision] was also the seal of faith and of the justification by faith apart from which the covenant is meaningless.'<sup>892</sup> Is faith an element of justification by faith, or is it distinct? Murray continues, by referring to Abraham's faith exhibited throughout his life as the same faith he initially exhibited.<sup>893</sup> Murray did not embrace the notion of continual justification. Therefore, it is to be concluded that he most probably saw "faith", as distinct from justification by faith. If it is distinct, it would seem that it represents another aspect that circumcision signified. Union with Christ underlies every step of the application of redemption.

<sup>894</sup> So it is possible that Murray would incorporate faith into union with Christ. If union with Christ is so fundamental, then why did Murray not include regeneration and justification by faith under it as well, when defining the meaning of circumcision and baptism? It must be borne in mind, that in his *ordo salutis* Murray makes a distinction in logic between faith and justification, and between union, justification and regeneration. Even accepting that Murray teaches that "circumcision" in Romans 4 signifies justification by faith, we must accept that he also comments that it signifies ongoing faith

We have noted before that Murray thinks that the spiritual baptism taught in Romans 6 refers to definitive sanctification (see Union with Christ). To definitive sanctification, Murray adds sanctification (*WCF* 28) as another member of the significance of baptism.<sup>895</sup>

## COMMENT

CALVIN

### Comparison

<sup>891</sup> *Christian Baptism*, p.5.  
<sup>892</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.137-138.

<sup>893</sup> *ibid.* p.138.  
<sup>894</sup> *RA*, p.161.

<sup>895</sup> *CW* 2, p.371.

In reality, our adoption, or regeneration, says Calvin, begins the moment we are internally renewed (see Adoption). Our perception of this work happens only after we believe:

...faith...is the fruit of spiritual regeneration. For the Evangelist says none can believe save he who is begotten of God...It seems as if the Evangelist has put things back to front by making regeneration prior to faith, since it is the result of faith and therefore follows it. I reply, that the two orders are in perfect agreement: by faith we conceive the incorruptible seed by which we are born again to new and divine life; and also, faith is itself the work of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in none by the children of God. Thus, in many respects, faith is a part of our regeneration, an entering into the Kingdom of God, that He may number us among His children. The enlightening of our minds by the Holy Spirit belongs to our renewal. So faith flows from its source, regeneration. But since by this same faith we receive Christ, who sanctifies us by His Spirit, it is called the beginning of our adoption. Of course, another distinction can be advanced which is clearer and more straightforward. When the Lord breathes faith into us He regenerates us in a hidden and secret way that is unknown to us. But when faith has been given, we grasp with a lively awareness not only the grace of adoption but also newness of life and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. For since, as we have said, faith receives Christ, it leads us in a sense to the possession of all His blessings. Thus so far as our attitude is concerned, we begin to be sons of God only after we believe.<sup>896</sup>

Regeneration, to Calvin, is something that is perspectival. The first aspect or perspective is the divine one: God by his Spirit indwelling the believer creates faith within the believer. This divine work is unknown to us, secret; because it is secret to us, then it is not perceivable by our consciousnesses. It is a work upon our minds. It is a renewal. The second perspective is that by faith we beget the seed of life. That is, in faith we are united with Christ, and he gives to us the gift of newness of life, again, by his Spirit. The second perspective is our own perception of the one work of regeneration.

There is more that needs to be said on Calvin's notion of perspectival regeneration. The ungodly do not receive the admonitions of the Lord. Why is it that admonitions are effective with the godly, asks Calvin? They are because the Spirit who does not omit the 'instrumentality of his word', and who comes with the call of the gospel, though separate to it, acts within the sinner, carefully inviting 'those who must be taught inwardly by the Spirit before they can make profit' of the word. The believer is now in a state to receive the gospel. Internal circumcision is all of God and nothing of man. It is God who creates the will in order that we might do, that we might

<sup>896</sup> John 1-10, p.18-19. Cf., *Inst.* 3:3:1.

circumcise ourselves.<sup>897</sup> So there is a work of the Spirit without the word, and there is a work with the word. 'God works in his elect in two ways: inwardly, by his Spirit; outwardly, by his Word. By his Spirit illuminating their minds, and training their hearts to the practice of righteousness, he makes them new creatures, while by his Word, he stimulates them to long and seek for renovation.'<sup>898</sup> The work without the word can be called regeneration narrowly defined-Murray's definition of regeneration. The work with the word can be called sanctification; this work equates to spiritual circumcision by man. The second work, the work of the word, corresponds to the human perspective; it is the work of God through man, wherein the believer exercises faith, and, consequently, there is stimulated within him the longing to be sanctified, which is fulfilled in actual reception of the newness of life. Thus, the view that Calvin put justification before regeneration<sup>899</sup> is too simplistic, though it is partly true.

### Evaluation

Murray's *ordo salutis* entails that we are united to Christ and receive eternal life before faith. He tried to counter this by stating that regeneration is never separated from faith. This is appreciated. However, in *logic terms* he still has the difficulty of trying to reconcile that we can logically receive eternal life in regeneration, at least principally, before the exercise of faith.

Calvin speaks of double regeneration: the Spirit regenerates secretly; and the believer conceives the seed of life. If the Spirit has already planted the seed of life, why is there a need to have the believer implant the same seed? Herein is a repetition of the problem Murray incurred in his doctrine of union with Christ.

## REGENERATION, THE WORD AND FAITH

### Dichotomy

In Reformed circles, there has been the tendency, thinks Strimple, to separate the word from the Spirit in regeneration. He cites Abraham Kuyper as an example of a theologian who makes this dichotomy.<sup>900</sup> Strimple holds that Murray never divorces regeneration from the word: effectual calling of the word carries within its bosom the power of regeneration, and the sinner believes in the word. This keeps Murray, he determines, from a pure mysticism that holds that God's

<sup>897</sup> *Inst.* 2:4:1, 6, 9, 10, 11; 2:5:8, 11, 15.

<sup>898</sup> *ibid.*, 2:5:5. Cf., 2:20; 2:3:1; *John* 1-10, p.65; *John* 11-20, p.273.

<sup>899</sup> Editorial, *Present Truth* 5:6 (Sept., 1976), p.16.

<sup>900</sup> Tape, *Regeneration* 2 (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

regenerative work is achieved in a mystical manner without the word.<sup>901</sup> There is an organic relationship between the word, effectual calling and regeneration, says Murray. Yet, it is the Spirit separated from the word, though accompanying it, who transforms us, Murray concludes. To our mind, this position is ultimately no different to Kuyper's. The sum of both is this: in effecting regeneration the Spirit works, without using the word, in (upon) an individual.<sup>902</sup>

### Regeneration and infant salvation

The most obvious example of a dichotomy between regeneration and God's word is found in Murray's teaching on infant regeneration. Regeneration is possible in infants, he believes, because it does not involve the *direct* utilisation of the word. Thus, the infant who cannot exercise faith can be regenerated by the Spirit's power without the infant having heard the gospel.<sup>903</sup> This view has problems. First, there is no evidence adduced by Murray that would suggest that infants are regenerated *per se*. Second, he says the regenerated infant exercises the germ of faith. But he makes no attempt to define "germ" and thereby covers himself in ambiguity. It is a germ of *faith*, the emphasis being upon faith. Yet, faith in a New Testament soteriological sense is always a specific act of trust in the God of the bible, and more specifically, in his promise of salvation in Christ Jesus. *In what sense* can a baby, which cannot properly reason and think (in terms of faith), exercise some *cognition* of God and his promise?<sup>904</sup> At the very least, Murray should have distinguished between New Testament faith and the "germ of faith" exercised by some infants.

### Regeneration and the sufficiency of scripture

The dichotomy between the word and the Spirit is magnified if Murray's doctrine of the sufficiency of scripture is compared with his doctrine of regeneration. The scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only infallible rule of practice, he says. The word of God is the 'perfect and sufficient rule of practice', and is 'relevant to every situation in which we are placed,

<sup>901</sup> Tape, *Regeneration* 3 (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

<sup>902</sup> H. Burkhardt claims that regeneration is the same act as conversion, and that to put it before conversion would be mysticism, and to place it afterward would result in synergism. ["Regeneration," *NDT*, p.574.]

<sup>903</sup> The gap between the word and the Spirit has been accentuated by some Reformed theologians. L. Berkhof writes that it is possible that those who 'live under the administration of the covenant' may have 'an interval between the time of their regeneration and effectual calling.' [*Systematic Theology*, p.471.] Murray does not assent to this doctrine.

<sup>904</sup> Otto Webber accuses Calvin of baptismal regeneration. [*Foundations of Dogmatics* 2, translator: D. L. Guder, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983), p.353. Cf., Martin Luther, *Small Catechism*, Third Article; R. S. Wallace, *Word and Sacrament*, pp.159-196. For a thorough, though not quite up-to-date, discussion of baptismal regeneration, see G. C. Berkouwer, *The Sacraments* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969), pp.11-133.]

and in one way or another bears upon every detail and circumstance in our life'. 'The corollary of this is that we may not look for, depend upon, or demand new revelations of the Spirit.'<sup>905</sup>

But, is it possible for God to work in relation to our salvation without the word? In his sermon on 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Murray declares that scripture is corrective and informative of doctrine; scripture reproves our errors; it corrects perversity of thought that ensnares us in ungodliness; scripture produces and promotes righteousness, that is, corrects ethical behaviour. Thus, Murray thinks that *sanctification* and *faith* are generated by, or through, the word. The Spirit never works apart from the word in effecting sanctification and faith. The logical sum of Murray's reasoning is that he undermines the sufficiency of scripture by arguing that the Spirit regenerates without the direct implementation of the word upon the subconscious; for this implies that the word of God is not sufficient to transform the subconscious.

#### Regeneration and the transformation of the whole man

Dabney says that the soul is a "monad", a unit;<sup>906</sup> the whole man is renewed in regeneration; Murray says the mind, character, will, soul, indeed everything in man, are transformed. Obedience to God and faith are the registering of regeneration in the consciousness, continued Murray. It is not directly effected by regeneration, according to him. If the whole man is transformed, then the subconscious and the conscience must also be transformed- to use Murray's understanding of regeneration. But what are consciousness and subconsciousness? How do they differ from the heart, mind, and will? He writes of the "mind" in Romans 12:2, 'Sanctification is a process of revolutionary change in that which is *the centre of the consciousness*.' [emphasis ours]<sup>907</sup> It would seem from this that the mind is part of the consciousness. Maybe Murray would wish to say that the mind is also the centre of the subconsciousness. If so, it would need distinct reasoning to show how the subconsciousness is not directly impinged upon in regeneration; but Murray does not provide such evidence. We would suggest that this whole area poses problems for him. The most outstanding example being his usage of Romans 12:2 as a proof text for regeneration. This text, according to him, is concerned with sanctification.

There is still another question outstanding, what is renewed in sanctification? If man is a monad, what is renewed in sanctification must be the whole man, conscience and sub-conscious.

<sup>905</sup> CW 1, pp.186-187.

<sup>906</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p.571.

<sup>907</sup> Romans 2, p.114. Renewal (*ἀνακαινώσει*) in Romans 12:2 is reflective of resurrection-faith theology, concludes Gaffin. [*Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.140-141, 61-62, 109, 126.]



Murray's categories. If we say that merely the conscience is renewed, how can we refer to the whole man being transformed? Further, if the sub-conscience is transformed by the word in sanctification, then what is to stop it being transformed by the word in regeneration? If the whole man is regenerated, then we must also refer to the resurrection as consummation of the regeneration of man, even although such a doctrine is not stated.<sup>908</sup> All of these comments are to argue within Murray's system of thought found in his doctrine of regeneration.

## BAPTISM AND CIRCUMCISION

What exactly do the rites of circumcision and baptism signify to him? To the *exclusive* definition of the signification of circumcision as union, justification and regeneration, he *adds* ongoing faith, sanctification, and definitive sanctification. This exposes the problems with a strict *ordo salutis*: an *ordo salutis* depends on the uniqueness of each of its loci; for him, to say that baptism signifies only union, justification and regeneration means he cannot then add to this definition other loci.

<sup>908</sup> Non-rational creation will experience a regeneration at the revealing of the adoption of sons at the resurrection (Rm.8:19). Murray writes, 'It is most reasonable to regard the ἀποκαταστάσις πάντων of Acts 3:21 as referring to this same regeneration. In Matt.19:28 παλιγγενεσία has frequently been interpreted in the same way.' [Romans 1, p.302.] Angels are not referred to in Romans 8:19 because they were not subjected to bondage. Satan and his host are excluded because they do not long for the revealing of the sons. The sons of God cannot be meant, for they are distinguished from "the creation" (vv19, 21, 23). [ibid., pp.301-302.] The glory that creation will share in is that of the sons of God (Rom.8:21). This glory 'must not be conceived of apart from the cosmic regeneration- the glory of the people of God will be in the context of the restitution of all things (cf. Acts. 2:31).' Creation is groaning until its new birth takes place. [ibid., pp.304-305.] The groaning of the believer (Rom.8:23) is not 'the idea of travailing in birth', as was mentioned of inanimate creation in Romans 8:19. Yet, the sons' groaning portends their liberation, as does the groaning of inanimate creation portend its own liberation. [ibid., p.307.] The renewal of creation is its regeneration, but the resurrection of God's people is not their regeneration, Murray says. The co-ordination and correlativity of the regeneration of inanimate creation and the resurrection of believers might allude to a closer link between both, we think. For example, Ferguson thinks that the resurrection of Christ was his regeneration. He rose as the first of many. Consequently, our future resurrection is also our regeneration. Mysteriously, we experience future regeneration here and now through union with Christ. So Ferguson writes of James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:3, 23:

Regeneration is causally rooted in the resurrection of Christ....Like produces like; our regeneration is the fruit of Christ's resurrection. In union with him it is effected here and now, and will be consummated at his return. He is the firstfruits of the resurrection-regeneration of the end time; we will participate in the final harvest, but already, through the bond of union in the Holy Spirit, we share in the firstfruits (Rom.8:23). [Holy Spirit, p.119.]

## PROGRESSIVE REGENERATION?

Peter Wilcox is correct to maintain that Calvin understood regeneration as event and process.<sup>909</sup> "New birth" *per se*, is a definitive event; there is no *explicit* evidence of it being progressive. Like Calvin, B. B. Warfield argued for "renewal" as a wider process than regeneration narrowly defined; he also argued for regeneration as narrowly defined. But he does not refer to the new birth as being a progressive motion.<sup>910</sup> We think that Calvin was theologically correct. In Pauline theology, *renewal- we are not referring to new birth-* is a process that belongs to the resurrection realm. However, John's epistles do not explicitly refer to continuous new birth. But if we accept the premise that we are continuously dying to sin and living unto righteousness, then this might be grounds for saying that *in theological terms* we are said to be continuously born-again.

## OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS

Psalms 51: 2, 7, 10 are the confessions of a believer, and cannot be used, therefore, to support Murray's view of regeneration. If these texts are to be used as proof, then it must be concluded that regeneration is a progressive process because David, *a believer*, asks to be cleansed from his sins. That is the way Calvin interprets Psalm 51.<sup>911</sup> Keil paraphrases Psalm 51:5-6 as 'flesh born of flesh,'<sup>912</sup> language reminiscent of John 3:6, "Flesh gives birth to flesh". Is Christ, or John, alluding to Psalm 51? If so, then the "new birth" of John 3 is correlated to the concept of renewal in Psalm 51.<sup>913</sup>

Texts such as Deuteronomy 10: 16;<sup>914</sup> Ezekiel 18:31;<sup>915</sup> and Jeremiah 4:4<sup>916</sup> teach that the Israelites are to circumcise their own hearts.

<sup>909</sup> "Conversion in the Thought and Experience of John Calvin," *Anvil* 14:2 (1997), pp.118-125.  
<sup>910</sup> *Biblical Doctrines*, pp.439-463.  
<sup>911</sup> *Inst.* 2:5:8, 11.

<sup>912</sup> *Commentary on the Old Testament: Psalms*, (Peabody: Massachussetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), 2, p.137.

<sup>913</sup> Cf., W. Hendriksen, *John* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1987), p.134.

<sup>914</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch 1 & 2*, translator: J. Martin, (Peabody: Massachussetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), vol.2: p.345, vol.1., p.227.

<sup>915</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Ezekiel, Daniel*, translator: J. Martin, (Peabody: Massachussetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), p.256.

<sup>916</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Jeremiah and Lamentations*, translator: J. Martin, (Peabody: Massachussetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), p.104.

In Isaiah 34:16, Yahweh utters that his Spirit will gather Israel together. The coming together of the Israelites is the work of the Spirit, entailing that his work is co-extensive with the coming together of the Israelites: his work does not finish until *they* come together, and this event surely involves their volitions in an act of obedience. Zechariah 12:10 expresses that the Israelites will receive a Spirit of supplication and grace. It is possible that no more is meant than to say that the supplications of the Israelites are co-extensive with the work of the Spirit; it is not merely preparatory unto supplication, it is the giving of supplication, and supplication is an act of faith.<sup>917</sup> Ezekiel 11:19 says that Israel will receive an “undivided heart”. That is, Israel will be obedient and not disobedient (cf., v20). An undivided heart as a quality is ethical, and is not passive; it speaks of obedience as opposed to disobedience. The text does not refer merely to the implantation of a principle of life that *then* gives rise to obedience; for obedience is integral to the definition of an undivided heart.<sup>918</sup> Notice how in Ezekiel 37:7, 9, 12, it is in the act of Ezekiel’s prophesying that the Spirit is given, and he resurrects the bones. Israel did eventually come out of exile, having heard, and responded to, the words of the prophet. The hearing done by Israel was of a physical quality: the hearing of faith, the conscious man; it was not a subconscious listening, which is something that Murray argues is integral to regeneration *per se*.<sup>919</sup>

What about the clear references to the exclusivity of the work of God in transformation, as found in Deuteronomy 30:6; Isaiah 44:3; 59:21; and Ezekiel 36:25-27; 37:14; 39:29? It was God who renewed Israel. Renewal does imply *complete* renewal, and it is not complete until the nation is submissive to God, which entails the activity of faith on the part of the Israelites. Even the faith of Israel comes from God. This is to say that the exclusivity of God’s work, his divine monergism, is one angle of viewing the synergistic motion of God working through the repentance of his people. That is, the faith of his people is not mentioned but is implied.

Murray quotes Warfield, who says, “The recreative activity of the Spirit of God is made the crowning Messianic blessing (Isa.32:15; 34:16; 44:3; 59:21; Ezek.11:19; 36:27; 37:14; 39:29; Zech.12:10).” The quotation continues, ‘and this is as much as to say that the promised Messianic salvation included in it provision for the renewal of men’s hearts as well as for the expiation of their guilt.’<sup>920</sup> Notice how the “promise” widens to include expiation (meaning

<sup>917</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament: Minor Prophets*, translator: J. Martin, (Peabody: Massachussets, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989), p.387.

<sup>918</sup> C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Ezekiel, Daniel*, pp.152-153.

<sup>919</sup> Cf., Keil and F. Delitzsch, *ibid.*, pp.126-127.

<sup>920</sup> *Biblical Doctrines*, p.445.

justification, probably). How can regeneration *per se* be the crowning blessing, if it is coupled with justification? it has to be one or the other, or both at the same time; it cannot be both and, at the same time, only regeneration. What does Murray mean when he cites Warfield's words "crowning Messianic blessing"? According to Murray, the ultimate blessing in the Christian life is adoption, or to be made sons of God.<sup>921</sup>

## NEW TESTAMENT TEXTS

### John 1:12-13

*Adoption and regeneration.* There are a number of things that can be said of Murray's exegesis of John 1:12-13. Let us first of all comment that "adoption" is not a Johanine concept but a Pauline one- *contra* Murray and Calvin.<sup>922</sup> Burkhardt affirms that 'Paul is not concerned with the origin of sonship (*ed [sic] theou*, that is "from God,"), but with the believer's present position.'<sup>923</sup> This is too strong a statement. The very fact that Paul refers to birth by or from the Spirit (Gal.4:21-31) is proof enough that he was "interested" in the *origin* of sonship. It is difficult to articulate the difference of emphasis between John and Paul concerning new birth, nevertheless, overlap does not entail that John taught adoption.

Murray's idea is that in adoption God constitutes us sons. John 1:12, on the other hand, says that we were given authority to *become* sons. In John's gospel, "right" (ἐξουσία) conveys the notion that one has *authority* to do something, to act, and, by extension, one has the *power* to do something (5:27; 10:18; 17:2; 19:10-11). The act of believing was the point of becoming a son; those who believed only did so through the authority or power invested in them by God.<sup>924</sup>

Murray appeals to Old Testament texts that describe God's renewing or creative power, his regenerating power (Malachi 2:10; Is.43:1, 7, 9; cf. 64:8, 9), in order to corroborate his view of New Testament adoption. Because these texts refer to renewal, then, strictly speaking, they have nothing to do with Murray's definition of adoption, because he thinks that adoption is, in logic terms, after regeneration.

<sup>921</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.35.  
<sup>922</sup> *John 1-10*, p.19.

<sup>923</sup> *Doctrine of Regeneration*, p.26.  
<sup>924</sup> Edwyn Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, editor: F. N. Davey, revised edition, (London, Faber and Faber, Ltd, 1947), p.146.

Old Testament sonship, which Murray acknowledges as the shadow of New Testament sonship, knows not of a situation where to be in the kingdom is lesser to being in the family of God. Not only were Israelites constituted the sons of God at the exodus, but they were also, by that same event, made a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex.19:6). The Old Testament accounts for the relationship that God has with his people in various ways, with each variation shedding light on the unique union that he has with them.<sup>925</sup>

### Principal sonship

Adoption is the point at which we are truly made sons, says Murray. This is not a proper point for consummation of regeneration- to use his system. If regeneration is an ethical work, then its proper consummation must also be found in an ethical work, a work within our natures. Adoption, believes Murray, is a status, and not a work wrought upon the soul.<sup>926</sup> The implications are stark: we receive a sonship that is *principally* begun in regeneration but which is not consummated in an ethical manner; consequently, the sonship of *status* originates from nowhere. By regeneration the people of God are made members of God's kingdom (Jh.3:3, 5); by adoption members of his family (Gal. 4:5-6; Jh.1:12-13), declares Murray. Again, this is not quite precise; for if regeneration is to be made a son principally, it is also to be made a member of God's family after a principal or pre-faith fashion; or we might say that the kingdom of God is only a principal or pre-faith notion. None of these things are biblical, and we are sure Murray would agree.

## JOHN 3:3-21

### Basic exegesis

To "see" and "enter into" the kingdom (Jh.3:3) are acts of faith, as Murray implies. Yet, "life" in John's gospel is resurrection or spiritual life, and is received by faith.<sup>927</sup> Faith is not only a possession of the soul, as seen as some kind of deposit that effects the soul, it is a style of existence, a dynamic- a seeing, and an entering. It is both possession and dynamic.

<sup>925</sup> See Calvin, *Romans*, p.96; *John 1-10*, p.19; *Genesis*, p.445; *Inst.*3:2:1.

<sup>926</sup> Adoption is a forensic act like justification, because adoption describes the fact that we become sons by a legal act, "by a act of translation and instatement"; [*Soteriology II*, p.36] adoption is an objective and a non-subjective state, therefore. [*CW* 2, p.228.]

<sup>927</sup> Carson, *John*, p.119; J. L. Neulsen, "Regeneration," *ISBE* 4, p.69; Peter Toon, *Born Again* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1987), p.31.

Carson maintains that Christ is probably still speaking in verse 15.<sup>928</sup> We conclude, therefore, that verses 1-15 are probably a unit. If so, then in Murray's construction, Jesus moves from regeneration (vv1-13) to eternal life through faith (vv14-15), thus giving us two major themes. Our alternative proposal puts the whole emphasis of John 3:1-15 upon regeneration. Verses 1-13 emphasise the Spirit's activity in this process, though the act of man is briefly mentioned- "seeing" and "entering". And verses 14-15 convey man's activity in effecting regeneration, viz., faith,<sup>929</sup> though the divine aspect is also prominent, in that it was God who healed the Israelites- it is through faith in the Son of Man eternal life comes. The lifting up of the snake in the desert effected a physical *transformation* in the Israelites who exercised faith. And this is a shadow of the work of spiritual regeneration in the life of the individual, and that work comes through faith in the Son of Man. To use an illustration, verses 1-13 give us a "behind the scenes" view of regeneration, whilst verses 14-15 are a "stage" sight of it. Edersheim writes:

A symbol this, showing forth two elements: negatively, the putting away of the past in their dead death [*sic*] (the serpent no longer living, but a brazen serpent); and positively, in the look of faith and hope....The meaning which tradition attached to it was that Israel lifted up their eyes, not merely to the serpent, but rather to their Father in heaven, and had regard to His mercy....And the lesson which tradition drew from it is that this symbol taught that the dead would live again....<sup>930</sup>

Flesh gives birth to flesh, and Spirit to spirit, says John 3:6. "Flesh" in John's gospel is not an abstract or latent power. It is said that "flesh" denotes the human family and not sinful *nature*; it is man as opposed to God, declares Carson.<sup>931</sup> It is the frailty that man is, states Ferguson.<sup>932</sup> *Sarx* man is under the dominion of sin, as Murray suggests. We have already argued that Christ was also under the dominion of sin. Burkhardt believes that *sarx* man in John 3:6 is the individuation of grumbling Israel in the wilderness. Consequently, Israel needed to look unto the serpent to be healed.<sup>933</sup> If Burkhardt is correct, "flesh" in John 3:6 has an ethical connotation.

<sup>928</sup> John, p.203.

<sup>929</sup> C. K. Barret, *The Gospel According to John*, 2nd edition, (London, SPCK, 1993), p.164; John Peck, *I want to Know what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit* (Eastbourne, Kingsway Publications, 1979), pp.41, 97-98.

<sup>930</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *Jesus the Messiah*, sixth impression, (London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1902), p.82.

<sup>931</sup> John, p.196.

<sup>932</sup> Christ took upon himself "flesh" (*sarx*) (Jh.1:14). The root cause of *sarx* man is sin. The cause is therefore distinguished from its effect, *sarx*. To be born by the Spirit, Ferguson continues, is to receive the life and energy of the Spirit's world, of which *sarx* man by nature does not participate in. [*Holy Spirit*, p.120.]

<sup>933</sup> *Doctrine of Regeneration*, p.23.

Excluding Christ, how do we know frail man, how do you discern one who is under a kingdom dominated by Satan, is the question? You know this man because he rebels against his maker.

The Spirit gives birth to spirit. In this delivery, a “spirit” character is given. If the parallelism with the previous clause is to be maintained, the clause “Spirit is spirit” must also retain a dynamic connotation. That is to say, the Spirit gives birth to a living entity or character called “spirit.” This spirit is not a latent capacity waiting to express itself, as Murray would have us to believe. It is the character of spiritual power or activity; it is to *belong* to the family and kingdom of God, and the manifestation of this is faith, not rebellion, looking to the “serpent” or Son of man, and not grumbling.

John 3:8 reads, “The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” Carson allows for the possibility of this verse alluding to Ezekiel 36:25-27 and the resurrection of Israel, as depicted as the revivification of skeletons.<sup>934</sup> This was an observable act. We would contend that it is difficult for Murray to sustain his view. He declares regeneration is a work of the Spirit in the subconsciousness. Does this not make regeneration *per se* an *unobservable* work? Strimple comments, ‘It follows that [regeneration] is an action which is unobserved, which causes no perceptible sensation within the person regenerated. Unperceived not only by others, but by the individual who has been regenerated.’ Strimple says of John 3:8 that the reality of regeneration is only seen in its *effects*.<sup>935</sup> But is this what John 3:8 says? Might it be that the wind parallels the Spirit; and the *sound* of the wind *parallels* the *new birth*? The wind moves and gives off, *creates*, a sound; it is the evidence of the wind’s presence. The Spirit moves sovereignly, unseen, but its “sound”, the thing created, is observable, the evidence of the Spirit’s work. This is to say that “born again” includes action- the Spirit creates- and form- the thing created.<sup>936</sup>

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<sup>934</sup> John, pp.197-198.

<sup>935</sup> *Regeneration* 2.

<sup>936</sup> J. I. Packer writes:

Since the seventeenth century, *Reformed theologians* have tended to distinguish between regeneration and new birth. They defined regeneration as the first act of God instilling life into dead souls, below the level of consciousness; and they understood new birth as the first conscious manifestations [*sic*] of that life in new spiritual apprehension, affections and acts- the initial exercises of faith and repentance. [emphasis his] [*God’s Words*, p.149.]

It is the Old Testament backdrop that causes us to profoundly disagree with Murray's understanding of Johanine regeneration. To be in the kingdom is to belong to the new Israel that has been brought from death to life, from Babylon to Israel, from the captivity to the promised land. According to John, to belong to the kingdom is to be Spirit-man and not *sarx*-man. John is concerned with the Israelite's *behaviour*: is he rebellious, thus showing he is under the dominion of Satan, or is he righteous, thus revealing he is a true son of God (1 Jh.2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18)? To be "born again", for John, is to belong to the new kingdom by the resurrection power of the Spirit. This is also why faith is integral to regeneration.

### "Water" in John 3:5

Some have argued that *hudor* ("water") in John 3:5 connotes baptism. Murray rejects the opinion that "water" in John 3:5 connotes baptism because baptism is an act of faith, and regeneration is not. Strimple accepts Murray's doctrine of regeneration but he also believes that John 3:5 connotes water baptism. He notes that there are some who would say to someone holding Murray's view, "would not Nicodemus have heard of John's baptism, and does not the self-righteousness of the Pharisees therefore arise from their rejection of John's baptism and the gospel (Lk.7:30)?" But Strimple chooses a different line of argumentation. He remarks that it is not enough to ask the question, what did Nicodemus think about the term water? We must also ask the question, what did the church, to whom John was writing, think of the term? Strimple concludes, they would have understood that the term connoted baptism by water.<sup>937</sup>

Must we expect the first century church to have read only Murray's theology of regeneration into the term water in John 3:5? Could they have conceived of baptism as not including, representing,

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It is the case that the new birth is itself the first "manifestations" of spiritual life. Yet, there are no grounds to distinguish between regeneration and new birth; they are the same concept. It is nevertheless interesting that earlier writers did make a distinction between new birth and regeneration. Regeneration is seen as the Spirit's hidden work, and the new birth as the activity or "living" of the principle given in regeneration. Take E. Kevan's comments, 'Two elements, therefore, are to be distinguished in regeneration, namely, (1) generation, or the begetting of the new life, and (2) birth, or the bringing forth of the new life. The act of generation implants the principle of the new life in the soul, and the new birth is the event in which this principle begins to assert itself in action.' [*Salvation* (Welwyn, Evangelical Press, 1979), p.59. Cf., T. C. Hammond, *In Understanding*, pp.137-139.] Does the command, "You must be born again" reflect merely the Spirit's work, or does it indicate the new entity or birth itself? Kevan does not eviscerate the concept of new birth of action by the believer. Yet, Kevan resorts to a rather convoluted distinction between "generation" and "new birth".<sup>938</sup>

<sup>938</sup> Regeneration 1. See, W. Robert Cook, *The Theology of John* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1979), pp.87-88; Toon, *Born Again*, p.28., cf., pp.21-23, 45, 46-48, 65-66.



and signifying, the notion of faith? Why does Murray use references concerning water baptism (Jh.3:22-23, 26; 4:2) for his doctrine of regeneration, if regeneration does not involve faith?

Alfred Edersheim writes, ‘How was [Nicodemus] to attain that new being? The Baptist had pointed it out in its negative aspect of repentance and putting away the old by his Baptism of water; and as regarded its positive aspect he had pointed to Him Who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. This was the gate of being, through which a man must enter the Kingdom, which was of the Messiah’.<sup>938</sup> Here, Edersheim divides John 3:5 into two stadia: “water” denotes the Johannine baptism unto repentance; and “Spirit” refers to Christ’s baptism of believer’s with the Spirit and with fire. Earlier we discovered that John 3:5 was an allusion to Ezekiel 36:25-27. There are two activities in these verses, according to Murray: negativity and positiveness; the cleansing of impurities and idols, the removal of a heart of flesh, and the impartation of a new heart and a new spirit. The water is said to cleanse from idols and impurities; the Spirit is said to enable the cleansed ones to follow God’s law. It is possible that in John 3:5, the removal of negativity is to be attributed to water, and the impartation of life, or positiveness, is to be assigned to the Spirit.

There is a problem with this interpretation, however. In John 7:37-39, Christ equates the Spirit with water. This impresses R. Strimple as probably being a basis for saying that “water and Spirit” in John 3:5 are hendiadys. He concludes, ‘In the last analysis, there’s not that much difference in result between Calvin and Murray’.<sup>939</sup> However, we probably should distinguish between “water” and “water”.

John	water (baptism)	deliverance from curse
Christ	water	reception of the Spirit

In John’s gospel, the apostle wants us to perceive the distinction between the inability of the old covenant to bring life, and the ability of the new covenant to do so. The Spirit was poured forth upon Christ’s resurrection. Consequently, all men must “believe” in Christ to receive the resurrection-Spirit (Jh.7:37-39). Whereas, repentance corresponds to leaving behind the old covenant. To be baptised into John’s baptism was to be re-baptised with the baptism of Moses. 1

<sup>938</sup> *Jesus the Messiah*, p.82.  
<sup>939</sup> *Regeneration 1* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

Corinthians 10:2 says that Israel was baptised into Moses “in the cloud and in the sea”. ‘The waters of the Red Sea’, says V. Poythress, ‘stand for a kind of ceremonial cleansing *from* their enemies... (1 Corinthians 10:1-2).’ [emphasis ours]<sup>940</sup> Thus, although the old covenant can be viewed positively as an epoch of grace, the New Testament also portrays it sometimes as a negative epoch, anticipating, by its very nature, its own complement- deliverance *unto* newness of life in Christ. He is the old covenant’s complement. First, having been “born under the law” (Gal.4:4), he had to submit to old covenant baptism, and so he emptied the old covenant of its curse. And then, secondly, he introduced the new world by his resurrection (Rm.1:4).

In John 3:3, Jesus says that a man must be born again (γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν). He then states that a man must be born of water and the Spirit (Jh.3:5). In Union with Christ, it was detailed how Christ as *sarx*: it primarily had a negative connotation; yet, it was no mere contrast but also comparison: Christ of the flesh under the curse anticipated Christ of the flesh under the Spirit. It is probable that γεννᾶω in John 3:3, 5 is functioning in a similar manner. The renewal of life has its seed in death; except a man die, he cannot rise to newness of life. Thus, the regeneration or rebirth referred to by John is primarily concerned with newness of life. However, this life comes out of death. Thus, death is not to be merely contrasted to life; but death is the basis for life.

### Johannine epistles

Some scholars accept the instrumentality of faith in regeneration is taught in 1 John.<sup>941</sup>

To finish our comments on 1 John, first observations of texts like John 1:12-13; 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4 and 18, communicate that it is the Father who regenerates.<sup>942</sup> John 5:21 relates that the Father and the Son regenerate.<sup>943</sup>

## EXTRA-JOHANNINE TEXTS

<sup>940</sup> *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1991), p.24.

<sup>941</sup> Thomas F. Johnson, NIBC, *1, 2 & 3 John* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1995), p.67; I. H. Marshall, *The Epistle of John*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1982), pp.186-187; M. M. Thompson, *1-3 John* (Leicester, IVP, 1992), p.96; Toon, *Born Again*, pp.32-36.

<sup>942</sup> D. Jackman, *The Message of John's Letters* (Leicester, IVP, 1992), p.79; M. M. Thompson, *1-3 John*, p.96.

<sup>943</sup> Toon, *Born Again*, p.32.

### The Pauline perspective

Romans 6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; <sup>944</sup> Ephesians 2:5; <sup>945</sup> Colossians 2:12f; <sup>946</sup> Titus 3:5. These texts are better grouped together, for Gaffin has demonstrated that they are indicative of the Pauline faith-resurrection motif. <sup>947</sup> Consequently, they reveal that faith must be construed as the instrument to regeneration. The centrality of the resurrection in renewal leads Gaffin to state:

[The view that says that] being raised with Christ [is] a metaphor for regeneration...is an inversion of Paul's way of thinking. As 1 Cor.15:42ff. and Rom.1:3f. (cf. Acts 13:33) make clear, the realistic counterpart to the natural process and birth is not new birth but resurrection. If the term regeneration is at all applicable to Paul's resurrection theology, it is the metaphor (cf. 3:5). <sup>948</sup>

**Water baptism.** Douglas Moo writes of Roman 6:3 that it does refer to water baptism. He says, 'By the date of Romans, "baptize" had become almost a technical expression for the rite of Christian initiation by water, and this is surely the meaning the Roman Christians would have given the word.' <sup>949</sup> J. D. G. Dunn considers the baptism of Romans 6:3 to be the matching metaphor of death and burial. Josephus frequently uses βαπτίζειν to mean merely immersion. <sup>950</sup> Also, in Romans 6:3 merely mentions baptism into the death of Christ- *contra* Murray. Also, in Colossians 2:12, baptism is co-ordinated with burial, and newness of life by faith is co-ordinated with resurrection. <sup>951</sup> To Calvin, the baptism of believers into Christ taught in Romans 6:3, is a water baptism signifying spiritual baptism. This baptism represents the believers union with Christ in faith. <sup>952</sup> In 1 Corinthians 12:13, it says the Corinthians were baptised by Christ through

<sup>944</sup> That 2 Corinthians 5:17 reflects the instrumentality of faith, see, Paul Barnett, *The Message of 2 Corinthians* (Leicester, IVP, 1988), p.114; H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Corinthians 2* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1879), p.288; R. V. G. Tasker, *2 Corinthians*, TNTC, (London, Tyndale Press, 1969), p.152; Toon, *Born Again*, pp.43-44. R. P. Martin does not accept that the regeneration of an individual is spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:17. He believes the text refers to a person entering a new eschatological creation order established by Christ's advent. [2 Corinthians, p.152.] <sup>945</sup> S. Ferguson's exegesis of Ephesians 2:5 entails that faith is instrumental to regeneration. [Holy Spirit, pp.126-127.] But how can he state this and, at the same time, hold to a traditional view of regeneration? [See, *Christian Life*, pp.49-60.] <sup>946</sup> Calvin argues that the spiritual baptism that we receive is given by faith. [*Philippians; Colossians; Thessalonians*, translator & editor: J. Pringle, (Edinburgh, Calvin Translation, Society, 1851), p.186.] <sup>947</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.128-129, 140-143. <sup>948</sup> *ibid.*, p.128. <sup>949</sup> *Romans*, p.359. <sup>950</sup> *The Epistles to Colossians and Philemon*, NIGTC, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1996), p.160. Cf., Francis Watson, *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.150. <sup>951</sup> See Paul Gardner, " 'Circumcised in Baptism- Raised through Faith' : a Note on Colossians 2:11-12", WTJ 45 (1983), pp.175-176. <sup>952</sup> *Romans 1*, p.122.

his Spirit <sup>953</sup> with a view to creating one body. <sup>954</sup> This "body" was to be a reflection of Christ's earthly or sacrificed body (cf., 1 Cor. 11:23-29).

In short, water baptism for Paul is the continuation of John's baptism. Its correspondent is Spirit-baptism, or real baptism.

*Controversial texts.* Galatians 3:26-27 says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." The second clause might be epexegetical of the first. However, this might not be so. The co-ordination of ideas does not entail synonymity. The inextricable and organic relationship between baptism and resurrection may be the basis for Paul moving from a resurrection blessing, namely faith, to a negative blessing, namely baptism, back to a positive blessing: to be clothed with Christ.

We see this same contrast throughout Paul. Romans 13:12-14 says, "So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." 1 Corinthians 15:53-54 refers to the removal of corruption and mortality, and their replacements in the putting on of immortality and incorruption. Ephesians 4:22 says, "put off your old self", and 4:24 says, "put on the new self". 6:11 says, "Put on the full armour of God". Colossians 3:8-10 says, "rid yourself of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips...since you have taken off your old self...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed (*ανακαινουμενον*) in knowledge in the image of its Creator." 3:12, "clothe yourselves with compassion", etc.. 3:14, "put on love". Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing (*ανακαινωσει*) of your mind", and 2 Corinthians 4:16, "Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed (*ανακαινυται*) day by day."

Titus 3:5 says, "He saved us through the washing (*λουτρου*) of rebirth (*παλιγγενειας*) and renewal (*ανακαινωσεως*) by the Holy Spirit". If "washing" denotes baptism, then we have a

<sup>953</sup> Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, p.194.

<sup>954</sup> Donald Macleod, *The Promise of the Spirit* (Tain: Rosshire, Christian Focus Publications, 1988), p.5; G. Fee, *First Corinthians*, p.606.

problem, for rebirth, we said, belongs to the province of the resurrection. However, maybe Titus 3:5 can be paraphrased in this manner, "God saved us through the washing of baptism, to the end of rebirth, by the renewal of the resurrection Spirit." Or, "Deliverance from death is to the end of regeneration; renewal or regeneration is effected by the Spirit."<sup>955</sup>

P. Gardner does not hesitate to say:

...baptism is regarded by Paul as pointing to God's judgement in death. The evidence of submission to God's judgement is baptism; the evidence of being raised in newness of life is faith in the power of God.

It seems to me that, on this interpretation, baptism may not be so much a "sign of corresponding spiritual death and resurrection of believers," as a sign of spiritual death which, to the believer, makes possible the resurrection through faith.<sup>956</sup>

*Circumcision.* When the concept of circumcision is considered from a New Testament perspective our theory thus far is consolidated. Circumcision was the *removal* of flesh (Gen.17:11). It signified the removal of a sinful heart (Dt.10:16; 30:16; Jer.4:4). Thus, in the New Testament, spiritual circumcision is the removal of the sinful nature by Christ (Col.2:11) and the Holy Spirit (Rm.2:29). In Ezekiel 36:25-27 there is removal of impurities and the giving of the Spirit for obedience to the law. In Acts 15:5, 24; 21:21, circumcision is co-ordinated with obedience to the law, probably implying that the complement of spiritual circumcision is obedience of life.

In Romans 2:29, the circumcision belonging to the Mosaic law is said to be ineffective, according to Murray.<sup>957</sup> He does not discern the import of the letter-Spirit distinction. Moo says of it:

Thus, as in the other Pauline "letter/spirit" passages (Rom.7:6; 2 Cor.3:6-7), "spirit" should be capitalised: it refers to God's Holy Spirit. Paul's

<sup>955</sup> Calvin thinks Titus 3:5 alludes to baptism, and is an exact replica of Ezekiel 36:25, 27. [*Galatians*, pp.332, 334.] Whatever one's interpretation of Titus 3:5, it is preferable if we do consider it to contain the resurrection motif. Gordon Fee writes, "Rebirth" and "renewal" are 'nearly synonymous metaphors and that such an intent seems to need a repeated "through" in order to make it clear.' He adds, the context does not put too much of an emphasis on baptism. Further, "rebirth" 'reflects Paul's "death, burial, new life" metaphor found in Romans 6:4-14.' He concludes, because verse 6 is a relative clause, it elucidates verse 5. Verse 6 refers to the Spirit being poured out. This view, to our mind, confirms our own interpretation. [1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, NIBC, (Peabody: Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1988), p.204. See, A. A. Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*, p.99; Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, pp.117-118.]

<sup>956</sup> "A Note of Colossians 2:11-12", p.176.

<sup>957</sup> *Romans* 1, p.88.

“letter”/“Spirit” contrast is a salvation-historical one, “letter” describing the past era in which God’s law through Moses played a central role and “Spirit” summing up the new era in which God’s Spirit is poured out in eschatological fullness and power.<sup>958</sup>

When spiritual circumcision is referred to, that is, salvific circumcision, it is viewed as an eschatological or new world blessing, deliverance from the old world.

Old flesh world (O.T.)	New resurrection world (N.T.)
Death	Salvation
Circumcision by law	“Spirit-ual” circumcision

Yet, the application of spiritual *circumcision*, although a new world blessing, is in fact reflective of deliverance from the old world.

“Spirit-ual” circumcision (deliverance from old world)	Faith (entrance into new world)
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If our system is correct, then Murray was wrong to say that regeneration has two aspects: purification from sin and vivification, both of which are accomplished without the believer’s participation. Instead, John 3:5 would assist us in saying that new birth has reference only to vivification or spiritual resurrection through faith. Purification, however, has reference to the removal of negativity- repentance, in other words.

Another issue is the distinctly Johanne concept of new birth. We have already said Paul does refer to new birth, in his own way. However, talk of God giving birth to us is a predominantly Johannine concept. Therefore, it is unwise to put the Pauline doctrine of adoption against or above regeneration; they are simply metaphors used to describe God’s work within us. Also, the above section on regeneration and two-age theology is more or less Pauline in its content. There is no need for us to force John or any other writer to follow Paul’s system, although there may be some methodological overlap.

Do we have an *ordo*? No, because purification is not the logical or chronological antecedent or proceeder of vivification. Yes: Christ’s resurrection proceeded his death. However, the

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<sup>958</sup> Romans, pp.174-175.

application of these events in the lives of the elect is another matter. Christ's death and resurrection were unique, after all. We might say that they are described, in relation to believers, typologically- death coming before resurrection.

#### James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23

Both James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1:23 teach regeneration by the word of God, or conversion, reasons Murray. He does not reflect upon the relationship between 1 Peter 1:3 and 1 Peter 1:23. 1 Peter 1:3 comments, "In [God's] great mercy he has given us new birth (*αναγεννησας*) into a living hope through the resurrection from the dead". Christ brought us into the family of God by his resurrection from the dead; we were united with Christ in his resurrection. By his resurrection he ushers in the new and eschatological creation, which began with the new man.<sup>959</sup> The faith of the elect is in God who raised Jesus from the dead (v21); it is faith in resurrection power, in other words. In order for the "word" to convert or beget (*γεννημενοι*) (v23), it must be accompanied by, create, faith. If verses 21 and 23 are to be read in harmony, then verse 3 might refer to the new birth through faith in Christ's resurrection.<sup>960</sup> Moreover, it is resurrection power that the elect of God partake off to sustain them in their pilgrimage (v21).

In 1 Peter 3:21, the water of the deluge symbolised baptism. We know that the deluge purified the earth from rebelliousness. Peter then says that baptism is "not the removal of dirt from the body". The significance of this is that the pre-Christ ritual of baptism probably was the cleansing of the body from dirt, as signifying the removal of a filthy or rebellious heart. Peter goes on to say that spiritual cleansing saves us by the resurrection of Christ. The co-ordination of baptism and resurrection, in this case, does not necessarily mean that "baptism" belongs to the province of the resurrection; it may merely mean that the instrument of resurrection is death itself. In 3:18, it says that Christ died to sin once for all but was made alive by the Spirit. The same relationship is possibly described in 3:21.

It might be levelled that what is being commended in this chapter is Arminian in character. The Arminian Wiley defines regeneration as 'the communication of life by the Spirit to a soul dead in trespasses and sins.' Regeneration, he continues, is preceded by the sinner exercising faith by his own strength and according to his own volition. Upon this faith God intervenes by his Spirit, and regenerates the sinner. Calvinism, maintains Wiley, incorrectly holds that regeneration is

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<sup>959</sup> E. Clowney, *1 Peter*, pp.45-46.

accomplished without the co-operation of man.<sup>961</sup> In effect, Arminianism teaches that regeneration *does not* involve the co-operation of man. Even Wiley does not deny that regeneration is solely the work of the Spirit. Therefore, how can regeneration involve the co-operation of man? He should have said- in order to remain consistent- that man is co-operative in preparation *for* regeneration.

### CONCLUSION

It is to be concluded that Calvin believed in regeneration narrowly defined, as Murray did. It is unfair, therefore, to contrast both men's doctrines of regeneration on the basis that Calvin has a wider definition of regeneration that includes faith and sanctification. Equally, it would be unjust to claim that a view like Murray's is inconsistent with Calvin because it comes from what has been called 'Protestant scholastic theology'.<sup>962</sup> The Puritans and the subsequent Reformed tradition have either followed Calvin explicitly, or have differed in that they have said that spiritual regeneration stops at the point of conversion or of internal renovation (regeneration narrowly defined).<sup>963</sup>

Murray is so keen to preserve the sovereignty of God in regeneration that he makes a dichotomy between the word and the Spirit. Calvin is guilty of the same mistake. An example of a dichotomy is that Murray argued that regeneration is the renewal of the whole man, mind, heart, soul, will; we found that his definition did not allow for the renewal of the consciousness. In testing Murray's definition of rebirth in the Johannine writings, it was concluded that rebirth was more concerned with living and not so much with the internal mechanics of the soul; rebirth is the statement that one is under the dominion of God, his power, and not under the dominion of Satan and his power.

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<sup>960</sup> P. H. Davids, *The First Epistle of Peter*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1990), p.51. See, W. Grudem, *1 Peter*, p.55.

<sup>961</sup> Cf., G. Spykman, *Reformational Theology*, pp.284-287.

<sup>962</sup> Eerdmans, 1995), p.487.

<sup>963</sup> See A. A. Hodge, *Outlines*, pp.454-455; A. A. Hoekema, *Saved By Grace*, pp.93-94; J. I. Packer, *God's Words*, pp.148-149; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp.466-467; S. Ferguson, *John Owen*, pp.41-48. Peter Toon outlines the views of J. Owen, J. Edwards, and W. Perkins in *Born Again*, pp.136-138. See also, *Synod of Dort*, articles 11, 12, 14, 17.



Regeneration or new birth is established by man's action- *contra* Murray and Calvin.<sup>964</sup> The Old Testament referred to God circumcising the hearts of the Israelites, but also to their need of circumcising their own hearts. The pattern just mention, Calvin saw in the New Testament, and so he tried to resolve its tension by referring to two perspectives. However, his position was logically indefensible, for it amounted to two new births. The way ahead must be to accommodate the instrumentality of faith. The whole event of regeneration is seen from one perspective as merely the act of God, from another, it is construed as man's act. Whatever rendition of regeneration is offered must accommodate the doctrine that regeneration is the result of both God's and man's actions, and that there is only one renewal, and not two.

We adapted Murray's doctrines of progressive and definitive sanctification to Calvin's doctrine of progressive regeneration, and came up with the doctrines of progressive and definitive regeneration. It is only in theological terms that we can say that we are progressively regenerated, inasmuch as we are continually being raised with Christ, and continually being renewed or recreated by his Spirit.

One of the biggest problems with Murray's concept of regeneration is that it makes uniform the New Testament teaching on renewal, whilst "new birth" is a predominantly Johanne concept. If we accept a Pauline doctrine of regeneration, we also have to accept that he, as well as John, considered regeneration to be a blessing that denotes probably vivification merely and not purification.

The next chapter is on faith.

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<sup>964</sup> Cf., Carl B. Hoch, Jr., "New Birth," *EDBT*, p.559; Spykman, *Reformational Theology*, p.488.

## Chapter 12: Faith, Repentance, and the Assurance of Faith

Alongside Calvin's doctrine of the extent of the atonement, scholars battle over Calvin's teachings on faith and the assurance of faith. Of the testimony of the Holy Spirit, John Frame writes:

Since the Reformation, this doctrine has continued to play an important role in Protestant theology- but with a wide range of interpretations, applications, and emphases, provoking numerous partisan debates. In our day, many have argued that the "orthodox" tradition that followed the Reformation (Turretin, Voetius, et al.) either ignored or seriously misunderstood this teaching, leading to similar deficiencies in the "Old Princeton" theology (Hodge, Warfield), which so strongly influenced modern Evangelicalism.<sup>965</sup>

As we know, Murray followed in the Princeton tradition. Were his doctrines of faith and assurance of faith deficient? Is he faithful to Reformation doctrine?

Murray distinguishes between faith, repentance and assurance of faith. Faith is sub-divided into three: *fides generica*; *fides generalis*; and *fides specialis*.

### STATEMENT

#### FAITH

*Fides generica* (faith as a psychological state)<sup>966</sup>

By "faith" in this instance is meant a state of mind, whether in relation to religious matters or not, which is distinct to other conditions of mind. Faith in this basic sense is apprehension by the mind of the trustworthiness of an object, event or person. Reasons are evaluated by the understanding, which lead it to rely on or 'trust' an object, event or person. Not every event, person or object evokes such faith, for the evidence may be deemed unsatisfactory.<sup>967</sup>

There are two reservations to be made. First, this judgement is not always a conscious and calculated event. Often the act of faith is in the form of a spontaneous, intuitive, and

<sup>965</sup> "The Spirit and the Scriptures", *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon*, editor: D. Carson, (Leicester, IVP, 1986), p.220.

<sup>966</sup> *Soteriology II*, 4, p.9.

<sup>967</sup> *CW* 2, pp.235-236.

instantaneous action, reflecting a speeded up process of reasoning. Often the process of evaluation is over a long period of time, so that we quite forget how we came to make a decision. Second, the understanding can make mistakes, construing as trustworthy that which is untrustworthy, and *vice versa*.<sup>968</sup>

Further, faith 'is *forced* consent. That is to say, when evidence is judged by the mind to be sufficient, the state of mind we call "faith" is the inevitable precipitate....Will to the contrary, desire to the contrary, overwhelming interest to the contrary, cannot make us believe the opposite of our judgement with respect to evidence.' [emphasis his] 'To sum up, faith is trust.'

*Locke's definition.* Faith is the assent of the understanding to propositions which are probably true. Murray concedes that there is a popular usage of faith which accords with Locke's definition. It alleges that belief is stronger than opinion but a step below knowledge or certainty. Murray rejects this, believing that there are exercises of faith that do not submit to uncertainty.<sup>969</sup>

*Kant's definition.* 'Opinion, he says, is a judgement resting on grounds that are both subjectively and objectively insufficient; belief is judgement resting on grounds that are subjectively sufficient but objectively insufficient; knowledge is a judgement resting on grounds that are both subjectively and objectively sufficient.' Murray says there cannot be subjective sufficiency without recognition of the objective sufficiency of the evidence. If the objective evidence proves inadequate, at that point the subjective sufficiency finishes, since objective sufficiency is the judgement of the understanding in regard to the sufficiency of the evidence.<sup>970</sup>

*Definitions that locate the distinguishing characteristic of faith in the constituent of desire or will.* (A) faith is determined by feeling or emotion. However, Murray comments that feelings may make us more sensitive to, or warp, judgement. Strong feeling may create what we determine to be evidence. Sometimes feelings do not enter into our evaluation, our convictions being obnoxious to them. Although feelings may warp or clarify our judgement, the judgement itself is not made by them. (B) faith is a voluntary conviction which does not have evidence, but is the expression of that which one desires and wills should be true. William James and Strauss advocated this view. It is true, believes Murray, that our willingness or unwillingness to accept

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<sup>968</sup> *ibid.*, p 236.

<sup>969</sup> *ibid.*, p.238.

<sup>970</sup> *ibid.*, pp.238-239. Cf., *Theology Proper*, p.2

evidence may affect our judgement. A strong will may lead us to evaluate as evidence that which is not evidence. Yet, belief does not emanate from the will but from our evaluation of the evidence. To act upon the basis of what we would were true is not faith but may be supposition, hypothesis, conjecture, probability, or venture. Considerations of worth may be forceful arguments of existence. They may fill up the mass of evidence needed for the exercise of faith. Notwithstanding all these concessions we believe what we know to be true and not what we desire to be true. Considerations of worth are invalid until they are 'judged to be evidence of the reality of what we believe to be valuable, and then they determine or induce faith only as they may be judged to constitute evidence of the reality of that believed.'

Leaps of faith and uncertainty are not of the essence of faith; in the scriptures faith (*pisteuw*) equals knowledge (*ginwskw*). <sup>971</sup>

### *Fides generalis*

*Autopistic nature of scripture.* '*Fides generalis* is simply faith in the truth of the Christian religion. More specifically stated, it is faith of the truth revealed in holy Scripture. More pointedly it is the faith that holy Scripture is the Word of God; it is our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of Scripture as the Word of God.' <sup>972</sup>

Faith is an intelligent understanding of the evidence provided in the scriptures. Scripture is autopistic, and self-authenticating, containing within itself the evidence for faith in itself as God's word. The evidence being its divine origin, character and authority. <sup>973</sup>

It is futile, therefore, to ground faith in God's word in 'rational argumentation which is extraneous to the sum total of the data with which Christian revelation confronts us.' The Reformers never tried to do so. Instead, they argued that the scriptures were autopistic. <sup>974</sup>

<sup>971</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.10.

<sup>972</sup> *CW* 2, p.241.

<sup>973</sup> Cf., *CW* 1, pp.9-22; *CW* 4, pp.30-57; "The Necessity of Scripture", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 9:6 (1941), pp.90ff; "The Inspiration of Scripture", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 9:7 (1941), pp.108ff; "The Authority of Scripture", *The Presbyterian Guardian* 9:8 (1941), pp.121ff; "The Attestation of Scripture," pp.1ff; "The Infallibility of Scripture," *TBT* 30 (1963), pp.8ff.

<sup>974</sup> *CW* 2, p.241.

Just as the invisible qualities of God, his omnipotence, divinity, and eternity, are clearly seen through the things that have been created (Rom.1:20),<sup>975</sup> so scripture as God's word and work bears his creative marks.<sup>976</sup>

Even if additional revelations or continuous miracles were given in order to certify to us that scripture was God's word, they would not cancel the inherent authority of scripture. God does not provide such supplementary revelation because scripture itself contains adequate evidence to verify that it is God's word.<sup>977</sup>

Central to understanding Murray's view of *fides generalis* is this rather long quotation:

So it is the constraint placed upon the human mind by the perfections resident in Scripture that explains the full persuasion and assurance of its divine character. This is to say that the Word of God, addressed to us, must in the nature of the case be of such unique character, be invested with such authority, and be accompanied with such commanding power, that nothing else could be more convincing than this Word itself. In the realm of confrontation or encounter with God there could be not be anything of higher evidential quality than God's Word to us. It is apparent, therefore, that if there is a Word of God at all, it must be self-evidencing, self-authenticating, autopoietic.

We are now faced with the question: if Scripture is the Word of God and thus invested with the quality of divinity commanding faith, why is faith not the result in the case of every one to whom it is addressed?... It is here that the doctrine of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit enters. And this doctrine is to the effect that, if faith in the Word of God is to be induced, there must be the interposition of another supernatural factor, a supernatural factor not for the purpose of supplying any deficiency that inheres in Scripture as the Word of God, but a supernatural factor directed to our need. Its whole purpose is to remedy that which our depravity has rendered impossible, namely, the appropriate response to the Word of God. In this respect the internal testimony is co-ordinate and consonant with the Scripture itself. The Scripture is pre-eminently redemptive revelation; it is remedial of sin. The internal testimony is but another provision of God's redemptive, and therefore supernatural, grace, directed to the correction of that which sin has effected.<sup>978</sup>

*Unbelief and internal witness.* The internal testimony 'is simply an activity of the Spirit extended upon and in our consciousness, so that we may be able to assent in confident faith' to God's

<sup>975</sup> Cf., Romans 1, pp.38-40; *Theology Proper*, pp.12, 15-17.

<sup>976</sup> *CW* 2, p.242.

<sup>977</sup> *idem*.

<sup>978</sup> *ibid*, pp.242-243.

word.<sup>979</sup> The evidence must be judged before faith is forthcoming. Not all people judge the scriptures to be God's word. Why? The reason is human depravity produces enmity and unbelief (1 Cor.2:14). The Spirit needs to induce faith in the word as God's word by a testimony to the mind which is 'co-ordinate and consonant with Scripture itself.'<sup>980</sup>

*The Necessity.* Man by his own wisdom cannot discover God. The triune God sovereignly chooses to reveal itself to some and not to others. The Father reveals himself (Mt.11:25-26), the Son reveals himself (Mt.11:27), and the Spirit reveals himself (1 Cor.2:6-15). Revelation of the Godhead is pre-eminently the activity of the Spirit (1 Cor.2:6-15; 12:3).<sup>981</sup>

*The Nature.* The work of revelation 'is called the drawing and instruction of the Father (John 6:44, 45). It is illumination of the heart (2 Cor.4:3-6) *photismos*. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit (1 Jh.2:20-27). It is the indwelling and energizing of the Spirit (1 Cor.2:15) *pneumatikos*.'<sup>982</sup>

*The effect* of revelation is that believers have assurance concerning truth's infallibility and are unmoved from that assurance. They can discern truth from falsehood (Mt.11:27; 1 Cor.2:12-15). They are not dependent upon human instruction or human testimony (1 Jh.2:20).<sup>983</sup> The internal testimony of the Spirit equates to the Reformation principle of *sola gratia*. It is this sealing work of the Spirit that brings the grace of salvation.<sup>984</sup>

*The focus* of revelation is upon the 'confession that Jesus is the Christ; the Son of the living God, Lord (Matt.16:17; 1 Cor.12:3; 2 Cor.4:3-6).'<sup>985</sup>

*1 Corinthians 2:4-5;*<sup>986</sup> *1 Thessalonians 1:5-6; 2:13*. Two considerations arise from these verses. First, Paul's gospel was certified to be divine. Second, this message was borne home with certitude to the souls of the hearers, eliciting faith in them. The demonstration of the Spirit

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<sup>979</sup> *ibid.*, p.248.

<sup>980</sup> *ibid.*, p.243.

<sup>981</sup> *ibid.*, p.244.

<sup>982</sup> *idem*.

<sup>983</sup> *idem*.

<sup>984</sup> *CW* 1, p.295.

<sup>985</sup> *CW* 2, p.244.

<sup>986</sup> *Plerophoria* may denote the Spirit's work. *Plerophoria* refers to the assurance experienced by believers (Col.2:2; Heb.10:22). Compare the textual variant of Romans 15:29. [*CW* 2, p.245.]

generates faith in the word, and is distinct to it.<sup>987</sup> The illumination of the Spirit is not faith; faith is its result.<sup>988</sup>

'Reformational theology'<sup>989</sup> conceived of the internal testimony of the Spirit in terms of illumination which he provides in the noetic expression of regeneration. That is, a man who has been regenerated by the Spirit now has the ability to discern and accept the scripture's self-attestation. This is no more than to say that the scripture's themselves illumine the mind. Such an account is not, strictly speaking, a testimony of the Spirit, but of the word. There is an epistemological need to posit more than illumination, for our minds by themselves are not able to perceive the evidence of scripture and produce faith. Thus, the testimony of the Spirit to the word is necessary.<sup>990</sup>

The internal testimony induces saving faith in Jesus Christ. As it is a witness that accompanies the word (1Thess.1:5; 2:13), it is not to be confused with the power of God resident in scripture.

<sup>991</sup> Thus, in this doctrine, there are no grounds whatever for new revelations. The witness of the Spirit is 'by and with' the word. 'There is no truth-content in the Spirit's operation, the truth-content is wholly in Scripture.'<sup>992</sup>

When the *Confession* speaks of the Holy Spirit "speaking in the Scripture" (I, x), it is not pointing to the internal testimony of the Spirit. What is meant is that, the scriptures are the product of the Holy Spirit and are therefore his living voice; the scripture is the 'product of the Holy Spirit through which he speaks.'<sup>993</sup> The scriptures are authoritative in themselves because they are God-breathed. Daniel Lamont appeals to the *Confession* (I, v), when he states that the scriptures only become authoritative when the Spirit testifies to them. Lamont is wrong, for in chapter I, section v 'the confession is not dealing with the ground of authority but the way in which that authority is registered in our conviction.'<sup>994</sup>

Barthian theology has also made the same mistake as Lamont. Barthianism teaches that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the means by which God reveals himself to man.

<sup>987</sup> CW 2, pp.244-245.

<sup>988</sup> CW 4, p.334.

<sup>989</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.11.

<sup>990</sup> CW 2, p.246.

<sup>991</sup> *ibid.*, p.247.

<sup>992</sup> *ibid.*, pp.248-249.

<sup>993</sup> *ibid.*, p.249.

Scripture is not inherently revelation. It only becomes revelation when God confronts man through itself. The reason why the scriptures are the medium of revelation and not revelation *per se* is because Christ alone is the revelation of the Father, and therefore no other form can reveal the Father. Barth argues that God- Christ- is living and must reveal himself existentially, in a living and active way. He cannot therefore reveal himself in words. To say Christ reveals himself in scripture, that is, to say scriptures are revelation, is to conceptually incarcerate him. He reveals himself to fallible man, the natural man, in a concrete, existential situation, where some particular individual, and no one else, is confronted by the Christ, *through* and *in* the bible. This encounter produces a crisis in the life of the encountered one: he must make the choice of obeying or disobeying the one who reveals himself. The scriptures are simply the fallible record of God's/Christ's redemptive encounters with man. History, therefore, is an irrelevance as far as revelation is concerned; God comes into, invades, history in order to encounter man, but revelation does not come from history. The history revealed in the scripture all becomes contemporary with us and is distinct from revelation. This act of God, this existential encounter, is the internal testimony of the Spirit.<sup>995</sup>

Barthianism fails at two levels. It does not accept the objective testimony of scripture to its own inspired nature. Neither does it distinguish between the objective testimony of scripture, and the internal testimony of the Spirit. Scripture testifies to its own authority. Scripture alone reveals Christ to us, 'To think of the revelation of the incarnate Word apart from his spoken words is a pure abstraction that has no reality.' His words were '*necessarily* revelatory because he was God manifest in the flesh.' [emphasis his] Because Christ was and is the truth, his words were and are infallible. Our Lord and the apostles appealed to scripture 'as a finality.' The way revelation comes to us in scripture is distinct to the way it reached the recipients of Jesus' words whilst he was on earth, and also distinct to those who themselves were organs of word revelation. In the instance of Christ and the apostles, the other modes of revelation corresponded to the mode of word revelation present in the Old Testament. The Spirit bears witness to the autopistic nature of scripture.<sup>996</sup>

<sup>994</sup> *ibid.*, p.250.

<sup>995</sup> *CW* 2, pp.250-252; "Bryden's Apologia," p.117; *CW* 4, pp.35-37; "Attestation of Scripture", pp.40-52.

<sup>996</sup> *CW* 2, p.46.

<sup>997</sup> *CW* 2, pp.252-253; "Bryden's Apologia," p.117; *CW* 4, pp.37-57; "Attestation of Scripture", pp.40-52.

<sup>998</sup> *CW* 1, pp.9-28; "The Necessity of Scripture," *Presbyterian Guardian* 9:6 (1941), pp.90ff; "The Inspiration of Scripture," *Presbyterian Guardian* 9:7 (1941), pp.108ff; ; "The Authority of Scripture,"



*Calvin and the internal testimony.* The term authority in Calvin's writings does lend itself to ambiguity. The 1539 edition of the *Institutes* relate that the authority of scripture is to be derived from the internal testimony. Reinhold Seeberg argues that Calvin based the authority of scripture partly upon its divine dictation and partly upon the internal testimony (*Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* 4:2 (Erlangen, 1920), p.569. Cf., Charles E. Hay, *E.T.* 2 (Philadelphia, 1905), pp.395f).<sup>997</sup>

E. A. Dowey believes there is a discrepancy 'in Calvin's doctrine of faith, between what we may call *fides generalis* and *fides specialis*, faith in the Word, on the one hand, and faith in Christ, on the other.' Calvin '...never fully integrated and related systematically the faithful man's acceptance of the authority of the Bible *en bloc* with faith as directed exclusively to Christ'. In Dowey's judgement, this discrepancy 'arises to some extent at least, if not pre-eminently, from Calvin's view of the verbal inerrancy of Scripture' (*The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1952)).<sup>998</sup>

Murray replies to Dowey, saying that it is difficult to formulate the relationship between *fides generalis* and *fides specialis* in Calvin's theology, and that this 'is to Calvin's credit', therefore. Dowey is influenced by Barthian theology. Furthermore, 'what relief can be secured...by positing an errant Scripture and therefore an errant Word?...For how are they [who oppose inerrancy] to bridge the gap between an errant Word and an infallible Lord?' Dowey's statements scarcely comply with other statements which reveal 'a more accurate perception of the distinction between intrinsic authority and the accreditation of that authority' (*Knowledge of God*, p.109).<sup>999</sup>

As for Seeberg, Murray reasons that it is most reasonable to infer that Calvin is thinking of two levels, 'when authority is grounded in divine authorship Calvin is thinking of the authority intrinsic to Scripture and therefore objective to us, whereas, when authority is conceived of as established by the internal testimony, he is thinking of the authority as registered or, for that matter, established in our minds.' This conclusion is corroborated from Calvin's *Institutes*.<sup>1000</sup>

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Presbyterian Guardian 9:8 (1941), pp.121ff; ; "The Sufficiency of Scripture," Presbyterian Guardian 9:8 (1941), pp.137ff; "Infallibility of Scripture," TBT 30, pp.8ff.

<sup>997</sup> CW 4, p.184.

<sup>998</sup> CW 3, p.380.

<sup>999</sup> CW 4, p.185.

<sup>1000</sup> idem.

Calvin says, '[scriptures] obtain complete authority with believers [*apud fideles auctoritatem*] only when they are persuaded that they proceeded from heaven' (*Inst.*1:7:1). Calvin is treating the persuasion that is the consequence of the authority of the internal testimony of scripture being registered in believers hearts; it is persuasion of scriptures' heavenly origin. Calvin also comments, 'It must be maintained, as I have already asserted, that the faith of this doctrine is not established until we are indubitably persuaded that God is its author. Hence the highest proof of Scripture is always taken from the character of the speaker' (*Inst.*1:7:4). Calvin argues, 'Without this certainty, better and stronger than any human judgement, in vain will the authority of Scripture be defended by arguments, or established by the consent of the church, or confirmed by other supports' (*Inst.*1:8:1). It is divine authorship which we are persuaded of; it is distinct to the internal testimony.<sup>1001</sup>

A second line of argument is to see that when 'Calvin deals with the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, it is always related in one way or another to our persuasion and to the agency by which the *persuasion* is secured' (*Inst.*1:7:1, 4, 5; *Comm.* 1 Jh.2:27). [emphasis his]<sup>1002</sup>

Calvin continually witnesses to scriptures intrinsic divinity (*Inst.*1:7:2, 4; 8:2, 11, 13).<sup>1003</sup> He refers to the internal testimony of the Spirit as a confirmation or seal of the scripture's inherent authority (*Inst.*1:7:4, 5; 9:1).<sup>1004</sup>

The strongest testimony to scripture's inherent authority in Calvin's writings is found in his commentary of 2 Timothy 3:16, 'First [Paul] commends the Scripture from authority, and then on account of the utility that springs therefrom. In order that he may uphold the authority of Scripture he declares that it is divinely inspired. For if it be so it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence.' There is no mention here of the internal testimony of the Spirit.<sup>1005</sup>

Murray quotes Gustaf Aulen to the end of showing that he makes no distinction between *fides qua creditur* ("faith that believes") and *fides quae creditur* ("faith that's believed").<sup>1006</sup> Aulen thinks, 'The content of faith cannot be separated from faith itself' (p.92). 'The divine revelation

<sup>1001</sup> *ibid.*, pp.185-186.  
<sup>1002</sup> *ibid.*, pp.186-187.  
<sup>1003</sup> *ibid.*, pp.188-189.  
<sup>1004</sup> *ibid.*, p.189.  
<sup>1005</sup> *ibid.*, pp.189-190.

and faith are...correlative concepts' '.<sup>1007</sup> Murray notes that, to Aulen, faith is the 'religious self-consciousness'. The religious self-consciousness as apprehended by divine revelation, the invasion of the eternal realm, overwhelming and captivating the sinner. This revelation, which is complete in Christ, and reveals the essence of God, extends from ancient history into the future. The Orthodox view of the verbal inspiration of Scripture undermines the whole essence of revelation and faith. The bible is not consistent enough in its witness to receive the definition of verbal inspiration. It has teaching that conflicts: the imprecatory psalms with their emphasis on wrath are incompatible with the notion of verbal inspiration.<sup>1008</sup>

Murray asks, 'what purpose are Aulen's ever-recurring insistences upon the central fact of Christian faith if he does not adequately validate the proper source of knowledge and the proper criterion of judgement?...How do we come into contact with divine revelation? In what is it embodied? What is the character of that medium by which it is conveyed to us?'

He also accuses Aulen of inconsistency in his appeal to scripture, 'Aulen has no right of such an appeal to Scripture unless he can validate the legitimacy and necessity of such appeal by formulating a doctrine of Scripture that will demonstrate its propriety.' The prayers of "hate and vengeance" reveal the divine wrath, and cannot therefore be counted as illegitimate.<sup>1009</sup>

### *Fides specialis*

*Fides generalis* concerns faith in God's word as divine. This faith is inextricable from the condition of salvation. *Fides specialis* respects the structure of faith in Christ.

1. *The presupposition.* In order to be saved, the gospel must elicit conviction of sin in the hearer. The sinner consequently sees his need of Christ. 'Faith is meaningless when divorced from an antecedent conviction of sin and its desert.'<sup>1010</sup>

2. *The warrant.* What are the grounds for faith in Christ?

<sup>1006</sup> *ibid.*, p.349.

<sup>1007</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1008</sup> *ibid.*, pp.350-1.

<sup>1009</sup> *ibid.*, p.352.

<sup>1010</sup> *ibid.*, pp.254-255.

Universal Invitation. All men are urged to come to Christ (Is.45:22; Eze.33:11; cf., 18:23, 32. Also, Mt.11:28; Jh.6:37; Rev.22:17). <sup>1011</sup>

Demand. There are two demands. Claim. The glory of Christ's person and work demands total commitment to him. Command. All men are commanded by God to believe in Christ (Jh.6:29; Acts 17:30; cf., 1 Jh.3:23). <sup>1012</sup>

Promise. Only a definite and limited atonement could ground the overture of the gospel. It is full and complete salvation which is promised to every man who believes. It is the Saviour, the perfect captain of salvation, who is offered; salvation is not merely a possibility, therefore. <sup>1013</sup>

3. *The nature- its constitutive elements. Notitia.* The object of faith is Christ. Faith in him can only be established through understanding his person and work, as taught in doctrine consisting of propositional truth. We must know that he is equal to the issues of life and death. <sup>1014</sup>

*Assensus.* This has two elements. Intellective. 'The information conveyed is recognized by us to be true (cf. Rom.10:9, 10; 1 John 5:1); *pisteuo* with a simple dative or followed by *hoti* has this import.' Emotive. Knowledge must pass into a conviction of its content; there must be a correspondence between the sinner's needs and the gospel's message. <sup>1015</sup>

*Fiducia.* Faith cannot be mere assent; faith 'must rise to trust'. The whole man must abandon any trust in himself or any other resource and completely commit himself to Christ. '*Pisteuein en* (with dative) implies steady confidence; *pisteuein epi or eis* (with dative) implies repose and reliance; *pisteuein epi or eis* (with accusative) bears the notion of "movement towards" ' (B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, p.478). <sup>1016</sup> Genesis 15:6 emphasises the notion of confident self-committal. <sup>1017</sup> 'Faith is not belief that we have been saved, nor belief that Christ has saved us, nor even belief that Christ died for us....Faith in its essence is commitment to Christ that we may be saved.' We should not preoccupy ourselves with trying to discover God's regenerative grace. Faith is preoccupation with the glory of Christ. Nor does faith rest 'upon the saving experiences

<sup>1011</sup> *ibid.*, p.255.

<sup>1012</sup> *ibid.*, pp.255-256.

<sup>1013</sup> *ibid.*, pp.256-257.

<sup>1014</sup> *ibid.*, pp.257-258.

<sup>1015</sup> *ibid.*, p.258.

<sup>1016</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1017</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.17.

that it evokes.’ ‘“It is not, strictly speaking, even faith in Christ that saves, but Christ that saves through faith” ’ (B. B. Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines*, p.504).<sup>1018</sup>

True faith is the commitment of intellect, feeling and will. ‘There is a consensus of all the functions of man’s heart and mind.’<sup>1019</sup> Scripture also speaks of faith in the heart, ‘The heart is the seat and organ of religious consciousness and must not be restricted to the realm of emotions or affections. It is determinative of what a person is morally and religiously and, therefore, embraces the intellective and volitive as well as the emotive.’<sup>1020</sup> Although God alone regenerates, it is important to underline the responsibility of man to exercise faith.<sup>1021</sup>

The Reformers laid special emphasis upon the element of trust. In doing so, they ‘were opposing the Romish view that faith is assent. It is the genius of the Romish conception of salvation to intrude mediators between the soul and the Saviour- the Church, the virgin, the sacraments.’<sup>1022</sup>

## REPENTANCE

### Repentance in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, the concept of repentance is expressed most frequently by the word שׁוּב (*shubh*), which means “to turn” or “to return”. People were to turn from sin unto God with all their heart, soul and might (2 Kg.17:13; 23:25; 2 Chr.6:26; 7:14; 15:4; 30:6; Neh.1:9; Ps.78:34; Is.19:22; 55:7; Jer.3:12, 14, 22; 18:8; Eze.18:21; 33:11, 14; Dn.9:13; Hos.14:1-2; Joel 2:13; Jon.3:10; Zec.1:3-4; Mal.3:7). The AV sometimes uses the terms repent and repentance in reference to men (Ex.13:17; Jdg.21:6, 15; 1 Kg.8:47; Jb.42:6; Jer.8:6; Eze.14:6; 18:30); as translations of the root שׁוּב they apply most often to God (Gen.6:6-7; Ex.32:14; Jdg.2:18; 1 Sam.15:11; 2 Sam.24:16; 1 Chr.21:15; Jer.18:8, 10; 26:3, 13, 19; 42:10; Joel 2:13-14; Am.7:3, 6; Jon.3:9-10; 4:2; Num.23:19; 1 Sam.15:29; Ps.110:4; Jer.4:28; Eze.24:14; Hos.13:14).<sup>1023</sup>

<sup>1018</sup> *CW* 2, pp.259-260.  
<sup>1019</sup> *ibid.*, pp.260-261.

<sup>1020</sup> *Romans* 2, p.55.  
<sup>1021</sup> *ibid.*, pp.260-261.

<sup>1022</sup> *RA*, p.112.  
<sup>1023</sup> “Repentance,” *NBD*, p.1083.

When it is said of God that he repents, this is not a reference to his being, perfections, and purposes, because he is immutable, but is a reference to his relationships and attitude (cf., Ex.32:12; Jos.7:26; 2 Chr.12:12; 29:10; Is.12:1; Hos.14:4; Joel 2:14; Jon.3:9).<sup>1024</sup>

### Repentance in the New Testament

'Regeneration becomes vocal in our minds in the exercise of faith and repentance.' It causes 'a radical change in our thinking and feeling.'<sup>1025</sup> *Metanoia* ("repentance") and *metanoew* ("repent") denote a change of mind, heart and will. Repentance is a change in the לב or νοϋς, the religious and moral consciousness.<sup>1026</sup> Repentance is a 'radical transformation of thought, attitude, outlook, and direction.'<sup>1027</sup> It is to turn from sin unto the service of God. As the Shorter Catechism comments, ' "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience." ' <sup>1028</sup>

The Greek equivalent of שׁוּב is *epistrepho* (Acts 3:19; 26:20).<sup>1029</sup> The conjunction of turning (*epistrepho*) and repentance underlines that repentance is turning from sin unto service of God. Also, *epistrepho* is almost synonymous with repentance (Lk.1:16; Acts 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18; 1 Thes.1:9; 1 Pet.2:25). 'Repentance is...the reflex in consciousness of the radical change wrought by the Holy Spirit in regeneration.'<sup>1030</sup> *Metamelomai* is also employed to mean repentance (Mt.21:30-31; 27:3; 2 Cor.7:8).<sup>1031</sup>

Repentance demands sorrow for sin. It is not morbid sorrow, as exemplified by Judas (Mat.22:3-5; 2 Cor.7:10; Heb.12:17), but godly sorrow which is the issue of sensitivity to sin (2 Cor.7:9-10; Jb.42:5-6; Ps.51:1-17; Lk.22:62).<sup>1032</sup>

The Lord began his preaching with repentance (Mt.4:17), and before he ascended, he commanded repentance (Lk.24:47; cf., 13:3-5). Peter's (Acts 2:38) and Paul's (Acts 17:30; 20:21) preaching were messages of repentance. The message of repentance was one of remission of sin unto

<sup>1024</sup> idem.  
<sup>1025</sup> RA, p.113.  
<sup>1026</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.22.  
<sup>1027</sup> "Repentance," p.1084.  
<sup>1028</sup> RA, p.113.  
<sup>1029</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.22.  
<sup>1030</sup> "Repentance," p.1084.  
<sup>1031</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.22.

eternal life (Lk.24:17; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 2 Cor.7:10). This shows there is no salvation without repentance. Repentance respects our own individual sin. In the case of the Thessalonians, they turned away from idols (1 Thes.1:9-10).<sup>1033</sup> Acceptance of the gospel necessitates repentance as well as faith (Mt.4:17; Lk.24:49; 26:46-47; Acts 2:37-38; 5:31; 17:30; 20:21; Heb.6:1).<sup>1034</sup>

'Faith alone is the instrument of justification. But justification is not the whole of salvation, and faith is not the only condition. Faith dissociated from repentance would not be faith that is unto salvation.'<sup>1035</sup> Faith does not come before repentance, and repentance does not come before faith. 'The faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith and the repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance.' Faith is 'in the mercy of God as revealed in Christ.'<sup>1036</sup> 'Faith is directed to Christ for salvation from sin unto holiness and life. But this involves hatred of sin and turning from it. Repentance is turning from sin unto God. But this implies the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.' Both faith and repentance are 'always concurrently in exercise' unto salvation.<sup>1037</sup>

There are two evangelical fallacies. The first is to preach faith without emphasising repentance. The other is to say that faith is merely a decision. Both these views condition one another.<sup>1038</sup>

## ASSURANCE OF FAITH

### The meaning and nature of assurance

Assurance is 'the assurance entertained by a believer that he is in a state of grace and salvation' (1 Jh.3:14; 5:13; cf., 1 Jh.4:13).<sup>1039</sup> According to Romans 8:38-39, persuasion is confidence that God will not allow life nor death, angels nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The greatest commendation of God's love was the sending of his Son to die for sinners (Rm.5:5, 8). The love of God only exists in Christ Jesus our Lord, 'only in him has it been

<sup>1032</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.22, "Repentance," p.1084.  
<sup>1033</sup> *ibid.*, pp.114-115.  
<sup>1034</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.22; *RA.*, p.115.

<sup>1035</sup> "Repentance," p.1084.  
<sup>1036</sup> *RA.*, p.113.

<sup>1037</sup> "Repentance," p.1084.  
<sup>1038</sup> *RA.*, p.114.

<sup>1039</sup> *CW* 2, p.264.

manifested; only in him is it operative, and only in Christ Jesus as Lord can we know the embrace and bond of this love of God.' <sup>1040</sup>

Assurance is also confidence that tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or the sword, will not separate us from Christ's love. It is the love of Christ supremely manifested in the cross (Rom.5:6-10; Col.2:15), and which is also revealed in his ascension and resurrection (Rm.8:34). This love is powerfully working in the present, and the believer is to meditate upon it. <sup>1041</sup>

Primary faith respects trust in God in order that we might be saved, and proceeds from the conviction that we are lost. Whereas, assurance 'is the conviction that this salvation is ours.' Assurance is therefore the logical subsequent or reflex of faith and is not of the essence of primary faith. Although the assurance of faith can be the chronological subsequent of primary faith, it not always so, 'This assurance may be instantly inwrought in the act of saving faith and thus be instantly registered in the consciousness of the believer.' Because assurance can be immediate, it is not necessarily attained by a process of syllogistic reasoning. <sup>1042</sup>

Assurance is implicit in the salvation that the believer receives in the primary act of faith. Faith implies renewal. A renewed person is never the same again. The consciousness of the believer, even in his lowest moments, is distinctly different to any point when he was an unbeliever. The seed of God within the believer is the sure source of assurance to come- implicit assurance. The believer may not yet have assurance but he will receive it because faith must out. <sup>1043</sup>

There is also explicit or infallible assurance, that is, actual assurance. Yet, because not all believers are continually assured of salvation, Murray concludes that assurance is not of the essence of faith, 'But that the full consciousness of the implications of the change, the infallible assurance of being in a state of grace and salvation, is of the essence of a state of salvation is not apparent from Scripture' (*Confession* 18:3; 2 Pet.1:10; 1 Jh.5:13; see Ps.51:8, 12, 14; 31:22; 77:1-10; Eph.4:30-31; 1 Jh.5:13; cf., Mt.26:69-72; Lk.22:31-34). <sup>1044</sup>

<sup>1040</sup> Romans 1, pp.334-335.

<sup>1041</sup> *ibid.*, pp.330-332.

<sup>1042</sup> *ibid.*, pp.264-265.

<sup>1043</sup> *ibid.*, p.265.

<sup>1044</sup> CW 2, pp.265-266.



Although Murray does not think that assurance is of the essence of faith, he nevertheless uses the term assurance to describe the persuasion or confidence that the believer has in respect to the promise of God *in the act of faith*. That is, the believer is assured that God exists, and that his promise that he *will* save him is true, though faith 'may consist with uncertainty as to the possession of the salvation which is the result of faith.' <sup>1045</sup>

The witness of the Spirit to our adoption is distinct to his internal testimony to the scripture. Murray writes, 'the witness to the truth of the gospel and of Scripture is inseparable from the witness to divine adoption. This is the simple truth that the persuasion which the internal testimony produces is inseparable from a state of salvation. But the impossibility of separation does not carry with it the identification of the two.' <sup>1046</sup>

There are reasons why fully developed assurance is not always present. First, there is immaturity in grace and knowledge. Some have gradually come to the Lord and have no awareness of when the transition took place. Others are converted as infants or early youths, and though they have grown up in grace, they have not reflected upon their salvation. <sup>1047</sup> Also, there is the misapplication of the gospel. For example, it is taught by some that salvation can be lost. Due to lack of the fruits of the Spirit, or not attending the means of grace, assurance can also be lost. Further, sinfulness causes the Father to withdraw his presence; the believer thereby loses assurance (*Confession* 18:4). <sup>1048</sup>

### The duty and privilege of assurance

Commenting on Rome and Arminianism, Murray writes:

The Romish Church does not regard the full assurance of being in a state of grace and salvation as the safe and normal state of mind of the ordinary believer. [See Sylvester J. Hunter, *Outlines of Dogmatic Theology* 3, pp.47-51, 139-142, 599, 639.] Rome believes that this assurance is attained by some exceptional and highly privileged persons. But ordinarily it is discouraged as ministering to pride and presumption, which are not compatible with the humility and contrition that Rome seeks to cultivate in its devotees.

The Arminian position is that, although the believer may be assured of a state of grace, yet this present state of grace is no guarantee of perseverance and so there

<sup>1045</sup> *ibid.*, pp.266-267.  
<sup>1046</sup> *CW* 4, pp.332-333.

<sup>1047</sup> *CW* 2., p.266.

<sup>1048</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.20; *CW* 2, p.266.

can be no assurance of eternal salvation. The true believer may fall from grace and come short of glory.<sup>1049</sup>

Properly speaking, assurance is set within the *foci* of the foreknowledge of God the Father and an infallible inheritance (1 Pet.1:1-7; Rom.8:28-39; cf., *Confession* 18:1).<sup>1050</sup> 2 Peter 1:10 focuses upon the determinate actions of God in election and calling. Assurance is conditioned 'by the thought of the divine determinativeness of sovereign election, efficacious grace, definite atonement or effective redemption, the irreversibility of effectual calling, and the immutability of the gifts of grace.'<sup>1051</sup> Scripture urges us to cultivate assurance (2 Pet.1:4-11; 1 Jh.2:3; 3:14, 18, 19, 21, 24; 5:2, 5, 13; Rom.8:15, 16, 35-39; Heb.6:11, 17-19; 2 Cor.1:21-22; 13:5; Eph.1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Tim.1:12). 'The facts are that the more intelligent, the deeper and the more unwavering the assurance of salvation is, the humbler, the more stable and the more circumspect will be the life, walk and conduct.' We are to strengthen those of a weaker faith (Is.35:4).<sup>1052</sup> Assurance does not eradicate, nor conflict with, sin or evil; nor does it permit self-righteousness (Rom.7:24; 8; Phil.3:13; 1 Jh.1:6-7; 3:3).<sup>1053</sup>

### The grounds of assurance

1. *An Intelligent understanding of salvation.* The full scope of salvation needs to be considered. 'Too frequently believers entertain far too truncated a conception of salvation, as if, for example, it consisted merely in the forgiveness of sins and freedom from its penalty.'<sup>1054</sup>
2. *An identification of the immutability of God's calling in Christ.* Assurance ebbs and flows, but God does not change; his covenant faithfulness is exhibited by his promises being yea and amen in Christ (cf., Is.54:10).<sup>1055</sup>
3. *Obedience to God's commandments.* Disobedience brings God's displeasure. Obedience is the mark of life in Jesus (1 Jh.2:3; 3:21).<sup>1056</sup>

<sup>1049</sup> CW 2, p.267.  
<sup>1050</sup> Romans 1, pp.313-335.  
<sup>1051</sup> CW 2, p.268.  
<sup>1052</sup> *ibid.*, pp.268-269.  
<sup>1053</sup> *ibid.*, pp.269-270.  
<sup>1054</sup> *ibid.*, p.270.  
<sup>1055</sup> *ibid.*, pp.270-271.  
<sup>1056</sup> *ibid.*, p.271.

4. *Self-examination*. The church must examine itself to see whether it is in the faith (2 Pet.1:10; 2 Cor.13:5). Self-examination is not morbid introspection.<sup>1057</sup>

5. *The Inward testimony of the Holy Spirit*. Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6 (cf., 1 Cor.2:12; 2 Cor.1:21-22; 2 Cor.5:5; Eph.1:13-14).

The witness of the Spirit to our sonship (Rom.8:15-16) has two elements. The first is found in Romans 8:15 (cf., Gal.4:6), "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba Father.' " Of it, Murray comments, 'in [the Spirit], or by him, there is generated within them that filial confidence'<sup>1058</sup> which is 'the reflex in our consciences of the status' of being a son.<sup>1059</sup> This is the witness of the believer's own spirit. The second element is the joint witness of the Spirit with our spirit. That is, the Spirit seals or authenticates the testimony of our own spirit to the love of the Father. This second witness is not direct revelation, though its mode is inscrutable. There are many ways the witness of the Spirit is borne; it is especially given through sealing the promises of God.<sup>1060</sup>

Romans 8:15 and 16 are not saying exactly the same thing:

Of course, the interpretation could be advanced that this is but another way of stating that which is adverted to in verse 15. But there are three considerations against this view: (a) The *sunmarturei* points to a joint testimony and therefore to something additional. (b) It is a witness *to* our spirit. If it were the same witness as that reflected on in v. 15, it would be difficult to see the point of v. 16. (c) A comparison of verses 15, 16 with verses 23, 26 would confirm this interpretation. For in the latter Paul speaks of the groanings of our own spirit and of the Holy Spirit, and the latter are distinct because he introduces the subject with the words *hosautos de kai* and again uses a composite verb with *sun*, namely, *sunantilambanetai*.<sup>1061</sup>

The 'Spirit's work in evoking filial affection and confidence, and in the direct witness to the sonship of believers, must never be divorced from the other activities of the Spirit in the sanctification of the believers.'<sup>1062</sup>

<sup>1057</sup> *idem*.  
<sup>1058</sup> *ibid.*, p.272.  
<sup>1059</sup> *ibid.*, p.229.  
<sup>1060</sup> *ibid.*, pp.272-273.  
<sup>1061</sup> *ibid.*, p.273.  
<sup>1062</sup> *ibid.*, p.273.

### The cultivation of assurance

Assurance is cultivated only through the use of the means of grace: the word, the sacraments and prayer. Also, assurance comes from 'devotion to the duties which devolve upon us in the family, the church, and the world'. This is the privilege of all who are called in Christ Jesus (cf., *Confession* 18:3).

The rite of baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration, union and justification by faith.<sup>1063</sup> A "sign" indicates the existence of that which it signifies, whilst a "seal" is the guarantee of the thing signified.<sup>1064</sup> Baptism 'is a means of grace to signify and confirm grace.' Baptism 'confirms to us the reality and security of the highest of spiritual relationships'. God 'thereby shows more abundantly the immutability of the covenant relationship'.<sup>1065</sup>

The new covenant in Jesus' blood is 'represented and sealed in the Lord's supper. The confirmatory character of covenant is transferred to the cup. This is what the cup bespeaks. And when we partake of the cup in faith, it is the Lord's own certification to us that all the new covenant in his blood is ours. It is the seal of his grace and faithfulness.'<sup>1066</sup>

## COMMENT

### FAITH

#### *Fides generica*

*Fides generica* is not fully defined by Murray. He does call it trust but what is trust? He never once mentions which part of man trusts, whether it is the mind, will, or feelings. Nearly all of his description of *fides generica* is concerned with the process leading to its occurrence.

#### *Fides generalis*

Calvin. Murray comments that Reformational theology conceived of the testimony of the Spirit as the noetic expression of regeneration, and that this was not proper. Yet, Murray's definition of the internal testimony also begs the question, for it is one thing to say that the testimony is

<sup>1063</sup> *Christian Baptism*, pp.46-48. Cf., *CW* 2, pp.374-375.

<sup>1064</sup> *Romans* 1, p.138.

<sup>1065</sup> *Christian Baptism*, p.84.

<sup>1066</sup> *CW* 2, pp.376-377.

illumination and attestation, but what is the nature of illumination and demonstration? for example, are they esoteric experiences, or non-rational experiences, or are they mystical?

We just said that Murray's definition of the nature of the testimony begged the question. Calvin did attempt to define its nature. He reasons that in the internal testimony a mystical knowledge is imparted to us, not the Law or word itself:

Let it therefore be fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by him, we no longer believe, either our own judgement or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but, in a way superior to human judgement, feel perfectly assured- as much so as if we beheld the divine image impressed on it- that it came to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God. We ask not for proofs or probabilities on which to rest our judgement, but we subject our intellect and judgement to it as too transcendent for us to estimate... a divine energy living and breathing in it- an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it.<sup>1067</sup>

Kenneth Kantzer pinpoints why Calvin believed in a dichotomy between the word and the Spirit in the internal testimony, 'God, however, in his omniscience and in his immediate comprehension of truth does not need the *indicia*; he sees the truth and intuitively knows it to be the truth. It is this immediate divine knowledge of the truth which is formed in the mind and sealed upon the heart of man.'<sup>1068</sup> Kantzer asks of Calvin's interpretation of the internal testimony, how do we know that the testimony of the Spirit is true? Kantzer replies that we do not, for the internal testimony, according to Calvin, has no rational explanation. It is due to this that Kenneth Kantzer accuses Calvin of Kantian dualism and of 'pseudo-mysticism'.<sup>1069</sup> John Frame makes the same criticism of Calvin.<sup>1070</sup> Frame adds that Barth, Berkouwer, Herman Dooyeweerd, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck 'have pressed Calvin's teaching in a somewhat irrationalist direction.'<sup>1071</sup>

Also, Murray is not altogether clear on the relation between the illumination of the Spirit and regeneration. He himself believes that 'Regeneration becomes vocal in our minds in the exercise

<sup>1067</sup> *Inst.* 1:7:5.

<sup>1068</sup> *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, p.455.

<sup>1069</sup> *ibid.*, pp.517-518, 525-526.

<sup>1070</sup> "Spirit and the Scriptures", pp.232-233.

<sup>1071</sup> *ibid.*, p.233.

of faith and repentance.’<sup>1072</sup> He does not explain, however, how this theology differs from that which says that the illumination of the Spirit is *not* the noetic expression of regeneration.

*The drawing energy of scripture in the internal testimony.* Confusingly, Calvin writes that at the moment of the internal testimony we feel in the scriptures ‘a divine energy living and breathing in it- an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it’. Taken at face value, he seems to be saying that the scriptures are not only the voice of the Spirit but also have energy living and breathing in them. What is this living and breathing energy? It is that which draws us unto obedience of the word. In other words, it is the Spirit’s presence in the form of his own voice that creates the energy. However, when Calvin says, ‘an energy by which we are drawn and animated to obey it’, he is not referring to the Scripture *per se* transforming the sinner, but the Spirit. The Spirit who is the inherent ‘energy’ of the word, in the act of illumination separates himself from the word *per se*, and witnesses to the sinner concerning the word. If there is any doubt as to this interpretation of Calvin, then we must understand that to him the internal testimony to scripture and the act of regeneration (narrowly defined) are the same event.

*The source of the contradiction.* First, the scriptures are the living and powerful voice of the Spirit, *they* have an energy and live. Second, because faith comes from heaven, from God, any spiritual action on the part of man must have a vertical or heavenly origin. The mere force of the evidence of scripture cannot convert a man- the horizontal plain- but only God can by his Spirit- the vertical plain. Why this division? To hold that the horizontal plain transforms would be tantamount to saying that man could by his own volition believe the evidence and enter the faith. Yet, scripture tells Calvin that the word saves man. So what does Calvin do? He tries to blend both plains, but he cannot extract himself from the view that, ultimately, the horizontal achieves, effects, nothing at the point of the reception of salvation. So he swings from the one plain to the other, but never rejects the *exclusive* effectiveness of the vertical plain.

*Our thesis more clearly stated: the necessity of "merging" the word and the Spirit.* Kantzer and Frame rightly criticise Calvin, but they do not propose a solution, and this is unfortunate. Indeed, Frame goes on to make exactly the same mistake as Calvin.<sup>1073</sup> So, in what sense is scripture powerful or effective? How can we avoid the mysticism and dualism of Calvin? In Murray’s and Calvin’s views, the word of God in its part in the internal testimony is like a lighthouse that

<sup>1072</sup> RA, p.113.  
<sup>1073</sup>

“Spirit and the Scriptures”, p.234; *Knowledge of God*, p.156.

provides light for us in the darkness, but the lighthouse and its "inherent" light do not steer the ship. A different agent or process effects the steering of the ship, namely the Spirit. We understand the scriptures' role differently. One of the passages central to our understanding of the power of the scriptures is 2 Timothy 3:16. Of it, Murray declares, 'Scripture is corrective'.

<sup>1074</sup> It communicates and inculcates truth; *it* exposes error; *it* straightens out that which is crooked and perverse; and *it* instructs in righteousness. It is the scripture that is the lighthouse and its light. Further it creates, effects, the 'eyesight' by which its own light is perceived. The lighthouse, the scriptures, *steers* the ship into safety. We are saying that it is the word of God *per se* that creates the testimony within us. Murray parallels the effect of God's spoken word in creating the universe to the effects of the scriptures.<sup>1075</sup> We know that the Spirit made creation, also. There is no dichotomy here. The words of God created, and the Spirit created. The Spirit was the one who- and this is to put very simply a mystery- energised the words. More than this, the words themselves were efficacious, because they were the going forth of the Spirit.

No, we are not arguing that God's propositions, whether Biblical or extra-Biblical, are his Spirit. We are insisting that the Spirit *is* in a fashion incarcerated within propositions in relation to the internal testimony- *contra* Barth. *That is*, although scripture and the Holy Spirit are two distinct "beings", there is undoubtedly a sense in which they are identified or merged. Of course, the use of "beings" is somewhat clumsy, for there is no ontological union of the Spirit and word (we cannot refer to the word in ontological terms). How do we label the union of the word and the Spirit, then? We confess that we do not know. Maybe helpful terms would be "functional" or "hypostatic". Whatever term is used would have to be heavily qualified. It nevertheless stands that there is a union, and it is a paradox: there is identification and non-identification. In our opinion, this paradox resolves the objection raised by neo-orthodoxy, namely, that the content of faith cannot be separated from the active presentation of the content of faith.<sup>1076</sup> We do not pretend to fully understanding the mystery of the internal testimony by the *word* and Spirit, yet, what must be said is that the Spirit is never word-less in *effecting* the testimony; his "punch" is not "bare knuckle", but it is covered with a "boxing glove", the word, the new covenant. More than this, the internal testimony is the begetting of the *word* within us; it is not merely the begetting of spiritual life by an indwelling Spirit. It is Spiritual life that is begotten because it is *word* life.

<sup>1074</sup> CW 3, p.260.  
<sup>1075</sup> *idem*.

Another way of putting our thesis: the Reformed camp forgets its own doctrine of the scriptures being God's self-revelation. The Reformed doctrine of the internal testimony does not utilise its own teaching of the bible being the revelation of God. Some say that whenever an attribute of God is referred to we must also understand that God is present with that attribute. The same is true of revelation, the bible. The bible is God's self-revelation; it is not a picture of him. When Peter "encountered" Christ upon the boat, he was overwhelmed by Christ and consequently by his own sin. To encounter God is to- if you can excuse the expression- encounter raw power. And because the scriptures are God revealing himself, then they are naturally and without remission efficacious.

The Spirit may not be working within certain men to create the internal testimony, nevertheless, whenever the word is preached he is powerfully transforming all that hear. It is not merely that men reject that revelation, but that the revelation itself acts powerfully to confirm their rejection. As Calvin declares, 'If anyone thinks that the air echoes with an empty sound when the Word of God is sent forth, he is making a great mistake. This was something alive, [sic] and full of hidden power which leaves nothing in man untouched.' [emphasis mine] <sup>1077</sup>

And the sum of the matter is this: if the word is powerful because it is the revelation of God, then what need is there to posit a separate work of this same God in effecting the internal testimony?

*Fides generalis and fides specialis.* For us, one of the most striking points against Murray's thought originates from the division he makes between faith in the word of God arising from the internal testimony (*fides generalis*), and faith in Christ who saves (*fides specialis*). The problem with this set-up is that the texts used by Murray to corroborate his thesis are all concerned either with salvation or with sanctification. Strictly speaking, this is improper. If the internal testimony is to the divinity of scripture, then the special property of the testimony of the Spirit is that it is not unto salvation *per se* or sanctification.

Although Murray would be keen to maintain that *fides specialis* and *fides generalis* are the same faith, in effect he has created two faiths: one in scripture and one in Jesus. <sup>1078</sup> His system depicts

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<sup>1076</sup> Cf., B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, p.83.

<sup>1077</sup> *Hebrews*, p.51. If only Calvin would have followed through his own teaching.

<sup>1078</sup> In wanting to safeguard against mysticism as well as Roman Catholicism's doctrine of tradition, the Reformers declared that it was not enough to talk of faith in Christ, one must also posit faith in the divinity of Scriptures. The latter was seen as prerequisite for the former.



two "coins" of faith. Calvin has the same problem.<sup>1079</sup> We would say that we should think of one "coin" called faith, which has two sides: Christ and the divinity of scripture; faith in Christ *is* faith in the scripture; faith in scripture *is* faith in Christ. This is just to say that true faith is saving faith.

In effect, part of the Calvinistic teaching on the illumination of the Spirit has a Barthian tendency. Calvinism states that regeneration and the witness of the Spirit occur not by the word directly but by the Spirit accompanying the word. Barth said that the Calvinistic theory of the inerrancy and infallibility was wrong because it meant that God was incarcerated within scripture. Consequently, he stated that the Spirit or God was completely unbound from scripture, working beside and with it. We are stating the exact opposite to Barth. The Spirit has chosen to work *in* propositions; he has not merely chosen to accompany them. In trying to preserve the divine monergism and incomprehensibility, Calvin, Murray and Barth did not properly utilise the complementary doctrine of divine immanence or assistance, wherein the transcendent One is "located" or "enclosed" within time and space. This is a paradox, a mystery.<sup>1080</sup>

We are acutely aware of the danger of immanence swallowing up transcendence. In stating that it is the *transcendent* Spirit who is bound to propositions, we are avoiding the classic Liberal position of advocating merely a divine immanence. Some might say that we have not said enough. True, for at the point of convergence between methodology, ontology and epistemology, there are many difficulties. Further, we believe the reason for this is that there is relatively little scriptural data to call upon.

*Different texts.* The work of revelation 'is called the drawing and instruction of the Father (John 6:44, 45)', comments Murray. Yet, he uses John 6:44 elsewhere to describe the work of God in

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<sup>1079</sup> Salvific faith and the gospel are inseparable because only the gospel offers us Christ. 'Take away the word, therefore, and no faith will remain.' Faith is not merely concerned with whom God is, but it focuses upon his will or character toward us, as ascertained in his word. There can be no persuasion that the word will tell the facts concerning God's character, unless there is a prior acknowledgement that God's word is complete truth. [3:2:6.]

By "will" is not meant a knowledge of the whole scope of the will of God; for knowledge about the wrath of God, for example, will not bring salvation. Rather it is a knowledge of the will of God concerning his mercy which is needed. Calvin further elucidates the distinction between the promise and the rest of God's word, 'Therefore, when we say, that faith must rest on a free promise, we deny not that believers accept and embrace the word of God in all its parts, but we point to the promise of mercy as its special object.' [3:2:29.]

<sup>1080</sup> Cf., K. Vanhoozer, "Effectual Call", pp.219-221.

regenerating the sinner.<sup>1081</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14 is also used by Murray to expand regeneration.

<sup>1082</sup> This can only mean one of two things: Murray sees John 6:44 and 1 Corinthians 2:14 as including both regeneration and illumination, or, he contradicts himself.

Matthew 11:25-27 is a questionable text to use to prove the internal testimony, simply because there is no reference to verbal propositions. Moreover, is this text concerned with Peter coming to faith, or is it merely describing how Peter, the Christian, came to be enlightened in one point of theology? The words "power" and "Spirit" in 1 Thessalonians 1:5 might denote that the apostolic preaching was validated and accompanied by miraculous effects, such as miracles, tongue speaking, and so forth (cf., 2 Thess.2:9). Even if this is incorrect, the mere fact that in grammatical terms "Spirit" is separated from "word" in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, does not mean that the internal testimony is a separate work of the Spirit accompanying the word. It might reflect a desire within Paul to merely underline the fact that the word is of the Spirit, that is, it was a spiritual word that transformed the Thessalonians. And because 1 Corinthians 2:4 has almost an identical construction as 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Murray's interpretation of it is also open to revision. Calvin comments on 1 Corinthians 2:4:

... "demonstration of the Spirit and power", which most interpreters confine to miracles. But I understand it in a wider sense, viz. as the hand of God stretching itself out to act powerfully through the apostle in every way. He seems to have put "Spirit and power" either by hypallage (καθ' υπαλλαγήν) for spiritual power; or, surely, in order that he might point out by means of signs and effects how the presence of the Spirit had been apparent in his ministry. And his use of the word αποδειξις or demonstration is apposite. For our dullness, when we look closely at the works of God, is such, that when He uses inferior instruments, His power is concealed as if by so many veils, so that it is clearly evident to us. On the other hand, in promoting Paul's ministry, because no human or worldly help was at work, the hand of God stretched itself out, as it were, bare; certainly His power was more visible.<sup>1083</sup>

Whatever Paul's meaning, one has to negotiate the theology of the inherent and efficacious power of God's word.

#### Paul and faith

The Pauline usage of *pisteuo* is used in reference to the two-age doctrine. Probably the most striking evidence of this is found in Galatians 3:22-23, "But the Scripture declares that the whole

<sup>1081</sup> RA, p.95.  
<sup>1082</sup> *ibid.*, p.96.

world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.” Commentators unanimously agree that “faith”, here, refers to faith in Jesus Christ unto justification and adoption. “Faith” refers to a distinct age because it ‘began after the period of law had come to an end.’ The period of the law is the ending of the rule of the Mosaic dispensation, according to Silva.<sup>1084</sup>

The proper interpretation of verse 22 is to say that the scriptures held all men as prisoners of sin.

<sup>1085</sup> In this case, “scriptures” functions as “law” does in verse 23. Who or what is denoted by “whole world”? Luther<sup>1086</sup> and R. C. H. Lenski<sup>1087</sup> think it refers to everybody, because of the curse, but especially to those under the law. Why do they introduce the curse into a text concerned with the condemnation coming from God’s word? Fung says that torah condemns all men, Jews and Gentiles, so that all are under sin.<sup>1088</sup> But how specifically did torah condemn all men? Eadie thinks that the world is unable to attain to justification by faith because, like the Jewish law, Gentile forms of law fail to justify.<sup>1089</sup> This position fails because the Jews would never have considered the Gentiles to have been seeking justification. F. F. Bruce says, ‘The law kept the Gentiles out of the privileges of the people of God and kept Israel apart from the rest of mankind’.<sup>1090</sup> Bruce ends up contradicting his own intention: if the whole world is under sin, including Jews, then holding up the Jews in a positive light over against the Gentiles is not sensible. Burton takes a novel view, saying only the Jews are under sin, since the context is concerned with torah.<sup>1091</sup> This hardly fits the usage of τοὺς πάντα, however.<sup>1092</sup>

<sup>1083</sup> 1 Corinthians, p.51. Calvin exegetes 1 Thessalonians 1:5 in the same manner, see *Romans*, p.336.

<sup>1084</sup> Moises Silva, *Explorations in Exegetical Method: Galatians as a Test Case* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1996), pp.187-195.

<sup>1085</sup> See, John Eadie, *Galatians*, The John Eadie Greek Text Commentaries 1 (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979), pp.276-277; Hans Dieter Bets, *Galatians* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1979), p.175; D. C. Arichea & E. A. Nida, *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (London, United Bible Societies, 1976), p.78; E. De Witt Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, ICC, editor: S. R. Driver, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark Ltd., 1988), p.195; G. Walter Hanson, *Galatians* (Leicester, IVP, 1994), p.105; R. Y. K. Fung, *Galatians*, p.164; J. D. G. Dunn, *Galatians*, p.194.

<sup>1086</sup> *A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, revised edition, translator: P. S. Watson, (Cambridge, James Clarke and Co. Ltd., 1978), p.321.

<sup>1087</sup> *The Interpretation of St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p.176.

<sup>1088</sup> *Galatians*, pp.164-165.

<sup>1089</sup> *Galatians*, p.296.

<sup>1090</sup> *The Epistle to the Galatians*, NIGTC, (Exeter, Paternoster Press, 1982), p.181.

<sup>1091</sup> *Galatians*, p.196.

<sup>1092</sup> Nida thinks that τοὺς πάντα includes all things, and not just people. [*Galatians*, p.79.] F. F. Bruce believes it denotes ‘the whole human situation- man and his works’. [*Galatians*, p. p.180.]

There is an element of accuracy in all the above views. Hans Dieter Bets has the answer. He says that the universal dominion of torah is demonstrated in Romans 2:14f. He adds, 'In Rom.1:18-3:20 the Apostle demonstrates that both Jews and Gentiles are "under sin" (3:9, 19, 23; 5:12, 14, 16). This period began with Adam's transgression (5:12-21), so that ever prior to Moses sin and death ruled, but they were not counted because there was no Law (cf.5:14).' <sup>1093</sup> Therein lies the tension of torah. All are under torah inasmuch as all are in covenant with Adam and have the requirements of the law of God written on their hearts. It is in this sense that scripture, the precise expression of that seminal torah of the heart, condemns all men. Yet, torah, properly speaking, is the Mosaic dispensation. Thus, Paul is saying that *all men belong to the Mosaic dispensation*, which was one of bondage and death, for all men are bound by either "pure" torah or "seminal" torah- see our argument in Union with Christ.

Verse 23 causes further problems. Hanson says it must refer to the Jews since the imprisonment mentioned is to be brought "under torah". <sup>1094</sup> This interpretation dispels the theology we have just mentioned. There are also contextual reasons for rejecting Hanson's construction:

The first person plural in vv.23-25 is taken as referring to Jews only by, amongst others, Donaldson....But the statement "we are no longer under a custodian" (v.25b, RSV) is explained by the sentence, "you are all sons of God in union with Christ Jesus" (v.26); this suggests that "we" includes "you." Now the following context (vv.27-29, especially v.28) shows that "you" refers to all Christians irrespective of race, status, or sex; this in turn suggests that the "we" of the previous verse also refers to both Jews and Gentiles. <sup>1095</sup>

Galatians 4:8-30 refers to "you", and Paul is appealing to the Galatians that they be not brought under torah. The context is obviously concerned with *Gentiles* falling under law. The section finishes in verse 31, saying, "Therefore, brothers, *we* are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman." This is a strange way to end an exposition given to Gentiles, since "we", according to Hanson, denotes Jews.

Although in the Pauline writings faith is said to be in the death of Christ, the negative realm, this does not undermine our view. As we will see, repentance is a new world or Spirit blessing. Its peculiar reference is to the province of negativity, however. With "faith" the process is turned

<sup>1093</sup> Galatians, pp.175-176.  
<sup>1094</sup> Galatians, p.116.  
<sup>1095</sup> Fung, Galatians, p.167.

round. "Faith", according to Paul, demonstrates that we belong to the new dispensation; "faith" is directed towards Christ's death and resurrection.

### FIDES SPECIALIS AND ASSURANCE

Calvin

*Knowledge and fides specialis.* Essentially, Murray's and Calvin's doctrines of faith are the same, though there are differences. In the last section, we evaluated Murray's and Calvin's teachings of *fides generalis*. We concluded that they had a tendency to mysticism. Because *fides generalis* and *fides specialis* are the same faith to Murray and Calvin, unsurprisingly Calvin describes saving faith as knowledge surpassing human reason.<sup>1096</sup> In *fides specialis*, he therefore incurs the dualism which he incurred in his understanding of *fides generalis*. But of his dichotomising the word and Spirit, we have already said enough.

*The Spirit's witness is not confidence.* The fastidiousness of Murray is also evident in Calvin. Murray said that the testimony of the Spirit is not faith. Calvin is convinced of the same thing, believing that the 'testimony of the Spirit' precedes our cry of confidence in God as our Father, 'for while the Spirit testifies to us that we are children of God, He at the same time pours confidence into our hearts, so that we dare invoke God as our Father'. Calvin continues, 'unless we are persuaded for certain in our hearts that He is our Father' we will not pray.<sup>1097</sup>

*Calvin divides the soul of man into intellect and will.*<sup>1098</sup> Man's nature consists of two parts, 'viz. intellect and will', holds Calvin.<sup>1099</sup> 'It is a power of reason to discern between good and evil; of will, to choose the one or the other.'<sup>1100</sup> 'By the *mind* he means the understanding, while *conscience* refers rather to the disposition of the heart. Here there are two things to be noted: a man is judged before God by the sincere disposition of his heart and not by external works'.<sup>1101</sup>

<sup>1096</sup> *Inst.* 3:2:14. See, Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy* (Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp.259-260.

<sup>1097</sup> *Romans*, p.170.

<sup>1098</sup> This section is extensive, but it is necessary in order to establish that Calvin divides up faith into two distinct and, ultimately, unhelpful components.

<sup>1099</sup> *Inst.* 3:3:1.

<sup>1100</sup> *ibid.*, 2:2:4.

<sup>1101</sup> *2 Corinthians*, p.367.

Other names for the intellect are “reason”, “mind”, “understanding”, “heart” and “spirit”.<sup>1102</sup> The mind ‘consist chiefly of three things- the knowledge of God, the knowledge of his paternal favour towards us, which constitutes our salvation, and the method of regulating of our conduct in accordance with the Divine Law.’<sup>1103</sup>

The next part of man dealt with is the will. It is equivalent to “heart”, and denotes the seat of affections. Calvin writes:

As by the word heart he means affections, so also by the spirit he signifies the mind itself and all its thoughts. The spirit of a man is often taken for the whole soul, and then it comprehends the affections. But where the two are joined together, as the heart and the spirit, the heart is called the seat of all the affections, it is in truth the very will of man, while the spirit is the faculty of intelligence.<sup>1104</sup>

He also describes how the will is related to the heart, ‘Scripture is accustomed to divide the soul of man, as to its faculties, into two parts, the mind and the heart. The mind means the understanding, while the heart denotes all the dispositions or wills.’<sup>1105</sup> This suggests that the will might be the dispositions of the mind. He writes, ‘the will of our nature and mind’.<sup>1106</sup> He comments, ‘[Paul] declares their mind to be vain. Now, this is what holds the primacy in the life of man, is the seat of reason, presides over the will, and restrains vicious desires’. He continues, ‘Finally, the reason and understanding which men possess make them without excuse in the sight of God; but, so long as they are allowed to live according to their own disposition, they can only wander slip and stumble in their purposes and actions.’<sup>1107</sup> Calvin also writes that the will ‘attends to the rule of the mind...reason...guides the will in the appropriate direction and restrains the sensual passions by its reins as a charioteer does a team of wild horses.’<sup>1108</sup> For Calvin, the organic unity between mind and will is such that he can refer to the mind willing, ‘[Paul] again applies the word *mind*, not to the rational part of the soul honoured by philosophers, but to that part which is illuminated by the Spirit of God, so that it may understand and will aright. Paul not

<sup>1102</sup> “Mind” (*cogitationis*) is the sense or intention of the soul. [*Galatians*, p.314.]

<sup>1103</sup> 2:2:18.

<sup>1104</sup> *Ezekiel* 1, p.373. “Heart” sometimes denotes the whole soul. [*Commentary on the Book of Psalms* 3, translator: J. Anderson, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1979), p.156.]

<sup>1105</sup> *Galatians*, p.290.

<sup>1106</sup> *ibid.*, p.141.

<sup>1107</sup> *ibid.*, p.187. See, *Inst.* 2:2:4-27; *Ezekiel* 1, pp.375-376.

<sup>1108</sup> *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, editor: A. N. S. Lane; translator: G. I. Davies, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1996), p.77.

only mentions understanding, but also connects with it the earnest desire of the heart.’<sup>1109</sup> The second sentence explicates the first; that the heart is “connected” with the mind is explicatory of the mind “willing”. In Romans 8:7, Paul says that the “sinful mind is hostile to God”. Calvin interprets “mind” as the will, ‘Let us observe here that the will of man is in all respects opposed to the divine will.’<sup>1110</sup> Because Romans 8:7, for Calvin, respects not merely attitude but affections set against God, he uses the designation “will”. There is no such thing as a non-willing mind, to Calvin. Therefore, “will” can quite readily serve for “mind”; the use of the one implies the other.

In the light of these comments, it is reasonable to suggest that Calvin thought of the will and mind as separate faculties, yet the will is founded upon the mind, or, more precisely, the will is the instrument of the mind.

Calvin divides faith into two parts, namely, the “illumination of the *intellect*”; and the seal of the Spirit on the *heart*. Time and again, Calvin talks of the Holy Spirit illuminating the mind, ‘unless the Lord enlighten their understandings’;<sup>1111</sup> ‘the human mind is wise only in so far as He enlightens it’;<sup>1112</sup> ‘whose minds have been renewed by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit’;<sup>1113</sup> ‘The eyes of our understanding being enlightened’;<sup>1114</sup> ‘the grace of illumination not less necessary to the mind than the light of the sun to the eye....Nor does Scripture say our minds are illuminated in a single day’.<sup>1115</sup>

That the Spirit “seals” the heart when creating faith is substantiated from these quotations: ‘the testimony of the Spirit...if this supports [the disciples] consciences’; ‘God’s truth, sealed by the Holy Spirit in our hearts’;<sup>1116</sup> ‘Therefore, although there is no faith until God’s Spirit enlightens our minds and seals our hearts’;<sup>1117</sup> ‘this is His way of sealing the certainty of His Word on our hearts’;<sup>1118</sup> ‘This is a notable passage in regard to the general benefits of the sacraments. These,

<sup>1109</sup> *Romans*, p.155.  
<sup>1110</sup> *ibid.*, p.162.

<sup>1111</sup> 2:2:20. See, 2 *Corinthians*, p.47; *Hebrews*, p.243.

<sup>1112</sup> *idem*.

<sup>1113</sup> *idem*.

<sup>1114</sup> *ibid.*, 2:20:21.

<sup>1115</sup> *ibid.*, 2:2:25.

<sup>1116</sup> *John 11-21*, p.109.

<sup>1117</sup> *ibid.*, p.110.

<sup>1118</sup> 2 *Corinthians*, p.23.

as Paul testifies, are seals by which the promises of God are in a manner imprinted on our hearts, and the certainty of grace confirmed'.<sup>1119</sup> Calvin writes:

...all [John] had in view was to strengthen their faith when he recalled them to the trial of the Spirit, who is the only fit critic and approver of doctrine and seals it in our hearts; so that we may assuredly know that God speaks. For since faith must look to God, He alone can be a witness to Himself, to convince our hearts that what our ears receive has come from him. And these words mean the same thing: *As his anointing teacheth you concerning all things, and is true.* That is, the Spirit is like a seal, by which the truth of God is testified to us. [emphasis his]<sup>1120</sup>

There are texts which seem, on first sight, to break up the formula of illumination belonging to the mind and sealing relating to the heart. Calvin refers to the illumination of the heart.<sup>1121</sup> "Heart" is sometimes used to mean the intellect, says Calvin, 'In Scripture *the heart* is sometimes taken as the seat of the affections. But here, as in many other places, it means the so-called intellectual part of the soul. Moses speaks in the same sense: "God hath not given you an heart to know (*ad intelligendum*)" (Deut.29:4).' <sup>1122</sup> This is emphasised in *Inst.2:2:22*, where Calvin quotes Romans 2:14-15, "the law written on their hearts", and then refers to this as 'the law naturally engraven on their minds'.<sup>1123</sup>

Another controversial comment by Calvin remarks:

[Paul] says the same thing in different words and speaks about 'anointing' and 'sealing' as well as 'stablishing' and by this double metaphor he illustrates more clearly what he has already said without any figure of speech. For when God pours out upon us the heavenly gift of His Spirit, this is His way of sealing the certainty of the Word on our hearts. Then he puts it forth by saying that the Spirit has been given us as an 'earnest' - a comparison Paul often uses and which is most suitable. As the Spirit is our surety because He testifies to our adoption, and our σφραγις and seal because He establishes the good faith of the promises, so He is well named our 'earnest' because it is His work to ratify God's covenant on both sides and without Him it would hang in suspense.

Here we should note first the relation that Paul requires between God's gospel and our faith. Since all that God avows is utterly certain, he wants us to receive

<sup>1119</sup> Romans, p.89.

<sup>1120</sup> John 11-21, p.263.

<sup>1121</sup> John 1-10, p.164; *Inst.2:20:22, 24, 25.* M. E. Eaton believes that Calvin refers to the illumination of the heart, and to the sealing of the mind. [*Baptism with the Spirit* (Leicester, IVP, 1989), pp.46-47, 57.]

<sup>1122</sup> John 11-21, p.47.

<sup>1123</sup> He also says, 'We know that in Hebrew the word heart often includes the mind, especially when it is linked with the soul...mind signifies for me the higher seat of reason from which all purposes and thoughts proceed.' [*Harmony of the Gospels* 3, p.36]



into our minds with a firm and unwavering assent. Secondly we should note that, since this degree of certainty is beyond the capacity of the human mind, it is the office of the Holy Spirit to confirm within us what God promises in His Word. That is why He is called Anointing, Earnest, Strengtheners, Seal.<sup>1124</sup>

In our reading of Calvin's various books, we have found no explicit reference to the mind being "sealed" by the Spirit. In the first paragraph of the above quotation, Calvin explicitly refers to the sealing of the heart. The second paragraph's subject is not the mind but certainty. Certainty does not arise from man's own operation; it is derived from the Holy Spirit, who, having created certainty in the mind, brings through the channel of the mind that same certainty to the heart. This is an example of the interrelationship we described earlier between the will and the mind. Certainty comes through the mind, to the heart, because the mind is the first or controlling faculty. The same methodology is found in this quotation, 'by the internal illumination of the Spirit he causes the word preached to take deep root in their hearts.'<sup>1125</sup> The illumination of the Spirit is the "cause" of the word taking root, just as the sun is the "cause" of its own rays.

Of Ephesians 1:13-14, Calvin maintains:

But here he seems to subject the sealing of the Spirit to faith. If so, faith precedes it. I answer, the effect of the Spirit in faith is twofold, corresponding to the two chief parts of which faith consists. It enlightens the intellect (*mens*) and also confirms the thinking (*animus*). The commencement of faith is knowledge; its completion is a firm and steady conviction, which admits of no opposing doubt. Each, I have said, is the work of the Spirit. No wonder, then, if Paul should declare that the Ephesians not only received by faith the truth of the Gospel, but also were confirmed in it by the seal of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1126</sup>

The two chief parts of faith are enlightenment and confirmation. This time, however, Calvin refers to the 'thinking' being confirmed. Does this mean that the mind is sealed, also? Not necessarily. Calvin has defined the intellect as that faculty which "discerns" true from false, good from evil. The mind is the vessel of "discerning" thought or knowledge. The heart is the receptacle of this knowledge; it harnesses it. It could be that "thinking" refers to the exercise of the will alone, in that the will is the faculty that interfaces with people or beings, just as when Calvin said that the natural mind is at enmity with God. Or, he might mean that the knowledge passed over from the mind is sealed upon the heart. The former suggestion is more in harmony with Calvin's definitions of heart and mind.

<sup>1124</sup> 2 Corinthians, p.23. Cf., *Inst.*3:2:33.  
<sup>1125</sup> *Inst.*3:24:8.

The mind discerns falsehood from truth, fact from fiction, thinks Calvin. This leads Calvin to sometimes say that “knowledge” *per se* is the property of the mind only:

Thus we see that a *mind illumined* with the *knowledge* of God is at first involved in much ignorance,- ignorance, however, which is gradually removed. Still this partial ignorance or obscure *discernment* does not prevent that clear *knowledge* of the divine favour which holds the first and principal part in faith. [emphasis ours] <sup>1127</sup>

The knowledge referred to is discerning knowledge, knowledge belonging to the mind. The mind is the first vehicle through which knowledge must pass. Therefore, discerning knowledge becomes ‘the first and principal part of faith.’ The second is the confirmation of that knowledge.

The second element, the seal or confirmation, is broken down into a further two aspects: confidence and boldness:

...first confidence and then, as its result, boldness, are begotten of faith. Thus, there are three steps to be taken. First we believe the promises of God; next, by resting in them, we conceive confidence, so that we may have a good and quiet mind. From this follows boldness, which enables us to banish fear, and to entrust ourselves courageously and steadfastly to God.

Those who separate faith from confidence act like men trying to take heat or light from the sun. I acknowledge, indeed, that, in proportion to the measure of faith, confidence is small in some and greater in others; but faith will never be found without these effects or fruits. A trembling, hesitating, doubting conscience will always be proof of unbelief; but a firm, steady conscience, victorious against the gates of hell, will be the sure proof of faith. <sup>1128</sup>

If “faith” *begets* confidence, and confidence and boldness are the ‘effects’ of “faith”, then “faith” is not these effects. Yet, because of the close relation between the two, Calvin does stretch the term faith so to incorporate confidence, ‘our faith is not true unless it enables us to appear calmly in the presence of God....So true is this, that the term *faith* is often used as the equivalent to confidence.’ <sup>1129</sup>

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<sup>1126</sup> *Galatians*, pp.132-133. See, Michael Eaton, *Baptism with the Spirit*, p.46.

<sup>1127</sup> *Inst.* 3:2:19.

<sup>1128</sup> *ibid.*, p.164. Cf., *Inst.* 3:20:1; *John* 1-10, p.162; *Romans*, pp.78, 177, 230-231.

<sup>1129</sup> *Inst.* 2:2:15.

We must not think that illumination does not involve assurance, and neither must we believe that sealing does not involve knowledge. For Calvin, faith is knowledge; further, faith is assurance. Calvin defines faith as ‘a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour towards us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, *and* sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit.’ [emphasis ours] <sup>1130</sup> This reinforces what we said earlier about the distinction between heart and mind. Also, it reveals that in both the mind and heart knowledge and assurance are present. Properly speaking, knowledge is nevertheless the property of the mind, and assurance is the property of the heart.

Calvin once more writes, ‘And the foundation of [faith in God’s promise] is a previous persuasion of the truth of God. So long as your *mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty* of the word, its authority will be weak and dubious, or rather it will have no authority at all.’ <sup>1131</sup> [emphasis ours] The genus faith, in the form of the species *fides generalis* and *fides specialis*, is stamped on the mind. Both species are stamped concurrently, although, as we saw under the section *fides generalis*, *fides generalis* is the antecedent of *fides specialis*. In a consistent fashion, Calvin applies the same order to the heart being sealed with the knowledge of the divinity of scripture, ‘the only true faith...that which the Spirit of God seals on our hearts.’ <sup>1132</sup> The ‘only true faith’, Calvin is referring to, is faith in God: only one faith (the genus), which is expressed in two species, *fides generalis* and *fides specialis*. The sealing of the divinity of scripture upon the heart takes place at the same moment of the sealing of the promises of scripture upon the heart, though the former in logic terms is antecedent to the latter. Thus, when Calvin refers to certainty in the mind in *fides generalis*, implied is certainty in the mind in *fides specialis*. The mind grasps, comprehends, *rests in*, the knowledge of God referred to in his promise. Calvin calls this ‘assurance’. <sup>1133</sup> Moreover, “persuasion” is a term set aside for this assurance, by Calvin. <sup>1134</sup>

Is there a theological purpose for this relationship between the will and the heart in faith? Calvin wanted to overcome the Roman Catholic dogma that faith is mere assent. He thinks that there is no such thing as mere knowledge; true faith is transforming faith:

...what the mind has imbibed [must] be transferred into the heart. The word is not received in faith when it merely flutters in the brain, but when it has taken deep root in the heart, and

<sup>1130</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:7.  
<sup>1131</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:6. See, 1:7:4.  
<sup>1132</sup> *ibid.*, 1:7:5.  
<sup>1133</sup> *ibid.*, 2:2:18.  
<sup>1134</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:14.

become an invincible bulwark to withstand and repel all the assaults of temptation. But if the illumination of the Spirit is the true source of understanding in the intellect, much more manifest is his agency in the confirmation of the heart....Hence the Spirit performs the part of a seal, sealing upon our hearts the very promises, the certainty of which was previously impressed upon our minds. <sup>1135</sup>

The word of God must take root in the heart. This is the accomplishment of 'an invincible bulwark to withstand and repel all the assaults of temptation', or the accomplishment of sanctification. The Spirit plays a dual sealing role: firstly it illumines the promises "upon" the intellect; then it seals them on the heart. Faith is more a matter of the affections than of the intellect. 'For this reason, it is termed "the obedience of faith" (Rom.1:5), which the Lord prefers to all other service'. <sup>1136</sup>

See how the sealing work of the Spirit is broken down into renewal and assurance:

Here it will be proper to point out the titles which the Scripture bestows on the Spirit, when it treats of the commencement and entire renewal of our salvation. First, he is called the "Spirit of adoption," because he is witness to us of the free favour with which God the Father embraced us in his well-beloved and only-begotten Son, so as to become our Father, and gives us boldness of access to him; nay, he dictates the very words, so that we can boldly cry, "Abba, Father." For the same reason, he is said to have "sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts," because, as pilgrims in the world, and persons in a manner dead, he so quickens us from above as to assure us that our salvation is in the keeping of a faithful God. <sup>1137</sup>

Sanctification is the result of the heart being sealed. We quoted Calvin earlier, saying that the confirmation of the heart gives two results: confidence and boldness. The latter is not assurance, but its fruit. Sanctification is the fruit of confirmation, also. We read that faith is obedience because it relates to the heart, the "outgoing" faculty of man. Sanctification naturally flows from a sealed heart; for the heart having been renewed or empowered by assurance is given impetus to express itself in works. This is just to say that the seed of God present in the elect manifests itself firstly in confidence and then in sanctification.

<sup>1135</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:36.  
<sup>1136</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:8.

<sup>1137</sup> See, 3:2:34. On Romans 1:5, Calvin comments, 'We are to note here also the nature of faith. It is referred to as *obedience*, because the Lord calls us by the Gospel, and we answer Him by faith as He calls us. So, on the other hand, the source of all wilful disobedience is unbelief.' [*Romans*, p.18]  
*ibid.*, 3:1:2.

The division of illumination of the mind and sealing of the heart corresponds to the distinction between justification by faith and sanctification. Calvin remarks:

Since faith embraces Christ as he is offered by the Father, and he is offered not only for justification but also for sanctification...it is certain that no man will ever know him aright without at the same time receiving the sanctification of the Spirit; or, to express the matter more plainly, faith consists in the knowledge of Christ; Christ cannot be known without the sanctification of his Spirit: therefore faith cannot possibly be disjoined from pious affection.<sup>1138</sup>

To bring together Calvin's thought, the *natura* of man, his mind and will, has its analogue in the *natura* of faith, illumination and confidence. Illumination is an activity within the mind, and confidence is a quality primarily concerned with the heart. In regeneration (narrowly defined), the mind and heart are renewed. We must recall Calvin's perspectival understanding of regeneration. The divine perspective was secret regeneration, and the manward perspective was sanctification *by faith*. The manward or observable event was an external reflection of the internal event. The same method is applied to the relation between secret regeneration and faith. The secret renewal of the mind and heart is "reflected" in faith, in the illumination of the mind, and the sealing of the heart. There is a logic distinction: the heart and mind are renewed concurrently, in logic terms, in secret regeneration; during faith, the illumination of the mind is the antecedent of the sealing of the heart. Further, the renewal of the mind in regeneration narrowly defined has its parallel in justification; and the renewal of the heart in regeneration narrowly defined has its correspondent in sanctification.

#### Calvin's division of mind-illumination and heart-confirmation is unhelpful

The distinction between the heart and mind in Calvin's thought is passed over by R. T. Kendall,<sup>1139</sup> though A. S. Lane accepts it.<sup>1140</sup> It is the heart-mind divide that provides a distinction between Calvin and Murray. In one sense, Murray is more accurate. If salvation is administered at the point of justification- so Calvin- then it is to be understood that salvation *at this juncture* is of the whole soul (mind and heart). In effect, Calvin's logic entails that at the point of justification only part of the man's soul is soteriologically active and only part of it is saved. In fact, in logic terms, justification is robbed of its value: salvation occurs at the point of

<sup>1138</sup> *idem*.

<sup>1139</sup> Calvin and English Calvinism, p.28.

<sup>1140</sup> "John Calvin: The Witness of the Holy Spirit", *Faith and Ferment* (Westminster Conference, 1982), pp.11-12.

justification, he avers, yet, it is only after assurance of the heart that can we say that we are saved. Therefore, according to logic distinctions, there is no salvation *until* assurance in the heart.

It is at the heart of Calvin's soteriology that this division of mind and heart is most patent. If the mind exercises a knowledge unto justification, union with Christ becomes non-personal. Calvin believes the heart is the faculty through which the individual hates and loves, does and does not. His doctrine of union with Christ is fundamental to his doctrine of justification by faith. At this moment we will merely say that if we are united to Christ in justification in terms of person to person, then that necessitates that the heart be involved. The heart is not involved in justification, according to Calvin, therefore his doctrine of justification becomes as "impersonal" as that of Murray's- see comments coming up- even although they would claim the opposite.

It might seem that our theory that the heart is linked with sanctification in Calvin's theology is completely erroneous because he refers to sanctification being the renewal of the mind and heart. This is a fact. Although, Calvin asserts this, this does not mean that he is completely consistent. Or it may simply mean that Calvin has a rather elastic understanding of the meaning of mind and heart.

#### **Murray thinks assurance is of the essence of faith**

There is the modern criticism that Calvinists have misunderstood Calvin concerning assurance. For example, Michael Eaton declares, 'For Luther and Calvin faith is assurance.' He then accuses Murray of splitting between faith and assurance, for Murray distinguishes between the primary and secondary acts of faith.<sup>1141</sup>

Eaton's criticism is partly correct. Murray does not say that assurance is integral to the definition of faith. Does this mean that he diverges from Calvin? By no means! Murray declares that in the act of faith *per se* the believer is assured that God is true and that his promise that he will save is true. Owen describes justifying faith as a 'firm persuasion of the heart'.<sup>1142</sup> C. Hodge names it 'the persuasion of the mind that a thing is true.'<sup>1143</sup>

#### **Murray thinks that assurance is not of the essence of faith**

<sup>1141</sup> *Theology of Encouragement* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1995), pp.19-20.

<sup>1142</sup> *Works* 1, p.486. See, S. Ferguson, "The Assurance of Salvation", *TBT* 186 (March, 1979), p.3.

<sup>1143</sup> *Systematic Theology* 3, p.42.

The seeming contradiction at hand is resolved if we remember that, to Murray, assurance proper, if we may call it that, was faith that Christ *has* saved me, whereas, the assurance that is integral to faith is assurance that God *will* save me. For Calvin, faith was not trust that God *will* save the penitent believer; instead of this proposition is another: faith is 'when we recognise God *as* a propitious Father through the reconciliation made by Christ, and Christ *as* given to us for righteousness, sanctification, and life.' [emphasis ours] <sup>1144</sup> Calvin adds, 'Hence there is need of the gracious promise, in which he testifies that he *is* a propitious Father'. [emphasis ours] <sup>1145</sup> 'In one word, he only is a true believer who, firmly persuaded that God *is* reconciled, and *is* a kind Father to him'. [emphasis ours] <sup>1146</sup> For Calvin, the believer *recognises* that God *is already* propitious towards him, and that Christ is already there as his sanctification, righteousness and life.

Calvin's opinion is more cogent. To him, faith does not embrace a God who is a concept, it embraces Christ; if it embraces Christ, it embraces him *as he is for his people*- Saviour. Murray conceives of faith as trust in Christ who *will* save us; Calvin heralds that faith is *knowing* Christ as Saviour: God will save by faith because it is an embracing of a propitiated Father, and embracing of a Saviour. In short, faith is the human bond of union with Christ; faith is the embracing of God, and is not merely the acceptance of propositions outside of our own being, the belief of a God who is "up there". <sup>1147</sup> Not that Murray says this but this is the issue of his reasoning.

To say that faith is confidence in Christ as Saviour is not to say that Christ has provisionally saved every man. To say that Christ is Saviour is to *denote* exactly that: he is no Saviour without having procured salvation full and proper for the elect.

That assurance is of the essence of faith is underlined by another consideration. Murray thinks that there need not be a chronological separation between faith and assurance, because the Spirit can work both at the same moment. This does not fit. If faith is in the promise of God in order to be saved, that same consciousness cannot be assured at the same moment that it is saved- to use Murray's logic. In other words, the consciousness can only be occupied with one species at a time- faith or assurance. For Murray's system to work, therefore, assurance must chronologically

<sup>1144</sup> *Inst.*, 3:2:2.

<sup>1145</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:7.

<sup>1146</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:16.

<sup>1147</sup> Cf., *Inst.* 3:2:16.

follow saving faith. Calvin overcomes this difficulty by saying that assurance is of the essence of faith; they are one and the same.

Not everything Calvin thinks in regard to assurance being of the essence of faith is correct. He reasons syllogistically: assurance is of the essence of faith; all believers have faith at all times because they have the seed of God at all times; therefore, all have assurance at all times. He distinguishes between weak or implicit faith, and strong or full faith. *Every* believer's faith is tainted with ignorance and is prone to weakness. Nevertheless, even the weakest of believers has a consciousness of belonging to God, even if they do not properly comprehend the mysteries of the gospel. This is implicit faith. As the believer grows up in the knowledge of the gospel, his assurance matures, and grows up into a full assurance.<sup>1148</sup> Calvin comments:

The whole, then, comes to this: As soon as the minutest particle of faith is instilled into our minds, we begin to behold the face of God placid, serene, and propitious; far off, indeed, but still so distinctly as to assure us that there is no delusion in it. In proportion to the progress we afterwards make (and the progress ought to be uninterrupted), we obtain a nearer and surer view, the very continuance making it more familiar to us.<sup>1149</sup>

A. A. Hodge,<sup>1150</sup> Dabney,<sup>1151</sup> and Cunningham<sup>1152</sup> all say that Calvin is not properly balanced, because he does not allow for the empirical fact that believers can lose assurance. C. Hodge writes:

...[the faith] may exist and be genuine and yet not be known as true faith by the believer himself. Only what is doubtful needs to be determined by examination. The fact, therefore, that we are commanded to examine ourselves to see whether we are in the faith proves that a true believer may doubt of his good estate. In other words, it proves that assurance is not essential to faith.<sup>1153</sup>

We endorse this criticism. To our mind, Calvin merges the exercise of faith with the theology of faith. That is, for him, *fides specialis* cannot but be the act of man wherein he is assured of his salvation. Every example of true faith in the bible bears this out, Calvin says. We agree. We also accept that every true believer has the seed of life in him. But it does not follow that because

<sup>1148</sup> *Inst.* 3:2:4, 7, 11, 17-21.  
<sup>1149</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:19.

<sup>1150</sup> *Confession of Faith*, p.240.  
<sup>1151</sup> *Discussion: Evangelical and Theological* 1 (London, BOTT, 1967), pp.215ff; *Systematic Theology*, p.709.

<sup>1152</sup> *The Reformers*, p.120.



he has the seed of life that he will always have assurance or faith. This is just to say that faith is an action, not a principle within us. *Appealing to New Testament examples of faith, merely confirms that in the exercise of faith there is assurance; such an appeal does not prove that the Christian cannot be without assurance.* We do not agree with everything R. T. Kendall comments about Calvin's doctrine of faith, but we do assent to this comment:

This answer may satisfy the one who enjoys such a confidence. But to the poor soul who does not have it, such an answer could add to his frustration. For Calvin must know that a true believer can become discouraged and imagine his 'implicit' faith to be but that 'confused awareness' which a reprobate may have. And if the reprobate may experience 'almost the same feeling as the elect', there is no way to know finally what the reprobate experiences. Furthermore, if the reprobate may believe that God is merciful towards them, how can we be sure our believing the same thing is any different from theirs? How can we be sure that our 'beginning of faith' is saving and is not the 'beginning of faith' which the reprobate seem to have? <sup>1154</sup>

So far, we have travelled a middle path between Murray and Calvin. We have said that the assurance that is of faith is assurance that God is our saviour- *pro* Calvin. On the other hand, we have said that a believer might not exercise faith, and, therefore, he can lack assurance- *pro* Murray. Moreover, with Calvin and Murray, we accept that the seed of God is always in the believer. And it must bring forth assurance at some point- *pro* Murray.

### Murray's interpretation of the WCF

Our understanding of assurance is borne out by the WCF. Of course, Murray cites the WCF in proof of his own doctrine. But D. Macleod writes:

The divines did not say that assurance did not belong to the essence of faith. What they said was that it did not *so* belong "but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it". This allows that not all believers enjoy an equal assurance of salvation, that not all have it from the beginning and that not all have it all the time. <sup>1155</sup>

Similarly, L. Berkhof states, 'Yet the Confession does not say [that assurance is not of the essence of faith] and there are reasons to think that it did not intend to teach this. The Marrow men in Scotland certainly gave a different interpretation of its position.' <sup>1156</sup>

<sup>1153</sup> *A Commentary on 1 & 2 Corinthians* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1974), p.681.  
<sup>1154</sup> Calvin and English Calvinism, pp.23-24.  
<sup>1155</sup> "Faith as Assurance", *The Free Church Record*, p.99.  
<sup>1156</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p.508.

These interpretations are consolidated, if we consider the *Confession's* section on faith. 14:3 says, "This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both author and finisher of our faith." Notice how assurance is sandwiched between teaching on faith on both sides. Weak *faith* grows up into what? Strong faith? No, but to the attainment of 'full assurance'. In this respect, Christ is the 'finisher' of our faith.

Why, then, does the *Confession* have a separate section on assurance? Chapter 14 is concerned with the organic growth of assurance. Assurance must grow up; and the believer is to aim at a full assurance. Chapter 18 reveals that actual and untainted assurance, what the *Confession* calls "infallible" assurance, is not always the possession of believers, simply because faith is not always the possession of believers. And the reason for this condition is that believers are plagued by ignorance, sin, weaknesses and temptations.

Interestingly, A. C. Clifford, who accuses the Reformed tradition of being scholastic, cites Richard Baxter as one who 'eliminates the confusion surrounding the theme' of Calvin's view of assurance.<sup>1157</sup> Clifford says:

Distinguishing between objective and subjective certainty, Baxter agrees with Calvin's definition: 'There is assurance in this faith', and 'assurance that God's promises and all his words are true'; indeed, it is impossible for faith to be exercised without assurance. This objective certainty may still coexist with the subjective uncertainty....<sup>1158</sup>

Can Clifford explain the difference between the "scholastically orientated" Murray and the "balanced" Baxter? For we confess that, at this moment in our thinking, we cannot see any radical difference, at least not that can be derived from Clifford's quote. Which suggests that Murray's and Calvin's perspectives differ minutely.

### The grounds of assurance

This brings us to the heart of the difference between Calvin and the *WCF*. It asserts that infallible assurance is "founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation, the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made, the testimony of the Spirit of adoption

<sup>1157</sup> *Atonement and Justification*, p.203.  
<sup>1158</sup> *idem*.

witnessing with our spirits that we are children of God" (18:2). Calvin considers holiness as a confirmation of assurance, and not that upon which assurance is founded; a man cannot know that he is of God until he has recognised God's grace.<sup>1159</sup> The Reformed tradition has considered an empirical approach to assurance. That is, it considers examination of one's life as an equally important means of assurance, along with comprehension of the promises.

The promise of God and the Spirit's testimony are everything to Calvin. His soteriology is thoroughly Christocentric and personal. And for two reasons. The first is that we are united to a real person. We cannot know salvation except we know Christ; we cannot know Christ except the Spirit testifies to him and we embrace him in faith, by union. The second explanation, which is merely an extension of the first, concerns election. God gives salvation. Assurance must begin with heaven, therefore, and his grace in the eternal decree of election. The mirror of our election is Christ, for he was the representative of his people. Therefore, we must "see" him to be assured of our eternal election.<sup>1160</sup>

For soteriology to be Christological is only right. This is no more to say that union with Christ is the hub of soteriology. Calvin takes this Christocentricity one stage too far, however. For at the very point we are told to make our calling and election sure, Peter refers us not to the promise or the testimony of the Spirit, but to the need to examine our lives (2 Pet.1:5-10). Christ pronounces, "You shall know them by their fruits" (Mat.7:16). Calvin makes a dichotomy between heaven and earth, God's action and man's. This is unnecessary. It is Christ who lives in the believer and enables him to will and do his good pleasure. It is thoroughly Christocentric, therefore, to appeal to the "Christ who works in me".

### Witness of the Spirit of adoption

One final point of debate. The *Confession* implies and Murray states that the witness of the Spirit to our adoption is a distinct element of the Spirit's testimony. It is obvious from Calvin's writings that he equated the internal testimony of the Spirit with illumination of the Spirit, effectual calling, and the witness of the Spirit to our adoption. Commenting on Romans 8:15, he pronounces that Christ, the heavenly Master of believers, 'teaches inwardly and effectually by His Spirit.'<sup>1161</sup> He designates the Spirit of adoption as the 'Spirit of faith', who 'is the seal and

<sup>1159</sup> *Hebrews*, pp.334-335. See, Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism*, pp.24-28.  
<sup>1160</sup> *Inst.*3: 21:1, 7; 24:3-6, 9  
<sup>1161</sup> *Romans*, p.168.

earnest of our eternal inheritance.’<sup>1162</sup> As for Romans 8:16, Calvin gives no indication that Paul is differentiating from the work of the Spirit mentioned in verse 15. Calvin states that the Spirit does not merely witness with our spirit, he also convinces us of God’s Fatherhood.<sup>1163</sup> Calvin goes on to interpret Romans 8:26-27 in terms of the Spirit who strengthens us in our weaknesses, so that we can cope with them. The Spirit’s teaching us to pray is a repetition of verses 15-16, states Calvin, but in relation to prayer.<sup>1164</sup> The Spirit is the Spirit of adoption because he brings us into the favour of the Father, for ‘the same reason’ he is called the seal and earnest, for he quickens us from death, bringing us life.<sup>1165</sup> More than this, Calvin says that the ‘Spirit guides them [believers] by His light’.<sup>1166</sup> By “light” he is speaking of the illumination of the scriptures to the believer’s mind. And this is the language of regeneration, in Calvin’s thought. The Spirit witnesses to our adoption ‘by enlightening our hearts unto faith.’ [emphasis ours]<sup>1167</sup> As Calvin writes elsewhere, ‘the Spirit of God is given to them as a sure earnest and seal of their adoption’.<sup>1168</sup> It is by the means of the reception of faith that the Spirit becomes the witness of adoption, ‘But we must first see whether any one can by his own strength acquire faith, or whether the Holy Spirit, by means of it, becomes the witness of adoption.’<sup>1169</sup>

Douglas Moo says that Romans 8:16 is explanatory of verse 15; the reason why believers cry “Abba, Father” is because the Spirit bears witness to their spirits. Moo points out that the Greek prefix *syn* of *symmartyreow* does not necessarily mean “with”, but can have an intensive connotation, thus giving the rendering “bear witness to” (Rom.2:15; 9:1). However, this is not the meaning. There is a papyrus document of the second century which reflects the meaning “bear witness with”. So far, Moo and Murray do not differ greatly. In application they do, though. Moo thinks that the Spirit bearing witness with our spirits means that the Spirit makes us aware that we are sons so that we cry “Abba, Father”. This is corroborated by Galatians 4:6, which pronounces that it is *the Spirit* who cries “Abba, Father”.<sup>1170</sup>

<sup>1162</sup> *ibid.*, p.169.

<sup>1163</sup> *ibid.*, p.170.

<sup>1164</sup> *ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>1165</sup> *Inst* 3:1:3.

<sup>1166</sup> *Romans*, p.178.

<sup>1167</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:8.

<sup>1168</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:12.

<sup>1169</sup> *ibid.*, 3:2:8.

<sup>1170</sup> See also, 3:1:2; 3:2:1, 8; *Romans*, pp.78, 177, 230-231; *Galatians*, p.75; *Romans*, pp.503-504.

The appeal to Romans 8:26-27 by Murray creates a question mark over his own argument. For concerning it he comments that what is meant by the Spirit helping us in our weaknesses is that he groans in our hearts; that is, *our* groans are really the Spirit groaning, his media.<sup>1171</sup>

The doctrine of adoption plays a vital role in Murray's thinking. He considers adoption as the pinnacle of God's salvific blessings. It is also a distinct locus in his *ordo salutis*, coming after justification by faith. It is probable that these are reasons that caused him to say that the Spirit's witness to our adoption is a different witness, or to be more precise, a different level to his witness, to when he enlightens our understanding to grasp the scriptures, thereby unveiling more and more of Christ's glory. It will be shown in the chapter "Adoption", that Calvin conceives of adoption taking place at the moment of justification by faith. He therefore has no difficulty in saying that the Spirit's creating of faith is the same witness to when he assures us of our adoption. We cannot see how a witness to the promises of scripture can be distinct to a witness to our adoption. Is it possible to see more of the glory of Christ and also to say that this is not a witness to our adoption? Christ is the Son of God, our co-heir. To see Christ is to participate in our adoption, therefore. Calvin begins with Christ when referring to the testimony. Whereas, Murray seems to begin with *our* experience of God's grace in Christ, in describing the Spirit's testimony; this experience has different levels, at points corresponding to Murray's *ordo*.

## REPENTANCE

### Calvin and Murray compared

Kendall argues that Calvin founded his doctrine of assurance upon the 'conviction that faith must precede repentance in his *ordo salutis*.' This order mirrors Calvin's description of the history of redemption: faith corresponds to the promise of grace given before the law; and repentance corresponds to the Mosaic Law. This is why Calvin did not believe in a covenant of works made between God and Adam, holds Kendall.<sup>1172</sup> In essence, this interpretation of Calvin by Kendall is correct. However, there is need to further explain what Calvin believed.

Both Murray and Calvin formulate their views of repentance against the backdrop of the Roman Catholic position that salvation is through self-mortification. Salvation is not given merely because one repents, believes Murray. According to Calvin, it is wrong to say that repentance is a

<sup>1171</sup> Romans 1, p.312.

<sup>1172</sup> Calvin and English Calvinism, pp.26-27.

part of faith, as when people advocate that what is necessary to please God is a contrite life, for this view rejects faith in the promise of God. Calvin is making the point that repentance flows from faith; it is a repentance grounded in faith, as opposed to one grounded in the law.<sup>1173</sup> Moreover, for Murray, faith is inseparable from repentance. Calvin holds that faith and repentance 'cannot be separated, because God does not illuminate anybody with the Spirit of faith, without regenerating him to new life at the same time.'<sup>1174</sup> The definition of repentance given by Calvin is essentially the same as Murray's, 'Repentance is a turning round (*conversio*) to God, when we compose ourselves and the whole of our lives to his obedience';<sup>1175</sup> repentance is not merely a 'feeling of relief that God has forgiven us of our sins.'<sup>1176</sup>

Repentance is a process, believes Calvin. The concept of repentance is stretched by him to mean the whole process of renewal. It has three stages. This first stage is that 'we require a transformation not only in external works, but in the soul itself, which is able only after it has put off its old habits to bring forth fruits conformable to its renovation.'<sup>1177</sup> This doctrine is equivalent to regeneration narrowly defined. Second, 'repentance proceeds from a sincere fear of God....As repentance begins with dread and hatred of sin'.<sup>1178</sup> This fear 'is a preparation for faith.'<sup>1179</sup> It is properly repentance. The prevalent view that Calvin phased out fear-repentance as he developed his argument for faith-repentance<sup>1180</sup> is unacceptable, therefore. Calvin calls fear-repentance a 'service and honour', and an awakening from our sleep in carnality.<sup>1181</sup> This suggests a change in the attitude of the mind, a turning *of the mind* from idols to God. The focus of repentance for Calvin is upon the change or transformation of the soul. Its third stage consists of the 'mortification of our flesh and the old man, and the quickening of the Spirit.'<sup>1182</sup> Calvin concludes, 'In one word, then, by repentance I understand regeneration.'<sup>1183</sup>

And because "repentance" can designate the whole process of renewal, Calvin includes faith within repentance' definition, 'I am not unaware that under the term *repentance* is comprehended

<sup>1173</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles 14-28*, Calvin's Commentaries, editors: D. W. Torrance & T. F. Torrance; translator: J. W. Fraser, (Edinburgh, Saint Andrews Press, 1966), p.176.

<sup>1174</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1175</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1176</sup> *ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>1177</sup> *Inst.* 3:3:6.

<sup>1178</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:7. See, *Acts 14-28*, p.177.

<sup>1179</sup> *Acts 14-28*, p.177.

<sup>1180</sup> Peter Toon, *Justification and Sanctification* (London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1983), pp.183-184.

<sup>1181</sup> *Inst.* 3:3:7.

<sup>1182</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:8.

<sup>1183</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:9.

the whole work of turning to God, of which the least important part is faith'.<sup>1184</sup> Calvin adds, 'That repentance not only follows faith, but is produced by it'.<sup>1185</sup> This is what was mentioned just before: faith is never alone, it is always accompanied by renewal.

So in effect, Calvin has four stages to repentance: regeneration narrowly defined; the fear of God; faith; and sanctification. As repentance is equated to regeneration, by Calvin, it is to be understood that the reason for the stages of secret repentance and observable repentance is that he roots his doctrine of repentance in his visible-invisible framework. Thus, he conceives of one repentance with different stages or perspectives (see *An Evaluation of Murray's Theological Method*, etc.).

There is nothing radically different in this extended definition to Murray's overall theology. There are some differences, however. To Murray, the fear of the Lord is concurrent with faith, and is also integral to the definition of repentance. Whilst, to Calvin, the fear of the Lord is in preparation to faith. Murray says that repentance is believing repentance and faith is penitent faith. Calvin does not merge faith with either the fear of the Lord or sanctification. In merging faith and repentance, Murray incurs a difficulty: if they are two different concepts, then how can the one include the other? If faith is not repentance and repentance is not faith, how can faith be penitent believing, and repentance be believing penitence? As he says, faith is in the mercy of God in Christ, whereas repentance is a change of attitude concerning one's lifestyle and service. It was unfortunate that he said that faith 'involves' repentance, and vice versa; better to have said- to use Murray's logic- that the one "implies" the other.

### Nature of repentance

Has repentance to do with the attitude of the believer, as Murray thinks, or is it also concerned with inner renewal and obedience, as Calvin declares? One text that proves extremely useful is 1 Thessalonians 1:9. In it, *epistrepho* denotes a change of deeds or service. It would seem, therefore, that Murray's definition is not extended enough. Even so, the verse relates to deeds and not the inner transformation of the soul. Nevertheless, it is possible that *metanoeo* and *epistrepho* at times only have to do with attitude. In the LXX, *metanoeo* often denotes a change of mind in God (1 Sam.15:29; Jer.4:28; Amos 7:3, 6). Sometimes it means that he changes a course of action or his deeds (Jer.8:6; Joel 2:13-14; Jon.3:9; 4:2). But never does it indicate inner

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<sup>1184</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:5.  
<sup>1185</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:1.

renewal of his character. The distinction might be put this way: repentance (widely defined) is a transformation of attitude and lifestyle or deeds,<sup>1186</sup> but it is not an inner transformation of the soul.<sup>1187</sup>

There is no consensus amongst scholars as to how the terms used to denote repentance relate to one another. For example, R. T. France thinks that “conversion” (*epistrepho*) involves ‘two elements, “from” and “to”.’ The sinner is saved from darkness, etc., and comes to light, etc., (1 Thes.1:9; Acts 14:15; 26:18). These two elements are represented by *metanoeo* and *pisteuo*. Believers repent (*metanoeo*) from sin, etc., and believe into God (*pisteuo*). In spite of this, as France himself points out, the equation is often broken.<sup>1188</sup> In Acts 3:19; 26:20, *epistrepho* and *metanoia* describe precisely the same thing, believes Calvin: the turning of the sinner to God.<sup>1189</sup> Whereas, D. Guthrie thinks that in the synoptics, “conversion” is the positive side of repentance, the turning away from sin.<sup>1190</sup> Calvin utterly denies the use of *metamolomai* for repentance; it means merely regret.<sup>1191</sup> Warfield believes that *metamelesthai* (Mt.21:29, 32; 27:3) denotes repentance issuing in an amended act, and in 2 Corinthians 7:8 *metamolomai* means regret.<sup>1192</sup>

There seems to be enough evidence that *metanoia* in the New Testament denotes turning from something, rather than turning to something. Our theory is that *metanoia* belongs to the province of the cross. There are some usages of *metanoia* that are impossible to determine whether they reflect the province of the cross or that of the resurrection, or possibly both: Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 16:30; Acts 17:30; Revelation 2:16; 3:3, 19. Repentance is sometimes linked with forgiveness (Luke 17:3-4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22). In Redemption, it was said that forgiveness of sins belonged to the same province as repentance, namely, the cross. Repentance is to spurn an immoral lifestyle (2 Cor.12:21; Rev.2:5, 21-22). That is, it is to turn from negativity. Repentance, that is, turning from evil, is complemented by turning to God (Acts 26:20). In Mark 1:15, sinners are to repent and believe in the gospel. There is at least one text that causes problems for our thesis: Acts 11:38. Repentance is said to lead to eternal life.

<sup>1186</sup> See, D. Carson, *Matthew*, p.99; J. Lunde, “Repentance”, *DJG*, p.670.

<sup>1187</sup> Warfield says, ‘No doubt, ἐπιστροφή may spread its skirts so widely as to include on this side the sorrow for sin and on that the amendment of life; but what it precisely is, and what in all cases it emphasises, is the inner change of mind which regret induces and which itself induces a reformed life.’ [Biblical Doctrines, p.453.]

<sup>1188</sup> R. T. France, “Conversion in the Bible”, *EQ* 65:4 (1993), pp.295-296.

<sup>1189</sup> Acts 14-28, p.278; *Inst.* 3:3:20.

<sup>1190</sup> *New Testament Theology*, p.575. See, W. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p.709.

<sup>1191</sup> *Harmony of the Gospels* 3, p.175; 2 Corinthians, p.98.

<sup>1192</sup> *Biblical Doctrines*, p.452.



However, as we saw in Redemption, the use of a preposition must be theologically defined. Is it a repentance which has as its own peculiar fruit eternal life, or does it mean that if one repents the inevitable concomitant of this is that someone believes unto eternal life? In the light of what we have just said, we think that the second choice is more accurate.

It is not obvious that in the citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 in Matthew 13:15 and Acts 28:27 whether *epistrepho* refers to turning to God or turning from sin, or both. The same applies to the citation of Isaiah 6:9-10 in John 12:40, where *strepho* is used. The same citation found in Mark 4:12 clearly links *epistrepho* with forgiveness. Since forgiveness probably belongs to the province of the cross, then *epistrepho* in this case has the force of *metanoia*. In Luke 1:16-17; 22:32; Acts 3:19; 9:35; 11:21; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 1 Peter 2:25, *epistrepho* has the meaning of turning to the Lord. In Acts 14:15; 26:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, *epistrepho* means to turn from idols (Acts 14:15; 1 Thes.1:9) and from Satan or darkness (Acts 26:18) to God. Although in Matthew 13:15; Mark 4:12; Acts 28:27 *epistrepho* is used in connection with believing or perceiving. In John 12:40 *strepho* is linked with believing. This is not proof enough to determine that both these terms incorporate the notion of faith. They may only reflect that until there is a turning there will be no faith.

In conclusion, it would seem that in the New Testament, *epistrepho* does normally mean turning to something. It can, however, also denote both turning from (Mk.4:12) and turning from and unto. Nevertheless, *metanoia* is, arguably, quite as specialist word, conveying deliverance from sin and evil merely.

Is justification pending repentance, therefore? Repentance is construed by Reformed theology as non-essential for justification, that is, it is not an instrument unto remission of sins. A *prima facie* reading of Acts 2:38; 3:19 (cf., Heb.12:7; 2 Pet.3:9) seems to indicate that *forgiveness* is granted upon repentance. R. Dabney rejoins, 'But it may be urged, in Acts ii:38, and iii:19, repentance is explicitly proposed as in order to remission, which is itself an element of justification itself. We reply: this is not to be pressed; for thus we should equally prove, Acts ii:38, that baptism is an instrument of justification; and Rom.x.9, 10, that profession is, equally with living faith, an instrument of justification.' <sup>1193</sup>

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<sup>1193</sup> Systematic Theology, p.646.

Both faith and repentance (*metanoia*) are promissory acts: they both “accept” the promise of salvation in Christ.<sup>1194</sup> It is this that qualifies repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Take Murray’s position. He said that repentance was believing repentance. Believing in what? Murray only knows one kind of faith: faith in the promise. This entails that the “believing” side of the phrase “believing repentance” would qualify repentance to be an instrument for receiving forgiveness. This is just to reveal a logic fallacy in Murray’s position; it is not his view. Although both faith and *metanoia* are promissory, *metanoia* has reference to deliverance from negativity, and thus reference to the forgiveness of sins. Justification is not concerned with the province of negativity, but the province of life. It is notable that repentance is never said to be unto “justification”.

### CONCLUSION

The differences between Calvin’s and Murray’s doctrines of *fides generalis*, *fides specialis*, assurance of faith, and repentance are so minute that they testify to the continuity between Calvin and the Reformed tradition. There were some patent yet not antithetical differences. In *fides specialis* and *fides generalis*, Calvin maintained that there were two stages to the Spirit’s testimony: one in the mind and one in the heart. Murray believed that there was only one stage executed in the heart and mind at the same logic moment. Calvin said that assurance was of the essence of faith, whilst Murray said it was not. Even so, Murray allowed for a kind of assurance within faith itself. Calvin believed that the seal of knowledge was the seal of justification by faith. Murray held that assurance was the certainty that we have been justified. Both believed in strong and weak assurance, corresponding to strong and weak faith. Neither thought that salvation could be lost. Calvin considered repentance proper to take place after faith. Another name for this is sanctification. Murray fully endorses this theology. He said that repentance, turning from sin to God, is concurrent with faith. Neither Calvin nor Murray believed repentance merited justification. Calvin said that the believer always has assurance. Murray said that the believer has not. Calvin does think that sanctification is a valid means of assurance. Calvin reasons that sanctification *confirms* the assurance that is inherent to faith.

In approaching *fides generalis*, Calvin and Murray both “de-earthed” God’s testimony, creating a dichotomy between the word and the Spirit, and incurring mysticism. This was also evident in Calvin’s teaching on *fides specialis*. We stated that the Spirit works through or in means, not

<sup>1194</sup> Cf., Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p.713.

merely alongside them; he works through and in the word. Therefore, it is the word of God *per se* that testifies in our minds and hearts. In assurance, Calvin laid great stress on the fact that faith is from God, and rooted in the person of Christ, who is in heaven. This meant that Calvin could not accept that sanctification, man's act, was a proper ground for assurance. Murray did think sanctification was a proper ground for assurance. We said that sanctification is properly Christological because it is Christ working in us. A dichotomy was discovered in Murray's doctrine of the Spirit's witness to our adoption. He said that the Spirit enables us to cry "Abba, Father", and additionally, the Spirit confirms to us that we are sons. In our brief exegetical comments, we saw that the Spirit's witness to our adoption *is* the Spirit working through us, so that his cry of "Abba, Father" is our cry.

There is no fundamental difference between Calvin's and Murray's doctrines of repentance. Repentance does have a wider meaning in Calvin, embracing the whole process of renewal. They both held the same core meaning: the sinner turns from sin to God, unto obedience. We saw that repentance does not refer to transformation- so Calvin- or to an attitude of the mind- so Murray- but to turning from evil deeds.

Finally, we argued that, *according to Pauline theology*, faith belongs to the resurrection realm. This follows on the back of the biblical teaching of repentance. *Metanoia* is a specialist term referring to deliverance from negativity. Paul occasionally uses *metanoia*, but he is more concerned to use the term faith.

The doctrine of faith in Calvin's and Murray's writings is permeated with the dichotomy between heaven and earth. Coming to the next chapters, Calvin's and Murray's tendency to dichotomise is seen most conspicuously in the doctrine of justification by faith.

## Chapter 13: Justification by faith 1

We come to the centre of Murray's soteriology. His doctrine of justification by faith is the most important doctrine of his that we will assess. Therefore, we will spend more time in evaluating it than any other chapter. As we said in Introduction, this first chapter on justification by faith will be purely a statement of Murray's doctrine of justification.

### OLD TESTAMENT

Usage

Murray writes:

In the usage of the Old Testament the root with which we are mainly concerned is that of צִדִּיק in its various forms as substantive, adjective, and verb. As a substantive it is frequently used in the Old Testament to denote the quality of righteousness or justice and is pre-eminently predicated of God. As applied to God it refers to his attribute of righteousness or justice. It is also predicated of men and describes their character or conduct or both as upright or just or righteous. In this study, however, we are particularly concerned with the verbal form in its various stems and parts.<sup>1195</sup>

1. *Stative*. The stative use reflects the character of man, "she is more righteous than I" (Gen.38:26; cf., Job.4:17; 9:15; 33:12; 34:5; Ps.19:10; Eze.16:52). 'It is possible' says Murray, 'that some instances in the Old Testament which are generally rendered forensically in the sense of declared or pronounced to be righteous fall into this category. In Psalm 143:2...the clause, "in thy sight shall no man living be justified", could be rendered "in thy sight no man living is righteous" (cf. Ezek.16:52).' <sup>1196</sup>

2. *Causative*. 'In Dan.8:14, where the Imperfect Niphal is used of the holy place, it would be difficult to maintain the rendering, "the holy place will be justified" whereas "the holy place will be made righteous", in the sense that it will be purified or cleansed and thus put right, is the appropriate rendering.' <sup>1197</sup>

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<sup>1195</sup> Romans 1, p.336.

<sup>1196</sup> idem.

<sup>1197</sup> ibid., pp.336-337.

Daniel 12:3 records how the 'persons in view are the instruments of turning many to righteousness.' This is the only instance where the causative sense appears (cf., Is.50:8; 53:11).<sup>1198</sup>

3. *Demonstrative*. Sodom and Samaria are justified, demonstrated to be righteous, in comparison with Jerusalem's iniquity (Eze.16:51-52; cf., Jer.3:11).<sup>1199</sup>

4. *Forensic*. It is the declaration that someone is just. The forensic force is found in the hiphil (Ex.23:7; Deut.25:1; 1 Kg.8:32; 2 Chr.6:23; Job.27:5; Pr.17:15; Is.5:23). In the LXX, all these references have a forensic import and are translated by δικαιωω, bar Job 27:5. Proverbs 17:15, has a forensic meaning, being rendered δικαιος κρινειν. The forensic meaning is evident in the piel (Job.32:2; 33:32). Job 32:2, απεφηνην εαυτον δικαιος, and Job 33:2, δικαιωω, retain their forensic force in the LXX. The hithpael offers up one text of forensic import, namely, Genesis 44:16. In the LXX, Genesis 44:16 is translated by διακωω, which is used forensically.<sup>1200</sup>

In the qal, some instances are hard to determine (Job.13:18; 25:4; Ps.51:4(6); Is.45:25). The imperfect qal is used forensically in Job 40:8 and Isaiah 43:9, 26. These instances give grounds for saying that other uses of the imperfect qal where the forensic meaning is not decisive are possibly forensic (Job.9:20; Ps.51:4; 143:2; Is.45:25). In the LXX, Psalms 51:4; 143:2; Isaiah 45:25; 50:8; 53:11; Ezekiel 16:52 (cf., Isaiah 43:9, 26), are all rendered by δικαιωω.<sup>1201</sup>

In Daniel 8:14; 12:3, there is no use of δικαιωω. Psalm 73:13a (LXX 72:13) is probably not an example of a causative use of δικαιωω, since the following clause, "I washed my hands in innocence", does not reflect the cleansing of his hands from defilement, but rather he 'washed his hands in testimony of his innocence.' It is interesting that some texts over which there is doubt as to a forensic force in the Hebrew the LXX uses δικαιωω (Ps.51: 4(6); 143:2; Eze.16:51-52; Jer.3:11).<sup>1202</sup>

Sometimes the stative use of צדק in the Qal stem is rendered by δικαιωω (Gen.38:26; Ps.19:10; LXX 18:10). In these texts, it is not clear whether the stative idea is expressed by δικαιωω,

<sup>1198</sup> ibid., p.337.  
<sup>1199</sup> ibid., pp.337-338.  
<sup>1200</sup> ibid., pp.338-339.  
<sup>1201</sup> idem.  
<sup>1202</sup> ibid., pp.339-340.

because when the 'stative idea appears in the Hebrew use of the Perfect or Imperfect Qal the LXX does not use δικαιωω but ειναι δικαιος or ειναι καθαρος or δικαιος αναβαινομαι (Job 4:17; 9:2, 15, 20; 10:15; 11:2; 13:18; 15:14; 25:4; 34:5; 35:7; 40:8).' Whereas, the perfect passive in Genesis 38:26; Psalm 19:10, 'may indicate that the thought expressed by the Perfect tense was suitable to convey the stative idea.' <sup>1203</sup>

### God's justification of men

*Personal righteousness.* 'When [God] is said to justify the righteous this act of judgement is a declaring to be that which is conceived of as antecedently and actually the case. The person is of a righteous character and conduct and the act of justifying is simply a judgement in accordance with the antecedent facts' (1 Kg.8:32; Dt.25:1; Ps.26:1; Pr.17:15; cf., Ex.23:7). Protestations of innocence and integrity are not self-righteousness, for they are accompanied by confessed sinfulness and plealessness (Job.6:29; 12:4; 13:18-19; 16:19-21; 17:9; 27:5-6; 29:14; 31:1-40; cf., 9:2; 40:4-5; 42:5-6; Ps.130:3; 143:2). <sup>1204</sup>

'Among men, to justify the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. But this is what God does....(Isa.43:26...45:25...53:11).'

*Imputed righteousness.* The faith of Abraham was reckoned or imputed to him as righteousness. 'It was not his righteousness of character or behaviour that was brought into account in this instance but something which derived all of its significance and efficacy from the character of God' (Gen.15:6). <sup>1206</sup>

*Righteousness imputed "in the Lord."* Isaiah 45:25 says "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be righteous and shall glory" (KJV). The rendering "in the Lord" is to be preferred to "by the Lord", since it is more suitable to the verb "shall glory", and also because the preceding verse says, "In the LORD alone are righteousness and strength". The 'righteousness that resides in the Lord is brought to bear upon Israel.' The same concept is found in Isaiah 54:17, "their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord" (KJV). The Lord's righteousness comes near or is about to be revealed in the salvation of his people (Is.46:13; 51:5-6, 8; 56:1; 61:10-11; 62:1). 'It is the righteousness of God himself that is thus revealed in saving action. Hence we see how it could be said that in the

<sup>1203</sup> *ibid.*, p.340  
<sup>1204</sup> *ibid.*, pp.341-342.  
<sup>1205</sup> *ibid.*, p.342.  
<sup>1206</sup> *ibid.*, pp.343-344.

Lord's righteousness Israel is justified and Israel's righteousness is of him (cf. Psalm 24:5; 89:16 (17); 103:17; Isa.32:17; 63:1).<sup>1207</sup>

In Jeremiah 23:6, the Messiah is called the "righteous branch". This verse can be paraphrased as either, ' "This is his name which the Lord will call him, our righteousness", or, "This is his name which he will be called (one will call him), the Lord our righteousness".' The former translation suggests that Israel had property in his righteousness. If co-ordinated with the ideas that Israel is justified by God and their righteousness is in him, then this suggests that the branch is to be identified with the Lord. The latter alternative is better, however. There are four considerations. The Massoretes interpreted the phrase in the same way. Secondly, there are other instances where the tetragram is joined with what follows (Gen.22:14; Ex.17:15; Jg.6:24; Eze.48:35). Thirdly, the LORD might be the subject of "will call", but then we would expect the construction "will call", then the tetragram as the subject, then "his name" ' (cf., Gen.3:20; 4:25; 5:3; 16:11; 19:22; 25:30; 29:34; 35:18; Jos.7:26; 1 Chr.4:9; Is.7:14; Jer.11:16; 20:3). Lastly, 'Jer.33:16 is a close parallel to 23:6 and the same denomination occurs with the same construction.' Jerusalem can never be called the righteousness of Israel.<sup>1208</sup>

The name of the righteous branch is "The Lord is our righteousness" and not "the Lord our righteousness". The latter does convey the notion that the branch is the Lord; the former does not. Out of the texts cited above, "The Lord is our righteousness" is found in Genesis 22:14; Exodus 17:15; Judges 6:24; Jeremiah 33:16; and Ezekiel 48:35. 'Hence we have the threefold respect in which the justification of men is grounded and validated- it is in the Lord that men are justified, it is in the Lord that their righteousness resides, the Lord himself is their righteousness.'<sup>1209</sup>

## THE NEW TESTAMENT

### The nature of justification

The most common verb to express justification in the New Testament is δικαιωω.

Stative. Δικαιωω never has a stative force in the active voice (Lk.7:29; 10:29; 16:15; Rm.3:26, 30; 4:5; 8:30, 33; Gal.3:8). The perfect passive may be used in a stative sense in Luke 18:14; 1

<sup>1207</sup> *ibid.*, pp.344-345.  
<sup>1208</sup> *ibid.*, p.346.

Corinthians 4:4. The present passive may also yield the same result in Acts 13:39; Romans 3:4, 28; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; 5:4; and James 2:24. The future passive in Romans 2:13; 3:20 may also thus be interpreted.

However, there are five reasons for favouring a strictly passive sense:

1. In several texts, such as Romans 3:20; 1 Corinthians 4:4, for example, a 'passive rendering is more natural'.
2. There is not one instance in which the stative is required.
3. 'Since δικαιω is a verb of action it would require the strongest evidence to show that the natural force of the passive is not intended.'
4. The many instances of the aorist passive do not accord with a stative notion.
5. Often the stative force is ruled out (cf., Mat.11:19; 12:37; Lk.7:35; Rom.3:24; 6:7; 1 Cor.6:11; 1 Tim.3:16).<sup>1210</sup>

*Causative.* It was shown that in the LXX δικαιω is used possibly once in a causative sense (Ps.73:13; LXX 72:13). This 'creates a strong presumption against interpreting any instance of δικαιω in the New Testament in the causative sense'. There is only one possible use of a causative sense in 1 Corinthians 6:11, "you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified". Because the context deals with purification, some have rendered the aorist passive "you have become pure"; also, the Spirit is associated with all three verbs in verse 11, creating a presumption in favour of sanctification. Believers are not justified "in the Spirit". Titus 3:5-7 says, "through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life". It is obviously similar to 1 Corinthians 6:11, and might be the basis for saying that δικαιω in 1 Corinthians 6:11 should also be interpreted as justification. Also, the phrases "by [God's] grace" and "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life", 'are, in Paul's teaching elsewhere...associated with justification.' Thus, 1 Corinthians 6:11 may be an instance of a causative sense, but this is not established beyond all question.<sup>1211</sup>

*Demonstrative.* Texts such as Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:35; 16:15; Romans 3:4; 1 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Timothy 3:16 seem to convey a demonstrative meaning. If so, this would help to clarify James

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<sup>1209</sup> *ibid.*, p.347.  
<sup>1210</sup> *ibid.*, pp.348-349.  
<sup>1211</sup> *ibid.*, pp.249-350.



2:21, 24-25, since James is highlighting the probative character of works, whereas Paul's accent is upon the 'judicially constitutive and declarative.'<sup>1212</sup>

*Forensic.* The prevalence of the forensic idea in the LXX is 'one of the most determinative data for the understanding of the...New Testament.' Luke 7:29 cannot bear a causative sense, but conveys the forensic notion. Romans 8:33 says that justification is contrasted with condemnation. 'This fixes the import of the same term in verse 30.' In Romans 4:3, 5-6, 11, 22-23, Abraham's faith is reckoned as righteousness, and 'Reckoning righteousness to our account falls clearly into the forensic sphere.'<sup>1213</sup>

## SOTERIC JUSTIFICATION

**The absolute uniqueness of soteric justification**

<sup>1214</sup>*Declaratory justification.* Justification is always declaratory; it 'means to declare to be righteous'.

*Grounds of justification.* The ground of justification precedes its declaration. Specifically:

In reality therefore it is inexcusably misleading to speak of the alternatives of moral and forensic justification. Justification is always forensic. The controversy regarding soteric justification should never have been stated in terms of the antithesis between moral and forensic justification. The real question in the controversy is whether the ground of justification is moral character infused, moral character developed, righteousness inherent and righteousness performed on the one hand, or righteousness imputed, on the other. If moral character developed were the ground, as the Pelagian avows, or holiness infused, as the Romanist contends....<sup>1215</sup>

## Corroboration

Equivalent expressions of God's act of constituting the ungodly just are seen in Romans 5:19, "even so by the obedience of the one shall the many be constituted righteous" (KJV), and in its synonym in the apodosis of verse 16, "the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification", as well as the apodosis of verse 18, "so also the one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."<sup>1216</sup>

<sup>1212</sup> *ibid.*, pp.350-351.

<sup>1213</sup> *ibid.*, pp.351-352.

<sup>1214</sup> *ibid.*, p.206.

<sup>1215</sup> *ibid.*, p.205.

<sup>1216</sup> *ibid.*, pp.207-208.

Romans 5:17, 19 tell us that that righteousness is a free gift from God which we receive. Righteousness is imputed (λογιζομαι) to us (Rm.4:3, 5-6, 9, 11, 22-24; Gal.3:6; Jm.2:23; cf., Rm.4:8; 2 Cor.5:19; Rm.4:2; 1 Cor.4:4).<sup>1217</sup>

The constitutive act of justification is not merely its presupposition, but is integral to it. This is brought out by three arguments. First, the presumptive argument. The notion of mere declaration barely suits such passages as Luke 18:14; Romans 3:24; 5:1. Second, the justification (Rm.5:16), justification of life (Rm.5:18), free gift of righteousness (Rm.5:19), and constituting of righteousness, 'are all variations of expressions to denote the same unified action which is called justification'. Third:

It is quite likely that the very term "justify" or "justification" when denoting an action of God in reference to the ungodly is charged with this creative or constitutive ingredient after the analogy of Scripture teaching elsewhere that the word of God and the call of God into existence- 'he calls the things that be not as though they were'- and that God speaks and it is done....His declarative word carries with it the effectuation of that which is declared.<sup>1218</sup>

### **The righteousness contemplated**

*What the righteousness is not.* Murray does not allow for justification to be found in many things:

Justification is not the eternal decree of God with respect to us, nor is it the finished work of Christ for us, when once-for-all he reconciled us to God by his death; nor is it the regenerative work of God in us, nor is it any activity on our part in response to and embrace of the gospel, but is an act of God, accomplished in time wherein God passes judgement with respect to us as individuals.<sup>1219</sup>

A perfect infused righteousness would not obliterate past sins and therefore is inadequate for justification. It includes the remission of all sins. However, righteousness infused in this life is never perfect, and therefore will not care for future remission. Justification secures eternal life, something that a perfect inwrought righteousness could never do (Rm.5:17, 18, 21).<sup>1220</sup>

<sup>1217</sup> *ibid.*, p.208.

<sup>1218</sup> *ibid.*, pp.209-10.

<sup>1219</sup> *ibid.*, p.203.

<sup>1220</sup> *ibid.*, pp.210-211.

The righteousness contemplated is not that of our obedience to the law (Rm.2:13; 3:20; 4:2; Gal.2:16; 3:11; 5:4; cf., Rom.10:3-4; Phil.3:9; Tit.3:5).<sup>1221</sup>

God's righteousness is contrasted to both human unrighteousness and righteousness. 'It is not of human origin, not of human authorship, not of merely human quality.'<sup>1222</sup> Neither is it the divine attribute of justice or righteousness, God's rectitude (cf., Rm.3:5,<sup>1223</sup> 25-26). It is true that faith can never be divorced from God's rectitude.

*Romans 2:12ff.* Those "under the law" (Rm.2:12) are the Jews, for they are contrasted to those who do not have the law. The law in each occasion is the written word. Verse 13 says that the doers and not merely the hearers of the law will be justified. 'The burden of this verse is that not the hearers or mere possessors of the law will be justified before God but that in terms of the law the criterion is *doing*, not *hearing*.' The Gentiles have the works of the law written on their hearts (v15). The law referred to is the Mosaic law, since those who have the works of the law written on their hearts are without the law. The Gentiles are therefore "without the law" 'in one sense', but 'are "under the law" in another.' The "things of the law" (v14) equates to the works of the law; things such as 'the pursuit of lawful vocations, the procreation of offspring, filial and natural affection, the care of the poor and sick, and numerous other natural virtues which are required by the law.' In doing these things, the Gentiles become "the law unto themselves" (v14). That is, 'they themselves, by reason of what is implanted in their nature, confront themselves with the law of God. They themselves reveal the law of God to themselves- their persons is the medium of revelation.' The conscience, in conjunction with the works of the law, prove that the requirements of the law of God are written on the heart (v15). The conscience accuses and vindicates the individual. The time when the conscience does this is in dispute. Is it on the day of judgement- so Calvin- or is it throughout the life of the Gentile, but especially on judgement day? The latter alternative is right, because verse 16 is connected with either verses 12 or 13 or verses 5-14. 'The nature and consequences of the day of judgement are the burden of verses 15-16 and it is reasonable that verse 16 should be directly related to that with which it has the most apparent affinity, namely, the judgement executed by God upon all.'<sup>1224</sup>

<sup>1221</sup> *ibid.*, p.211.

<sup>1222</sup> *ibid.*, p.213.

<sup>1223</sup> *Romans 1*, p.30. In *Romans 3:4* it says that God will be proved right (δικαιωθης) when he judges. Murray says that we are being taught that God's judgement of condemnation will be vindicated. The phrase "righteousness of God" in 3:5, he continues, denotes the attribute of God's justice or rectitude and not justifying righteousness. [*Romans 1*, pp.94, 98-99.]

<sup>1224</sup> *ibid.*, pp.69-77.

Paul says that he had already said that all men were under sin (v9). To Murray, this refers to the statements found in 1:18-2:24.<sup>1225</sup> To be “under sin” includes the Jews’ failure to obey the Old Testament. It also incorporates the Gentiles’ response to that same law, in the form of its requirements, which is written on their hearts. Thus, “under sin” is thoroughly grounded in scripture, and is not just a reference to universal depravity- so Murray.<sup>1226</sup>

*Romans 3:19-20.* “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ), so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God (γενηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ). Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law, rather through the law we become conscious of sin.” For Murray, the first usage of “law” denotes the whole of the Old Testament, because Paul has just quoted from throughout the Old Testament in verses 10-18. The phrase ἐν τῷ νόμῳ (“in the law”) is not to be equated with “under the law” (6:14), which has as its antithesis “under grace”. “In the law” denotes the ‘sphere of the law’. The demands and judgements of the law, the Old Testament, extend not only to the Jews (3:2), but also to the Gentiles. For verse 19 says that “every mouth” will be silenced, and the “whole world” will be held accountable. The law imparts the knowledge of sin ‘and enables us to perceive that from the works of the law no flesh will be justified’. The future tenses “will be justified” and “becoming accountable to God” (γενηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ) do not refer to future judgement, but ‘to the certainty and universality of the propositions with which they are concerned.’<sup>1227</sup>

*Romans 9:31-33.* The phrase “law of righteousness” (9:31) refers to the principle or order of righteousness. The Jews failed by their works to attain unto the order of righteousness. Verse 32 is a conflation of Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16. Whilst verse 33 is a citation of Isaiah 8:14. To Paul, these verses are fulfilled in Christ. He is the stumblingstone that will bring ruination upon the Jews and freedom to the Gentiles. Those who put their trust in him “will never be put to shame.” This phrase varies from Isaiah 28:16, which says, “he that believeth shall not be in haste” (KJV). The meaning is the same, however. The ‘believer will not be confounded, he will not have occasion to be ashamed of his confidence.’<sup>1228</sup>

<sup>1225</sup> *Romans 1*, p.102.

<sup>1226</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1227</sup> *ibid.*, p.106.

<sup>1228</sup> *Romans 2*, pp.44-45.

*Faith is not the righteousness of God.* That faith is reckoned for righteousness (Rom.4:3, 5, 9, 10, 22, 23; Gal.3:6; Jm.2:23), gives the appearance that faith is righteousness. This opinion obviates the direct relationship of Christ's own righteousness for justification. In Psalm 106:31, Phinehas' act of killing an Israelite who was yoked to a Baalite is said to be the reason why he was reckoned as righteous.<sup>1229</sup> It is the act of Phinehas that is credited to him as righteousness. The same formula as found in Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3 teaches that "faith" *per se* is reckoned as righteousness (cf., Rm.4:9, 22-23; Gal.3:6).<sup>1230</sup>

In the case of Phinehas, his deed is imputed to him as righteousness. Paul did not appeal to Psalm 106:31, for the doctrine of justification is concerned with the justification of the ungodly (Rm.4:5).<sup>1231</sup> Two considerations support this thesis. The formula "faith is reckoned as righteousness" is itself contrasted to justification by the works of the law (Rom.4:2-6, 13, 14, 16; Gal.3:5-6; cf., Rom.10:5-6). Also, "faith" in the phrase "righteousness of faith" (Rom.4:11, 13) can be construed as an appositional or definitive genitive.<sup>1232</sup>

The imputation of righteousness to Abraham is explicated by Paul by a reference to David's own sin having been forgiven (Rom.4:6-8; cf., Ps.32:1-2). The righteousness that was imputed to David was the non-imputation and forgiveness of sins. This entails that faith does not equate to the righteousness imputed.<sup>1233</sup> The imputation of righteousness is synonymous to justification by faith, for 'to "impute righteousness" without works" is equivalent to justification without works.' Remission of sin does not define justification; but justification embraces remission (Rm.1:17; 3:21-26; 5:17-21; 10:3-6). By this teaching, Paul proves that justification by faith is imbedded in the Old Testament.<sup>1234</sup>

In Romans 4:20-21, Abraham is said not to have been weak in faith, but trusted fully in God's promise. Although the preceding context is concerned with Abraham's belief that God would miraculously give to him a son as heir, verse 22 refers to an earlier period in Abraham's life, for it says, "it was credited to him as righteousness." Thus, the 'leading lesson' of verses 20-22 is that by faith Abraham was justified. 'Hence there is good reason why [Paul] should have concluded his elaboration of the true character of Abraham's faith with the appeal to this

<sup>1229</sup> *ibid.*, p.354.

<sup>1230</sup> *ibid.*, p.131.

<sup>1231</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1232</sup> *ibid.*, p.354.

<sup>1233</sup> *ibid.*, pp.354-355.

text....And from the standpoint of the reader of the epistle, he is now in a better position to assess the true character of this faith and more intelligently appreciate that it was imputed for righteousness.' <sup>1235</sup>

The content of justifying faith for us is not exactly the same as it was for Abraham. The object of our faith is that Jesus was raised from the dead (Rm.4:25). Just as Abraham believed God, so we believe in God. God raised Christ; Abraham had faith in God being able to quicken (v17). Our faith is in the promise of God; Abraham believed in the promise (v17).

There are two possible interpretations of Romans 4:25. First, Jesus was raised from the dead because we *had been* justified upon the cross. In Romans 5:9, justification refers to the objective, historical, once-for-all accomplishment of Christ's death. <sup>1236</sup> In this case, it is the grounds which establish justification, namely, the righteousness of God in the death of Christ. This is the correct interpretation of Romans 5:9, because in 5:18 Paul uses the substantive found in verse 9 in the same sense. Further, it is once more used in this manner in Isaiah 53:11. Moreover, it is paralleled with reconciliation in verse 10. <sup>1237</sup>

Second, Jesus' historical death and resurrection are the basis for our present justification. In preceding context Paul was dealing with actual justification that is through faith (Rm.2:13; 3:20, 24, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5). The second alternative is probably correct, therefore. The resurrection is connected with Jesus in the following ways:

- A. faith is in a risen Saviour;
- B. we can only be justified in union with him;
- C. Christ is the embodiment of the righteousness which he secured in his death;
- D. the 'death and resurrection of Christ are inseparable. Hence even the death or blood of Christ as related to our justification...could have no efficacy to that end in isolation from the resurrection';
- E. it 'is through the mediation of Christ that we come to stand in the grace of justification (5:2). But the mediation of Christ could not be operative if he were still under the power of death.' <sup>1238</sup>

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<sup>1234</sup> *ibid.*, p.133.  
<sup>1235</sup> *ibid.*, pp.150-152.  
<sup>1236</sup> *ibid.*, p.155.  
<sup>1237</sup> *ibid.*, p.170.  
<sup>1238</sup> *ibid.*, pp.156-157.

"Righteousness" in the expression "it is believed unto righteousness" of Romans 10:10 is the "righteousness of faith" spoken of in Romans 10:6. This in turn identifies with "the righteousness of God" in verse 3. In this verse we are told that the Jews did not submit to the righteousness of God. It is by faith that they should have submitted to the righteousness of God. Therefore, faith is distinct to righteousness. Further, the other clause of verse 10, "it is confessed unto salvation", is parallel the clause "it is believed unto righteousness". If salvation does not consist in faith, then neither does the righteousness of God. <sup>1239</sup>

Romans 1:17 puts beyond dispute the fact that faith is not the righteousness of God, because it says that the righteousness of God is revealed or manifested from faith to faith (Rom.3:21-22; 10:3; 2 Cor.5:21; Phil.3:9; cf., 2 Pet.1:1). This is what is denoted by "the righteousness of faith" (Rom.4:11, 13; 9:30; 10:6). Faith does not reveal or manifest itself. <sup>1240</sup>

Because justification is of grace (Rm.3:24-26; 5:15-21; cf., 4:16), then it is '*not elicited by anything in us but proceeds from the free and unmerited favour of God.*' [emphasis his] <sup>1241</sup>

The righteousness of God is an *objective* gift bestowed upon us (Rom.5:17), and therefore does not lend itself to saying that faith is righteousness. In Romans 3:22, we are informed that righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ. If we say that faith is righteousness, then we have the impossible interpretation that faith is unto all who believe. <sup>1242</sup>

In Romans 3:25-26 Paul's aim is to intimate the exigency of God's justice in the justification of the ungodly. The expression "so as to be just" (v26) conditions the phrase "righteousness of God". In the past, God did not visit men with 'wrath commensurate with their sins' (Acts 14:16; 17:30). To by-pass their sins was not to remit them. His forbearance 'tended to obscure in the apprehension of men the inviolability of [his] justice.' Christ was therefore set-forth to display God's anger against sin, and demonstrate that punishment is integral to justification. <sup>1243</sup>

<sup>1239</sup> *ibid.*, pp.355-356.  
<sup>1240</sup> *ibid.*, p.356.  
<sup>1241</sup> *CW* 2, pp.211-212.  
<sup>1242</sup> *Romans* 1, p.357.  
<sup>1243</sup> *ibid.*, pp.118-119.

Even though the justice of God revealed in demonstrating his righteousness is rectoral or governmental, it is nevertheless the inherent justice of God that is demonstrated.<sup>1244</sup>

*What God's righteousness is.* In the Old Testament, power, salvation, revelation and righteousness are drawn together in a manner like Romans 1:16-17 (Ps.98:1-2; Is.46:13; 51:5-8; 62:1; cf., Is.54:17; 61:10-11). In such contexts in the Old Testament, God's salvation and righteousness are virtually synonymous concepts. The same complementation is found in Romans 1:16-17, "[the gospel] is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed".<sup>1245</sup>

In the Old Testament passages just cited, the "revealed" righteousness of God has a dynamic meaning. The same emphasis must be given to Romans 1:17, therefore. God's righteousness is dynamically brought upon the situation sinful mankind.<sup>1246</sup>

Justification by faith is the theme of Romans. "Righteousness" is justifying righteousness (Rom.5:17, 19). Meyer [*Romans*], for example, sees this righteousness as originating from God. It is the righteousness which God approves, retains Calvin [*Romans*]. Whereas Philippi [*Romans*] and others believe "righteousness" is that which 'avails with God and is therefore effective to the end contemplated.'<sup>1247</sup>

Positively, righteousness is provided and approved by God. It is 'perfectly correspondent with the inherent justice of God', and in this manner is divine. It therefore demands the justifying act of God.<sup>1248</sup>

Christ is our righteousness and we are made righteous in him (1 Cor.1:30; 2 Cor.5:21). By union with him we gain the righteousness which he is.<sup>1249</sup> The obedience of Christ is the reason why we are "constituted righteous", that is, justified (Rom.5:19).<sup>1250</sup>

Murray concludes:

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<sup>1244</sup> *ibid.*, p.120.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p.29.

<sup>1246</sup> *ibid.*, pp.29-30.

<sup>1247</sup> *CW* 2, p.213.

<sup>1248</sup> *ibid.*, p.213.

<sup>1249</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.356-357.

<sup>1250</sup> *ibid.*, p.357.



The righteousness that we receive is that which is a free gift (Rom.5:17), the one righteous act (Rom.5:18), and the obedience of one (Rom.5:19). Paul proclaimed the "ministration of righteousness" (2 Cor.3:9) which can hardly be evened with faith. Noah became the heir of righteousness by faith (κατα πίστιν). Faith cannot be regarded as the inheritance.<sup>1251</sup>

Romans 10:3-10. Christ is the "end" (*telos*) (Rm.10:4) of the law. The word "end" can have the meaning of aim or purpose but it preponderantly denotes termination (cf., Mt.10:22; 24:6, 14; Mk.3:26; Lk.1:33; Jh.13:1; Rm.6:21; 1 Cor.1:8; 15:24; 2 Cor.1:13; 3:13; 11:15; Phil.3:19; Heb.6:11; 7:3; 1 Pet.4:7). "End" may convey purpose: Christ was the purpose of the law, its main subject matter. However, because in Romans 10:5 the righteousness of the law is contrasted with the righteousness of God, then *telos* may refer to Christ terminating the law as a means of righteousness.<sup>1252</sup>

In Romans 10:5, Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5, "The man that does these things will live by them", in order to show that by works, obedience to the law, a man will not achieve eternal life. Murray states that Paul seems to give Leviticus 18:5 a different setting to its original context. For, the Mosaic covenant was a grace covenant; it was not one based on merit. The obedience Israel was to offer was not in order to obtain grace, but to sustain it.<sup>1253</sup>

In Romans 10:6-8, Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in a manner that reveals the gracious nature of the Mosaic covenant. Paul introduces his use of Deuteronomy 30:12-14 by the formula, "the righteousness that is by faith says". Thus, his use of these verses is to show true righteousness, grace-righteousness. The covenant ordinances must not be considered legalistically. 'The whole

<sup>1251</sup> *ibid.*, pp.357-358. Of Romans 3:21, Meyer reasons that "now" (v21) denotes the contrast between the dependence on the law and independence from the law. A temporal force is appropriate, believes Murray. Paul is emphasising the contrast between salvation by works and salvation through faith, but he is also underlining that the latter has arrived with the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament saints were justified by faith. However, Paul is concerned with the appearance of God's righteousness. [*Romans* 1, pp.108-109.]

The righteousness of God is revealed "apart from law". 'This implies that in justification there is no contributory, preparatory, accessory, or subsidiary, that is given by works of law.' By "law" in this instance, Paul does not denote an epoch, since he says that the righteousness of God which is apart from the law is witnessed by the law and prophets. In the expression "apart from the law", "law" has the same meaning as "works of the law" (v20), as 'commandment or as constraining to and producing works'. [*ibid.*, pp.109-110.]

<sup>1252</sup> *Romans* 2, p.50.  
<sup>1253</sup> *idem.* Of Romans 9:31-32, Murray thinks that Israel failed to obtain righteousness by adherence to the torah. However, the phrase "law of righteousness" (v31) does not refer to the torah, but "law" in this case

thrust is the opposite (cf. Deut.7:7ff.; 9:6ff.; 10:15ff.; 14:2ff.; 15:15:f.; 29:9f., 29; 32:9; 33:29).<sup>1254</sup>  
Deuteronomy 30:12-14 bespeak God's grace, 'Their import is that the things revealed for faith and life are accessible: we do not have to ascend to heaven nor go to the utmost parts of the sea to find them.'<sup>1254</sup>

### The instrument of justification

The prepositions used in connection with justification ( $\delta\iota\alpha$  and  $\epsilon\kappa$  with the genitive,  $\epsilon\pi\iota$  and  $\epsilon\nu$  with the dative,  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha$  and  $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$  with the accusative) are far from indicating faith is the ground of justification. And even in the expressions "the righteousness of faith" (Rom.9:30), and "the righteousness which is of faith" (Rom.9:30), and "the righteousness according to faith" (Heb.11:7), the prepositional phrases rather clearly indicate that faith is not the righteousness but stands in some instrumental relation to it.<sup>1255</sup>

Why is faith the instrument of justification? It is not due to faith being the gift of God (Eph.2:8). 'If the mere fact that faith is the gift of God were the explanation, then we could discover no reason why faith rather than repentance, or love, or hope, or patience is brought into this relation to justification.' Faith is the instrument because it rests completely upon the free grace of God in justification.<sup>1256</sup>

### "From faith to faith"

"From faith to faith" (Rm.1:17) has been translated as advancing in one degree of faith to another, for example, Calvin [*Romans*]. Or it has been construed as equivalent to "by faith only", for example, C. Hodge [*Romans*] and A. Nygren [*Commentary on Romans* (E. T., Philadelphia, 1949), pp.78f]. Others have interpreted it as teaching that the righteousness of God is of faith from start to finish, for example, C. H. Dodd [*Romans*]. The best clue we have to the meaning of the phrase in hand is its parallel in Romans 3:22 (cf., Gal.3:22). This verse says, "the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ unto all who believe". The phrase "through faith of Jesus Christ" is concerned with how we are justified; "unto all who believe" is

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means the same as it did in 3:27b; 7:21, 23; 8:2: "principle". Israel failed to attain to the order that was concerned with justification. [*Romans* 2, pp.42-43.]  
<sup>1254</sup> *ibid.*, pp.51-53. In Romans 10:6, the phrase, "to bring Christ down", refers to fact of the accessibility of the revelation that 'Christ came down from heaven and tabernacled among men is most signal proof of this fact.' In the same verse, "to bring Christ up from the dead", 'should be interpreted as a denial of the resurrection.' [*Romans* 2, p.53.]  
<sup>1255</sup> *Romans* 1, p.358.  
<sup>1256</sup> *CW* 2, p.216.

emphasising that Jews and Gentiles are justified. "From faith" means justification is by faith in Christ; "to faith" denotes that all who believe, Jew or Gentile, are justified.<sup>1257</sup>

In Habakkuk 2:4, discussion has centred on 'whether "by faith" is to be taken with the subject of the sentence or with the predicate. Are we to render the proposition, "The righteous by faith shall live", [Nygren, *Romans*, pp.84ff] or as, "The righteous shall live by faith"? Is the proposition to the effect that the righteous will live or to the effect of intimating how the righteous will live, namely, by faith? The latter alternative is best. In Habakkuk 2:4, "by faith" cannot 'be interpreted in any other way and the massoretic interpunctuation favours this view.' The apostle is establishing the way that man appropriates the righteousness of God: by faith. 'The expression "the righteous by faith" is not one that can plead the analogy of Scripture usage.' J. B. Lightfoot's [*Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul* (London, 1895), pp.205f] comments are most apposite:

'I cannot doubt that ἐκ πίστεως is to be taken with ζῆσθαι, not with ὁ δίκαιος. For (1) the original seems certainly so to intend it....(2) ἐκ πίστεως here corresponds to ἐκ πίστεως in the former part of the verse, where it belongs, not to the predicate, but to the subject. It is here separated from ὁ δίκαιος as it is there separated from δικαιοσύνη. (3) ὁ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως is not a natural phrase, and, I think, has no parallel in St. Paul. (4) The other construction takes the emphasis off 'faith,' which the context shows to be the really emphatic word, and lays it on the verb 'live.' In Gal.iii.11 the context is still more decisive'.<sup>1258</sup>

Gabriel Herbert ["'Faithfulness' and 'Faith'", *Theology* LVII:424 (Oct.1955)] says that πίστις should sometimes be rendered as "faithfulness" (Old Testament 'emunah). Thus, Romans 1:17 should read, "From the faithfulness of God, unto faith". Romans 3:22 should be interpreted, "through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ". The same interpretation should be administered in Romans 3:26; Galatians 2:16; 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9; and Colossians 2:12. T. F. Torrance [*The Expository Times* LXVIII: 4 (Jan., 1957)] applies the same construction to Romans 1:17; 3:22; Galatians 2:16, 20; 3:22; and Philippians 3:9. He adds that *pistis Iesou Christou* includes Christ's faithfulness and man's response of faithfulness.<sup>1259</sup>

<sup>1257</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.31-32.

<sup>1258</sup> *ibid.*, pp.32-33.

<sup>1259</sup> *ibid.*, p.363. ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in Romans 3:26 denotes faith in Christ, according to the analogy of Paul elsewhere, says Murray, even though the same phrase is used in Romans 4:16, "of the faith of Abraham" (cf., Gal.2:16; 3:22; Phil.3:9). [*Romans* 1, p.121.]

πιστις only once in the New Testament patently denotes the faithfulness of God (Rom.3:3), whereas πιστος regularly does (1 Cor.1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor.1:18; 1 Thes.5:24; 2 Tim.2:13; Heb.10:23; 1 Pet.4:19; 1 Jh.1:9). The faithfulness of Christ is never denoted by πιστις but the phrase "faith (πιστος) of Jesus" does (2 Thes.3:3; Heb.2:17; 3:2; Rev.1:5; 3:14; 19:11).<sup>1260</sup>

Theologically speaking, there would be nothing incorrect in stating that it is because of the faithfulness of God (Rm.1:17; cf., 1 Jh.1:9) and the faithfulness of Christ (Rm.3:22; cf., 5:19) that sinners are justified. Not only so, it would not be wrong theologically to say that the faithfulness of man is correlative to the faithfulness of God within the term πιστις, for our faith is the response to God's and Christ's faithfulness.<sup>1261</sup>

There is enough evidence to reveal that πιστις only once denotes "faithfulness" (Rm.3:3). First, πιστις is almost invariably seen as faith on our part (e.g., Rm.1:8; 14:1, 22-23; 1 Cor.2:5; 12:9; 13:2, 13; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor.1:24; 10:15; Gal.5:6, 22; Eph.6:23; Phil.2:17; 1 Thes.1:3, 8; 3:2, 5-7, 10; 2 Thes.1:3-4; 3:2; 1 Tim.1:5, 19; 2:15; 4:12; 6:11; 2 Tim.1:5; 2:18, 22; Tit.2:10; Phm.5-6; Heb.4:2; 6:1; 11:1, 3-5, *passim*; Jm.1:3, 6; 2:5, *passim*; 1 Pet.1:7; 2 Pet.1:1, 5; 1 Jh.5:4; Rev.2:19; 13:10).<sup>1262</sup>

Also, πιστις is often contrasted with some contextual consideration, particularly human works. For example, the faith of Abraham in Romans 4 is that which is contrasted to works; it is belief in the promises of God (vv4-5, 11-14, 16, 20). In this chapter, "faith" is interchanged with "believe" (vv3, 5, 11, 17-18, 24). Abraham's believing and exercising of faith could not contain God's activity of faithfulness. The same is true of πιστις in Galatians 3:2-14.<sup>1263</sup>

Torrance is very much concerned with the expression εκ πιστεως. In Romans 4 and Galatians 3, εκ πιστεως cannot have a wider reference than the use of πιστις and πιστεως in these chapters. And Romans 5:1 must be interpreted in the light of the preceding context.<sup>1264</sup>

In Romans 10:3-12, the phrase "to everyone that believeth" (KJV) (vv4, 9, 10, 11, 14) points to the sense in which we are to comprehend πιστις in this passage. The "righteousness of faith"

<sup>1260</sup> *ibid.*, p.364.  
<sup>1261</sup> *ibid.*, pp.364-365.  
<sup>1262</sup> *ibid.*, p.365.  
<sup>1263</sup> *ibid.*, p.366.  
<sup>1264</sup> *idem.*

must therefore denote "to believe". The same truth must be imputed to ἐκ πίστεως in Romans 9:30, 32 because of its exposition in Romans 10:3-12. In Galatians 3:14 we discover διὰ τῆς πίστεως; it must have the same interpretation as πιστῇ found in that chapter. <sup>1265</sup>

Faith is said to be ἐν (Gal.3:26; Eph.1:15 (cf., Col.1:4); 1 Tim.3:13 (cf., 2 Tim.1:13); 3:15) and εἰς (Col.2:5) Christ Jesus. It is possible that what these prepositions convey is that faith is exercised due to union with ("in") Christ Jesus. These texts leave no room for the interpretation that πιστῇ includes or denotes the faithfulness of Christ, with the possible exception of 1 Timothy 3:13. In Colossians 2:5, Paul speaks of the "steadfastness of your faith in Christ Jesus". Moreover, when the verb πίστεω is weighed (cf., Mt.18:6; John 2:11; 3:15, 16, 18- where ἐν αὐτῷ in v15 must have the same force as εἰς αὐτὸν in vv16, 18, as far as our present interest is concerned- 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40; 7:5, 31, 38, 39; 8:30, 31; 14:1; 16:9; Acts 9:42; 10:43; 11:17; 16:31; 18:8; Rm.4:24; 9:33; 10:11, 14; Gal.2:16; Phil.1:29; 1 Tim.1:16; II Tim.1:12; 1 Pet.2:6; 1 Jh 5:10, 13) there is very good reason to think that in these passages Christ is viewed as the one to whom faith is directed. <sup>1266</sup>

On a number of occasions πιστῇ is used as a genitive of object, e.g., Mark 11:2, ἔχετε πιστὴν θεοῦ- "have faith *in* God" (also, Acts 3:16; Jm.2:1; Mk.11:22; Rev.2:13; 14:12). The analogy of the above texts and Romans 3:22, 26; Galatians 2:16 (2), 20; 3:22; Ephesians 3:12; Philippians 3:9 creates a presumption in favour of saying that these latter texts are also genitives of object. <sup>1267</sup>

Ephesians 3:12, "in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through the faith of him", has its parallel in Romans 5:2, "through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand." Torrance does not apply to Ephesians 3:12. In Romans 5:2, "faith" is that which we have in Christ. In Ephesians 3:12, the emphasis is upon boldness; and in terms of analogy with Romans 5:2, "faith" is in Christ. <sup>1268</sup>

In Romans 3:21-31, "faith", apart from verses 22, 26, is mentioned six times. In verse 28 what is referred to is "justification by faith". This is precisely the "faith" denoted throughout verses 21-31. The sustained appeal to Abraham's faith in chapter 4, 'fixes for us the definition of the

<sup>1265</sup> *ibid.*, pp.366-377.

<sup>1266</sup> *ibid.*, p.368.

<sup>1267</sup> *ibid.*, pp.368-370.

<sup>1268</sup> *ibid.*, p.370.

“faith” with which the whole argument of the apostle from 3:21 to 5:11 is so much concerned.’

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In the context of Galatians 2:16, Paul is contrasting justification by faith with justification by works. Specifically, it is faith patterned after Abraham’s that provides the contrast to justification by works. The first part of Galatians 2:16 says, “even we have believed in Christ”. The faith spoken of here is justifying faith. The verse continues, “in order that we might be justified by faith in Christ”. By saying this, Paul wants to underscore that *justification* has its sole fountain in faith in Christ. <sup>1270</sup>

The other texts in question, namely Galatians 2:20; 3:22; Philippians 3:9, due to the observations of similar considerations, all denote the same genitive of object. <sup>1271</sup>

In the context of what has just been determined, especially in relation to the comments on Romans 3:22, ἐκ πιστεως in Romans 1:17 provides no presumption in favour of the translation “the faithfulness of God”. ‘It is but a reiteration of what is implicit in Rom.1:16 that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation “to every one that believes, to the Jew first and to the Greek.” ’ [emphasis his] <sup>1272</sup>

It is not in question that faith is always in the faithfulness of God. Therefore ‘faith always involves this *polarized situation*.’ [emphasis his] Nevertheless, faith which is in Christ (πιστις εἰς Χριστον or πιστις ἐν Χριστῳ) never consists of the faithfulness of Christ, that is “faith” is never a polarized expression. In Romans 1:17 if ἐκ πιστεως denotes God’s faithfulness and εἰς πιστιν man’s faith, then “faith” in these instances cannot represent a polarized expression. And if in Romans 3:22 διὰ πιστεως denotes Christ’s faithfulness and εἰς παντας τοις πιστευοντας the faith of men, then neither phrase allows “faith” to be a polarised expression. <sup>1273</sup>

### Justification and the remission of sin

Occasionally, the scripture refers to the remission of sin as if this constitutes the whole of justification. The same is true of scripture’s use of forgiveness. However, justification is more

<sup>1269</sup> *ibid.*, pp.370-371.

<sup>1270</sup> *ibid.*, pp.371-372.

<sup>1271</sup> *ibid.*, p.372.

<sup>1272</sup> *ibid.*, pp.372-373.

<sup>1273</sup> *ibid.*, pp.373-374.

than mere freedom from guilt, it is also the imputation of righteousness. Remission of sin in justification consists in the removal of *judicial condemnation* upon all of our sin- past, present, and future. Therefore, justification is not continual. Further, God's wrath is not upon us for the sin that remains in us or for the sins we continue to commit; it is God's fatherly displeasure which is now directed against the believing sinner (*WCF* 11:5); the sufferings of God's children are 'not penal afflictions.' <sup>1274</sup>

### Justification and good works

It is said that the Reformed doctrine of justification is inimical to good works. The apostle Paul countered this argument in Romans 6. In connection with this objection, scripture subordinates justification to the overall purpose of the objective redemption accomplished by Christ: conformity to his image. Not only so, justification, because it removes God's wrath and guilt, is the basis for the believer having confidence to do good works (cf., Lk.1:74-75). Moreover, faith, the instrument of *justification*, is itself an act which by nature is sin-renouncing. And repentance, which is the instrument of regeneration, is the transformation of the sinful nature. And repentance, which is rejection of sinful self, accompanies justification. Justifying faith works itself out by love (Jm.2:18). Although eternal life is secured in justification, nevertheless, our works are the condition for the reward and life to come (Mt.10:41; 1 Cor.3:8-9, 11-15; 4:5; 2 Cor.5:10; 2 Tim.4:7). <sup>1275</sup>

Our future *reward* is not justification, nor salvation; we are saved by grace. 'The reward has reference to the station a person is to occupy in glory and does not have reference to the gift of glory itself.' The reward is given not because works deserve a reward, but because God is pleased to reward his people. <sup>1276</sup>

### The Romish doctrine of justification

The doctrine of Rome on justification is displayed in the:

...canons and decrees of the Council of Trent (Session VI, "Decree Concerning Justification") and is summed up in Chapters VI and VII. The doctrine is set forth in terms of the various *causes*. The *final* cause is the glory of God and Christ; the *efficient* cause is the merciful God who washes and sanctifies us; the *meritorious* cause is the Lord Jesus Christ who merited justification by his

<sup>1274</sup> *ibid.*, pp.217-219.  
<sup>1275</sup> *ibid.*, pp.219-221.  
<sup>1276</sup> *ibid.*, pp.221-222.

passion and made satisfaction to the Father for us; the *instrumental* cause is the sacrament of baptism; the formal cause is the justice of God by which we are made just and consists in the infusion of sanctifying grace. Though the canons do not speak of the *predisposing* or *preparatory* cause, yet the teaching of the two chapters referred to imply the same and define this cause in terms of faith, fear, hope, love, and contrition. [emphasis his] <sup>1277</sup>

According to Rome, Christ has procured the grace of justification by his merits and satisfaction (Canon X). Yet, Rome pronounces an anathema upon those who believe that it is upon Christ's righteousness that we are formally just. For Rome, justification is not a forensic or declarative act. It is through virtue stored up by Christ that a man must justified. That is, Christ by his obedience secured the grace of the remission of sins and the renewal of the soul. By 'the renewal of the soul, that is by regeneration, a man's sins are blotted out and he becomes truly just' (Joseph Pohle ed. Arthur Preuss: *Dogmatic Theology*, VII, St. Louis, 1934, p.303).<sup>1278</sup> In the Romish system, when faith precedes baptism, it is 'bare assent' and is simply a step before 'first justification' in baptism.<sup>1279</sup> The inward work of infused righteousness at baptism must be accompanied by works which are the result of '*fides formata*, namely, faith informed with charity.'<sup>1280</sup> Justification is progressive, for the merits (*meritum condigni*) of our works contribute to the increase in our righteousness, thereby we are 'still further justified (Chapter X)'-<sup>1281</sup> this is second justification.<sup>1282</sup>

Even if Rome conceded that justification is forensic or declarative, its grounds are only to be found in the infused righteousness of Christ. Scripture declares that faith receives the righteousness of Christ (Rom.5:17-19; 2 Cor.5:21; Phil.3:9); whereas Rome says that in the rite of baptism we are made righteous.<sup>1283</sup>

#### Isaiah 53:11

By "his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." The hiphil יצדיק ("justify") is a forensic term. The word in question is ברעתו ("his knowledge"). It could be rendered as an infinitive construct Qal "knowing" (Gen.38:6; Deut.9:24; Is.7:15; cf.,

<sup>1277</sup> Romans 1, p.359.  
<sup>1278</sup> ibid., 359-362.

<sup>1279</sup> CW 2, p.215.  
<sup>1280</sup> Romans 1, pp.359-362.

<sup>1281</sup> idem.  
<sup>1282</sup> CW 2, p.215.

<sup>1283</sup> ibid., pp.360-362.



Jb.9:24; Is.48:4). But it should be taken as a noun "knowledge" (Pr.3:20; 22:17; Is.44:25; 47:10; Jb.13:2).<sup>1284</sup>

How are we to construe the suffix "his"? Is it the Servant's own knowledge (subjective) or knowledge which others possess of him (objective)? Deuteronomy 9:24; Job 10:7; 13:2; Proverbs 3:20; Isaiah 7:15; 44:25; 47:10; 48:4, are all instances of a subjective usage of ידע plus the suffix. Genesis 38:26; and Proverbs 22:17 are the only objective usages of the same construction. Franz Delitzsch, Cheyne, Bredenkamp and Orelli hold a subjective view; whilst E. W. Hengstenberg, Albert Barnes and E. J. Young accept an objective angle. Young insists that it was only by sin-bearing that the Servant justified the many; they trusted in him, that is, knew him and his vicarious death. [*Isaiah Fifty-Three* (Grand Rapids, 1953), p.74.]<sup>1285</sup>

The knowledge of the Servant is his obedience to the will of God unto sin-bearing. It is obedience of intelligent will. If this knowledge impinges upon only the application of salvation, then it refers to knowledge which is requisite to the Servant's continuing high priestly work. Isaiah 11:2 says that the spirit of wisdom and understanding rest upon him. In 50:4, he will with the tongue of the learned speak to the weary. In 52:13, his prudence in procuring expiation is evident. Murray cites Young, ' "In its primary signification, it merely means to act with the understanding or intelligence. Since, however, such intelligent action usually results in success, the verb comes also to include the idea of effective action. Thus, we are to understand that the Servant will act so wisely that abundant fruition will crown His effort" ' [*Isaiah Fifty-Three*, p.10].<sup>1286</sup>

Furthermore, "familiar with suffering" (53:3) literally means "known of grief" (יָדַע חֵלִי), and indicates the depth of the knowledge of the Servant's grief in suffering. This is just to say that the Servant was "known" of temptation and suffering. Also, "to know" in the Old Testament is frequently associated with the ingredients of emotion and volition. Therefore, we must understand that the Servant did not merely exercise cognition, but his knowledge was also that of loving interest and decision (cf., Heb.10:10).<sup>1287</sup>

<sup>1284</sup> Romans 1, pp.375-376.

<sup>1285</sup> *ibid.*, pp.376-378.

<sup>1286</sup> *ibid.*, pp.379-81.

<sup>1287</sup> *ibid.*, pp.380-381.

The term justify refers to the once-for-all objective death of Christ, which is the basis for the justification of the many. In 53:10-11, the expiatory nature of the Servant's sacrifice is described. If "by his knowledge" is interpreted objectively, then what is spoken of is actual justification of sinners. This would necessitate a formula strange to scripture, ' "By faith in Christ, Christ will justify the many." ' Moreover, to substitute the word "knowledge" for justifying faith is alien to scripture. Also, in the analogy of scripture, justification is the work solely of the Father, the LORD (cf., Is.53:1, 6, 10). This evidence creates a presumption in favour of interpreting "justify" as the expiatory sacrifice of Christ. <sup>1288</sup>

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<sup>1288</sup> *ibid.*, pp.381-383.

## Chapter 14: Justification by faith 2

This chapter will have three main sections. The first is a comparison between Murray and certain prominent Reformed theologians. The second is an evaluation of his exegetical arguments.

### MURRAY COMPARED TO CERTAIN REFORMED SCHOLARS

#### John Calvin

Some scholars believe that Calvin taught that justification by faith is a continuous event.<sup>1289</sup> Calvin does head 3:14 of his *Institutes*, 'THE BEGINNING OF JUSTIFICATION. IN WHAT SENSE PROGRESSIVE.' Yet, he goes on to explain that justification is continuous in that our good works and our continuous faith prove that our once-for-all justification was real. Of James 2:21 he writes, 'since he declares that Abraham was *justified by works*, he is speaking of the proof he gave of his justification.'<sup>1290</sup> In the same manner does Calvin dispose of Psalm 106:30: Phinehas' act is imputed for righteousness because having been justified, God is favourable not only to his person, but also to his works, for they are covered by the blood of Christ.<sup>1291</sup> This is a similar, though not identical view to Murray's, as will be shown later in the chapter.

Of the "when" of Abraham's faith spoken of in Genesis 16:5, Calvin says, 'we are not here told when Abram first began to be justified, or to believe in God; but that in this one place it is declared, or related, how he had been justified through his whole life.... But now, since after such great progress, he is still said to be justified by faith'.<sup>1292</sup> It is possible that Murray, also, does not consider Abraham to have been justified at the historical moment that is related by Genesis 15:6.

Calvin, as Murray, denies that faith *per se* is the grounds for God's declaration:

Since there is a particular promise stated in the passage, they understand that Abraham acted rightly and honourably in believing it, and was so far approved by God. But their interpretation here is mistaken, first, because they have not perceived that *believing* extends to the whole context, and ought not therefore to be restricted to one clause. The principle mistake, however, is in their failure to begin with what is asserted of the grace of God.... Abraham... seized the kindness

<sup>1289</sup> E.g., A. C. Clifford, *Calvinus*, p.84; "The Gospel and Justification", pp.258-259; *Atonement and Justification*, p.173.

<sup>1290</sup> James, p.314.

<sup>1291</sup> Romans, pp.86-87.

<sup>1292</sup> Genesis, pp.408-409.

of God which was offered to him in the promise, and by which he perceived that righteousness was being communicated to him.<sup>1293</sup>

Murray would be fully at home with the following position of Calvin. Justification by faith, to Calvin, is the act of God whereby he approves at his tribunal the righteousness of Christ which has been imputed to the believer through faith in Christ. Thus, God acquits the believer as righteous- as if he were righteous.<sup>1294</sup>

According to Calvin, Christ was condemned upon the cross as a substitute for the believing sinner. God's judgement fell upon Christ, therefore. Christ's judgement within human history spares the elect from condemnation at God's tribunal in the day of judgement. Christ has ascended to God's judgement seat as the one who was condemned yet who has been vindicated. In this respect, there is 'no other tribunal' for the elect other 'than that of [their] Redeemer'. Because of this, on judgement day, it is from Christ that 'salvation is to be expected; and that he who in the Gospel now promises eternal blessedness, will then as judge ratify his promise.'<sup>1295</sup> In this setting, present justification is to be considered as the expression of the apocalyptic righteousness of God, his righteousness which will be revealed in the salvation of the elect on the day of judgement, since Christ himself is their righteousness.<sup>1296</sup>

It is far from clear whether or not Calvin is stating that there will be a justification of the elect on judgement day; for he does not say that justification will take place on judgement day. What he does say is that the righteousness that is the basis of our present justification is that which will be the basis of receiving salvation on judgement day. Murray certainly did not believe that the saints will be justified on judgement day.

Apart from Calvin's comments on Romans 6, he nowhere else has expresses the distinct doctrine of the death and resurrection motif, or of the two aeon motif. Thus, Murray is following after Calvin. Even so, the fact that Calvin says that the righteousness which will be attributed to us on judgement day is expressed in the present in the form of justification by faith, means that Calvin was, in respect of this particular doctrine, a forerunner of Wrede and Kasemann.

#### Calvin on Augustine

<sup>1293</sup> Romans, 83-84.

<sup>1294</sup> Romans, p.28; Inst.3:11:3-4.

<sup>1295</sup> ibid., 2:16:17-18.

We are not yet finished with Calvin. This time, however, we will focus upon his comments on Augustine's doctrine of justification. Calvin is aware that Augustine thinks that the phrase "righteousness of God" in Romans 3:21 'is the grace of regeneration'.<sup>1297</sup> By "regeneration" Calvin is referring to the whole of renewal. That is why he says that Augustine excludes from Christ's righteousness 'works of the law, i.e. those works by which men endeavour to deserve well of God by themselves, without self-renewal.'<sup>1298</sup> For Augustine, Christ's own righteous character was not procured by any work of merit or by faith. God gave him, in his human nature, the grace of righteousness. Christ is our head. When a man becomes a Christian by faith, God's grace of righteousness diffuses from Christ to his members.<sup>1299</sup> Augustine says, "This law of sin is both remitted in spiritual regeneration and remains in the mortal flesh; remitted, because the guilt is forgiven in the sacrament by which believers are regenerated, and yet remains, inasmuch as it produces desires against which believers fight."<sup>1300</sup> It would seem to us, that Augustine is stating that sin is forgiven, the sinner justified, in the event of baptism, by which the believer is regenerated. Indwelling sin remains after justification. Augustine is probably arguing that in regeneration Christ's righteousness is infused into the believer, and, consequently, upon this basis is he justified.

We must remember that Augustine said that Christ's righteousness is our regeneration. The view is to be favoured, therefore, that Augustine believed that the event of baptism, or regeneration, as a definitive event, is efficacious throughout the believer's life. Moreover, this same righteousness expresses itself in mortification. Augustine concludes that self-merit or self-virtue is utterly useless, therefore.<sup>1301</sup> This is true even for the saint: the works of the saint are not merits but are attributed to the mercy of God;<sup>1302</sup> whatever "good" the saint accomplishes is not his work but God's work in him, "Despise not the works of thy hands. See in me thy work, not mine. If thou seest mine, thou condemnest; if thou seest thine own, thou crownest."<sup>1303</sup>

Calvin notes how Augustine makes justification a once-for-all event. Moreover, justifying faith brings with it good works. Throughout his life, the believer applies to his definitive justification in order to have his sin-stained works, albeit works derived from the power and grace of God,

<sup>1296</sup> *Romans*, p.28.

<sup>1297</sup> *ibid.*, p.71.

<sup>1298</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1299</sup> *Inst.* 2:17:1.

<sup>1300</sup> *ibid.*, 3:3:13.

<sup>1301</sup> *ibid.*, 3:12:8; 3:14:3.

<sup>1302</sup> *ibid.*, 3:15:2.

approved and pardoned by him.<sup>1304</sup> Thus, the believer awaits perfection in righteousness which will come at the moment of death. Until then, the Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous one, the head of his people, intercedes for the sinner, pleading his own righteousness.<sup>1305</sup> Calvin summarises Augustine's teaching, "The righteousness of the saints in this world consists in the forgiveness of sins than the perfection of virtue".<sup>1306</sup>

## Luther

Every Reformed scholar proclaims that Luther is the father of Reformed theology because of his doctrine of justification by faith. But what exactly did Luther believe? A. E. McGrath writes that "Justification by faith", for Luther does *not* mean that a sinner is justified *on account of his faith*, as if faith was a human work. It means that *faith is a gift of God*. [emphasis his]<sup>1307</sup> But what does McGrath mean? Does he think that faith *per se*, according to Luther, is the grounds for God's declaration? Or that Luther thought that the objective righteousness of Christ is the grounds for justification- *pro* Murray?

For Murray, faith is not the ground of justification; for Luther it is. He writes, '*his faith*, such trust, is *reckoned*, freely, by God, *as righteousness*, so that he is righteous before God'. [emphasis his]<sup>1308</sup> Again, 'that this very believing or this very faith is righteousness or is imputed by God Himself as righteousness and is regarded by Him as such.'<sup>1309</sup> 'Righteousness is imputed to faith, that is, Abraham is reckoned righteous by God because he believes God.'<sup>1310</sup>

Justification is continuous to Luther; to Murray it is not. "On no condition is sin a passing phase, but we are justified daily by the unmerited forgiveness of sins and by the justification of God's mercy. Sin remains, then, perpetually in this life, until the hour of the last judgement comes and then at last we shall be made perfectly righteous."<sup>1311</sup> "Daily we sin, daily we are continually justified, just as a doctor is forced to heal sickness day by day until it is cured."<sup>1312</sup>

<sup>1303</sup> *ibid.*, 3:14:20.

<sup>1304</sup> *ibid.*, 3:18:5.

<sup>1305</sup> *ibid.*, 3:12:3.

<sup>1306</sup> *ibid.*, 3:11:22.

<sup>1307</sup> "Luther's Doctrine of Justification", *Evangel* 7:1, (Spring, 1989), p.17.

<sup>1308</sup> *Luther's Works* 25, editor: H. C. Oswald, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1972), p.36.

<sup>1309</sup> *Luther's Works* 3, editor: Jaroslav Pelikan, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p.20.

<sup>1310</sup> *ibid.*, p.24.

<sup>1311</sup> *Luther's Works* 34, editor: L. W. Spitz, (Philadelphia, Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p.168.

<sup>1312</sup> *ibid.*, p.192.

Luther did make a split between the righteousness of God and the remission of sins. To be righteous is to be forgiven; righteousness is the antithesis of sin. Moreover, because forgiveness is daily, then the imputation of righteousness is daily, "For inasmuch as the saints are always aware of their sin and implore God for the merciful gift of His righteousness, they are for the very reason always reckoned righteous by God." <sup>1313</sup>

However, Luther is not Arminian in his disposition: he does not believe that once someone is justified that that one can then lose justification, which view would require the need of continual justification. Definitive justification, once-for-all justification, takes place in baptism, according to Luther, "forgiveness of sins is not a matter of a passing work or action, but comes from baptism which is of perpetual duration, until we arise from the dead." <sup>1314</sup> To Luther, justification by faith in its definitive sense takes place at the moment of our baptism. This baptism or justification is efficacious throughout the whole of our lives, so that "we live continually under the remission of sin. Christ is truly and constantly the liberator from our sins, is called our Savior, and saves us by taking away our sins. If, however, he saves us always and continually, then we are constantly sinners." <sup>1315</sup> This, as we will see in the next chapter, is exactly the same principle at work in Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification: the sinner is considered as completely sanctified in Christ- definitive sanctification- it is then worked out daily in the sinner's experience- progressive sanctification.

Definitive justification does not mean that a man is righteous, but the sinner 'is in the very movement or journey toward righteousness', continues Luther. <sup>1316</sup> That is, the sinner will only be righteous *in himself* when he is glorified. Our own righteous acts in the present are polluted by sin, yet are covered by the 'umbrella' of Christ's own objective righteousness, so that God does not punish our sin. <sup>1317</sup> Faith is not, properly speaking, an act or work, since its referent is the objective righteousness of Christ. However, inasmuch as faith is an activity, Luther does allow that it may be called a work; yet "work" is an unfortunate and inadvisable term in the light of the Pauline usage of "works" as referring to man's attempts to enter the kingdom of God by

<sup>1313</sup> Lectures on Romans, p.125. Cited by R. D. Brinshead, "The Dynamic, Ongoing Nature of

<sup>1314</sup> Justification", *Present Truth* 4:3 (June, 1975), p.20.

<sup>1315</sup> Luther's Works 34, p.164.

<sup>1316</sup> *ibid.*, p.165.

<sup>1317</sup> *ibid.*, p.152.

*ibid.*, p.153.

obedience to the law.<sup>1318</sup> Faith, because it reaches to Christ, is the “power” for forgiveness and for the fight against indwelling sin, ‘[sin] which this same faith in Christ both pardons and conquers.’<sup>1319</sup> We might say that to Luther, faith is a “vertical plain event”, and our own righteous acts are “horizontal plain events”.

For Luther, the new creature that accompanies faith, as well as faith itself, is involved in justification, ‘[God] sustains and supports them on account of the first fruit of his creation in us, and he thereupon decrees that they are righteous and sons of the kingdom.’<sup>1320</sup> This is something Murray would “turn in his grave” over. According to Luther, when God reviews the new creation this is tantamount to him seeing faith. Of necessity, the relation between the new man and justification in Luther’s teaching needs explicating. The inner man is, according to Luther, either the old man, who rebels against God, or the new man, who submits to him by faith, ‘if you believe in [Christ], you may through this faith become a new man in so far as your sins are forgiven and you are justified by the merits of another, namely, of Christ alone.’<sup>1321</sup> Thus, faith is the proof that someone is a new man, and is the expression of the new man. It is vital to grasp that, for Luther, it is the new man, and not the acts of the new man, which is accounted as righteous.

It is not faith considered in itself that is righteousness, for Luther, but only as faith unites us to Christ’s objective righteousness. What is created is a real union with Christ. This real union, which creates the new man, is the ground of God’s declaration. Faith is the ‘work of God’, and on its account are we justified.<sup>1322</sup> Faith unites us with the promises of God, which is to unite us to the spiritual healing power of Christ. The power of the indwelling word or faith creates or ‘imparts qualities to the soul.’ These are sanctifying qualities and the continual forgiveness of sins.<sup>1323</sup> Luther conceives of faith as essentially becoming one with Christ, so that his promise becomes one with the faith that takes hold of it. Thus, just as to say “faith” is to say “new man”, so to say “faith” is to say Christ. Our works justify us in that ‘they proclaim that a man is righteous, that he does not have a feigned faith.’<sup>1324</sup>

<sup>1318</sup> *ibid.*, pp.159-160. See, *Luther’s Works* 23, editor: J. Pelikan, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p.21.

<sup>1319</sup> *ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>1320</sup> *ibid.*, p.152.

<sup>1321</sup> *Luther’s Works* 31, editor: H. J. Grimm, (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1957), p.347.

<sup>1322</sup> *Luther’s Works* 3, p.23.

<sup>1323</sup> *Luther’s Works* 31, p.349.



The origin of faith for Luther is found in God. However, Luther is not so concerned with the step leading to faith, but what faith itself involves, and what it procures. Therefore, he is not so concerned with what has been known as regeneration narrowly defined. His central concern is the vertical relationship- the faith that unites us to Christ and all that he is. *It is from the act of faith that we deduce that we have been renewed, thinks Luther.* Reformed scholarship puts incipient renewal before faith in its *ordo salutis*.

### Gerald Bray's interpretation of Calvin and Luther

Bray cites Karl Kertelge<sup>1325</sup> as one who denies the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith:

'God's action is not exhausted in simply an external decree (a purely forensic declaration), but signifies the effective creation of a new reality through God. This new reality of the justified one, created by God, is not to be understood in terms of static ontology, but rather as a 'relational reality'...i.e. a reality which consists of nothing except that new relationship between God and man created by God, the content of which is, from the side of God, Lordship, and from the side of man, obedience.'

But this is precisely what Calvin, and (less obviously) Luther believed!<sup>1326</sup>

Bray's assessment is "top heavy". To Calvin, without a shadow of a doubt, justification by faith *per se* did not include the notion of a *real* union, for according to him, justification was God's declaration that the repentant sinner was covered with the objective righteousness of Christ. *Real* union with Christ begins in regeneration (narrowly defined), says Calvin, and is expressed in the act of faith and in sanctification. However, justifying faith *unites* us with the *forensic* and objective righteousness of Christ, he continues. In other words, what is established in justification is a non-subjective union and relationship. This is the 'static ontology' that Kertelge rejects. It is precisely because Calvin wants to guard against the Roman Catholic view that first stage justification is given in baptism, that he is forced into an *ordo salutis* distinguishing between the subjective and non-subjective. Yet, because of what we have already said of Luther, we can now say that he comes closer to Kertelge than Bray thinks.

Jonathan Edwards

<sup>1324</sup> Luther's Works 34, p.189. See Luther's Works 31, pp.351-353.

<sup>1325</sup> From *Rechtfertigung bei Paulus* (Munster, 1976).

<sup>1326</sup> "Justification: The Reformers and Recent New Testament Scholarship", *Churchman* 109:2 (1995), p.112.

Randall E. Otto has helpfully identified Edwards' doctrine of justification by faith.<sup>1327</sup> Edwards takes us back to the distinction between the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness. However, Edwards considers the whole obedience of Christ, his life, death and resurrection, as the basis for our justification. More particularly, justification was only really procured when "in [Christ's] resurrection *he* was justified." [emphasis ours]<sup>1328</sup>

Faith unites the sinner to Christ, believes Edwards. It is through union with him in his resurrection or justification that the elect 'are justified and reckoned as having done that which entitles them to the reward of eternal life.'<sup>1329</sup> For Edwards, union in Christ's resurrection is a spiritual event. In other words, it is the believer's spiritual resurrection that is the grounds for God's declaration of righteousness. Edwards says, "...faith is the soul's active uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of union, on their part."<sup>1330</sup> To Edwards, the believer's *real* union with Christ's resurrected person is the basis for God declaring the believer to be righteous. That is, faith unites the sinner with Jesus Christ; through faith, the sinner and Christ become one, not forensically, but in reality; the sinner participates in Christ's substance and nature, and thereby becomes a partaker of the divine nature;<sup>1331</sup> it is the sinner's *real* union with Christ that then becomes the ground for God's legal declaration.<sup>1332</sup> Yet, it must not be thought that faith is in itself, as an act, the ground of justification. Rather, it is because faith unites us to Christ, in a real union with him, that we are declared righteous.<sup>1333</sup>

Edwards exceeds Luther by incorporating works (the horizontal plain) into the grounds of justification. The sinner is justified not merely on the basis of the initial act of faith, but *also* because his faith contains within itself, due to God's grace, the certainty of the saint persevering. Thus, the believer is justified in the initial act of faith proleptically, in anticipation of perseverance.<sup>1334</sup> Calvin and Murray, it would seem, would never have accepted this theology.

Justification is therefore twofold, according to Edwards: it is the acceptance of the judge himself, his declaration, which takes place in the initial act of faith; the second element is that justification

<sup>1327</sup> "Justification and Justice: An Edwardsean Proposal", *EQ* 65:2 (1993), pp.131-145.

<sup>1328</sup> *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 2 vols, editors: S. E. Dwight and E. Hickman, (Edinburgh, 1974), 1:623. Cited in "Justification and Justice", p.135.

<sup>1329</sup> *ibid.*, p.136.

<sup>1330</sup> *Works*, 1:622. Cited in "Justification and Justice", p.139.

<sup>1331</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1332</sup> *ibid.*, pp.136-137.

<sup>1333</sup> *ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>1334</sup> *ibid.*, pp.137-143.

is the manifestation of God's approbation through the medium of godly living. The former definition is Paul's understanding of justification; the latter is James'.<sup>1335</sup>

### Evaluation of historical theologians

*Relevant questions.* Some questions have to be put to a position like Murray's doctrine of justification by faith when compared to same doctrine as taught by Augustine, Luther and Edwards.

First, if Augustine's position was so Romish, as some Reformed scholars would say, why did Calvin not condemn it? It may be replied that Calvin would not want to undermine the fathers that he proposed to base his theology upon. However, Calvin is not disinclined to criticise the fathers where he thinks it necessary. Further, contrary to the opinion of some, Calvin only slammed those who undermined the gospel. Thus the use of strong language against Augustine would have been out of place.<sup>1336</sup> The Reformed camp needs to make its mind up, was Augustine heretical, or was he not?

Second, what exactly is the difference between Luther and Augustine? Luther believed that faith was the ground of our justification- so also Augustine. Secondly, Luther thought that in baptism we are definitively justified- so also Augustine. Thirdly, to Luther, the new man is also part of the ground for justification- so also Augustine.

Third, what of Luther's view of continual justification, and Edward's doctrine that works are a ground of justification by faith? Apart from these two scholars, we know of no other Reformed scholars who believe that justification by faith is anything other than a definitive, once-for-all work- of course, there may be some such scholars.

Fourth, what of Edwards statement that in his resurrection Christ was justified? We must also remember that Calvin taught the same thing- see Union with Christ. How many Reformed scholars would assent to this doctrine, or even know of its existence?

So, Calvin's "representational" doctrine of justification by faith is far from the only version of justification by faith within the Reformed tradition.

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<sup>1335</sup> *ibid.*, p.143.

*Further comment.* Augustine was correct to say that we are justified on the ground of faith, a faith which is Christ working within us. However, the New Testament does not think of faith as an infused righteousness. Luther thought “externally”: faith as an act, the new man expressing himself, is the ground for justification. Luther said this faith grasped Christ, and only upon this basis was faith a ground of justification. This is slightly to confuse matters. Faith is Christ within us, and is therefore the ground of justification.

Traditionally faith is that which reaches unto Christ. However, we believe that Calvin’s doctrine of the nature of faith eventually threatens his own expression of justification by faith. Faith, to him, is confidence that God *is* our Father. There is no “reaching to” in this definition. However, according to him, we are justified when faith reaches to Christ. At this juncture in theology, Murray is more consistent: faith is confidence that God will save; we are justified by faith reaching to Christ. The New Testament does refer to faith calling upon God. But this lies alongside the equally explicit teaching that faith is Christ working within us- more on this later.

Both Luther and Augustine refer to definitive justification in baptism. We can only go as far to say that the sinner’s definitive justification *is consequently symbolised in baptism*. Further, with Luther, it has to be said that justification by faith is ongoing. One last comment needs to be made on Luther. If faith is Christ working within us, then our righteous deeds as Christians are Christ working with us. Thus, acts or deeds, whether faith or the works of the saint, are in themselves righteousness. Consequently, we do not agree with Luther’s assessment that the horizontal plain is not the ground for justification- more will be said in the coming pages. The same criticism to the one made of Luther is applicable to Edwards. We do not agree with Edwards splitting faith into man’s act and that which unites us. Edwards expands on Luther by reasoning that *the spiritual resurrection* of the believer, expressed in faith, is the ground of justification- we will comment on this later. To our mind, it is at this point that Edwards confuses the issue. Both Paul and James quote Genesis 15:6. If Genesis 15:6 denotes declaratory justification, we would reason that Paul’s and James’ citation of it must be to the end of establishing declaratory justification- see coming argument.

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<sup>1336</sup> W. Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1989), pp.292-344.

The core of truth that links Augustine, Luther, Edwards, Murray and Calvin is the doctrine that says that faith unites us, in some fashion, to the *objective* righteousness of Christ, and upon this basis, and not by human merit, are we justified- *contra* Rome. As to interpreting the process or event leading to, or creating, this culmination, there is, it would seem, no uniformity amongst the scholars we cited.

Perhaps before plunging into the world of exegesis, a discussion of Paul's use of *nomos* would prepare us better for the exegetical section.

### A DISCUSSION ON PAUL'S USE OF *NOMOS*

#### Hermeneutics

*Moo's critique of Murray.* Murray's and Calvin's respective use of "law" was stated in An Evaluation of Murray's Theological Method, etc.. D. Moo criticises both Murray's and the Reformers' concept of "law". Moo says that "law" in Paul usually denotes the Torah.<sup>1337</sup> If so, "law" cannot predominantly denote "demand", as both Murray and the Reformers believe.<sup>1338</sup> To be "under the law" (Rm.6:14-15), says Murray, is a reference to believers not being under the condemnation of the condemning and binding aspects of the law, the commandments. For Moo, Murray's common denominator approach eviscerates "law" in Romans 6:14-15 of a redemptive-historical setting. The believer is not 'freed from law in "any sense", ' asserts Moo; for the believer is still held to the Mosaic economy. That is, the believer is free from the Mosaic dispensation as a *redemptive-historical category*, however, he is still bound to the Mosaic law in that he is required to obey the commandments of God.<sup>1339</sup>

*Evaluation of Moo.* Moo's evaluation of Murray is helpful. We said before that Murray leans too heavily upon the gracious nature of the old covenant. Yet, we are struggling to see precisely what Moo is arguing. To say the believer is not free from the Mosaic economy in any way, and then to say he is free from it as an historical event or dispensation, is a contradiction. The impression that Moo gives is that the problem (?) with the Mosaic covenant is that it is simply out-dated.

At least Murray attempted to explain how "law" condemned. The problem with Murray and the Reformers was that they viewed the Mosaic covenant as exclusively gracious, as so rejected the

<sup>1337</sup> "Legalism in Paul", pp.82-84.  
<sup>1338</sup> *ibid.*, p.88.

idea of an “evil” law, preferring to refer to the principle of law. It is impossible to conceive of law condemning as a *mere* redemptive-historical category. Ultimately, Moo takes the force out of Paul’s description of law given in Romans 7. “Law”- as we will argue in Sanctification- in verses 23, 25 is the Mosaic covenant (cf., Gal.2:15ff; 3:10-13, 19, 22; Rm.5:20; 7:1-25; 1 Cor.15:56; 2 Cor.3:7ff). It is the Mosaic covenant controlled by sin which wars against- yes- the same covenant which is served with the mind. In short, apart from one or two areas, “law” is always the Mosaic covenant in Paul’s writings. In one context, this particular law can represent the whole old covenant (Rm.3); in another, it can be contrasted to other covenants in the Old Testament (Gal.3).

*James Dunn.* Dunn agrees with our view that law in Paul predominantly denotes the Mosaic covenant. However, Dunn chooses a totally different path to our own. He reasons that Paul condemns Jews for thinking that the covenant was their exclusive property. In Christ the covenant had opened up to the Gentiles. ‘For Jews who believed in a Messiah fully to accept Gentiles as of their own number, without requiring them to become Jews, was too much of a contradiction for pre-Christian Paul’, comments Dunn.<sup>1340</sup> In particular, the Jews insisted upon the Gentiles receiving the badges of the covenant: circumcision; food laws; and the Sabbath. However, Christ’s death abolished the need for these badges as entrance into God’s community.<sup>1341</sup>

For Paul, the Mosaic law ‘is basically a single indivisible whole.’<sup>1342</sup> This entails that the division of “law” into ceremonial and moral- thus Calvin- or ceremonial, moral and civil is incorrect- since these proposed division arise out a desire to preserve the gracious character of the Mosaic dispensation.<sup>1343</sup> The indivisibility of the law also entails that Dunn’s thesis is faulty.

Moreover, his argument also suffers from a few logic inconsistencies. R. B. Matlock says that Dunn’s thesis amounts to saying that the only real problem with the Jewish system was that by the time of Christ it had passed its “sell-by-date”.<sup>1344</sup> The logical course of Dunn’s thesis is that the Jews merely needed to stop practising the badges in order to be at peace with God. Which, as

<sup>1339</sup> *ibid.*, pp.8-90.

<sup>1340</sup> Dunn and Alan M. Suggate, *The Justice of God* (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1993), p.23.

<sup>1341</sup> *ibid.*, pp.20-37.

<sup>1342</sup> *ibid.*, p.84.

<sup>1343</sup> Cf., Moo, *idem.*

<sup>1344</sup> “Sins of Flesh and Suspicious Minds: Dunn’s New Theology of Paul”, *JSNT* 72 (1998), p.77.

Matlock states, makes Jesus death something of a mystery.<sup>1345</sup> D. A. Campbell says, what, according to Dunn, is the 'exact problem for Paul with Judaism'?<sup>1346</sup> Pharisaical legalism and the thought of the Pharisees not being affected by legalism in any significant way are not necessarily mutually exclusive, says Moises Silva.<sup>1347</sup>

Dunn also makes the mistake of having "works of law" denote both the law considered as a boundary marker *and* the badges of the law.<sup>1348</sup> Moreover, Cranfield has persuasively demonstrated that to think that "works of law" equates to Jewish pride in the law, especially in boundary markers, is to lose sight of Paul's argument- we will draw upon Cranfield's exegesis in the exegetical section.<sup>1349</sup>

*The paradox of the nature of the law.* Time to come back to the central claim, namely, that the law is good, but it is also evil. Moo described the law's passing away as a redemptive-historical category. We did not object to this position, but only at what he constructed upon it. Thomas Schreiner takes a similar road to Moo. Schreiner states that the Mosaic covenant cannot refer exclusively to legalism, since in Galatians 3:15ff the Mosaic economy is conceived of as redemptive-historical category: it is differentiated from the historical Abrahamic covenant. In verses 24-25, Paul continues the redemptive-historical argument, contrasting the period before Christ's coming with the period of faith in the person of Christ. The law which came 430 years after the covenant is not against the promise, but legalism is.<sup>1350</sup>

Schreiner's doctrine fails to follow through the force of Paul's language in Galatians 3:23. Before faith, says Paul, we were in prison. When was the Abrahamic covenant? Surely it was "before" the redemptive-historical coming of Christ, and faith in him? Schreiner effusiveness about the gracious nature of the Abrahamic covenant in Galatians 3 demands curtailment. Paul is using "law" in Galatians 3 in two different ways. First, as the Mosaic covenant it is contrasted to the Abrahamic covenant. Why? Because this law had become to Jews and Judaisers an instrument of sin and condemnation. Not merely because, as Dunn's says, certain parts of it made Israel distinctive, but because the whole was considered as distinctive. The testimony of

<sup>1345</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1346</sup> "The ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ from Durham: Professor Dunn's *The Theology of the Apostle Paul*", *JSNT* 72 (1998), p.100.

<sup>1347</sup> "The Law and Christianity: Dunn's New Synthesis", *WTJ* 53 (1991), pp.350-351.

<sup>1348</sup> Matlock, "Sins of Flesh", p.78.

<sup>1349</sup> "The Works of the Law" in the Epistle to the Romans", *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp.89-101.

<sup>1350</sup> "The Abolition and Fulfillment of Law in Paul", *JSNT* 35 (1989), pp.50-51.

Paul in Philippians 3:4-6 is that the Jews understood their function as a nation as that of obedience to torah, and not merely parts of it. The whole law, in other words, was an instrument of condemnation for the Jews and Judaisers. The reason for it becoming thus, we will discuss later.

The promise was "before" law; salvation came not through mere legalistic obedience to law, but through the promise.

Yet, because the Old Testament covenants anticipated the coming of faith, that is, the realisation of promise, the whole of the Old Testament' covenants are lumped together, by Paul, as those which held mankind in bondage. "Before faith" (Gal.3:23) implies that prior to Christ's coming, the world- Jews and Gentiles- was imprisoned in the law, the Mosaic covenant. Thus, the Abrahamic covenant is also categorised under the Mosaic covenant. To this extent, we agree with Moo's and Schreiner's argument for the law being abrogated (?) as a redemptive-historical category.

The method of Paul is partly allegorical. It is a historical fact that in Israel's history, the Mosaic covenant was understood as *the* defining and governing covenant. Thus, there are two periods of history: law and Christ. "Outside of", "before" Christ, his coming, there was, in one sense, nothing, he did not exist as a divine-human figure within history. He was the embodiment of salvation. "Outside" of him there is no salvation. Paul takes this latter, theological, point, and applies it allegorically or typologically: history before Christ is condemned, outside of salvation.

Paul can do this because from a certain perspective, history before Christ was condemned. In Galatians, Paul is not merely resorting to redemptive-historical categories. He is also summarising the two Adams: there is the Adam of this world; there is the Adam of the next. The Mosaic covenant is representative of self-righteousness, a world that has emptied creation of God himself. The Mosaic covenant is the peculiar expression of this enmity because it is the peculiar expression of those chosen to particularly embody mankind.<sup>1351</sup>

<sup>1351</sup> In Faith, etc., we said that Paul subsumes all men under torah because seminal torah has been written on all men's hearts. But Paul does not mean that seminal torah is subordinate to torah. Rather, it is the other way round. We can only understand the existence of torah because of the prior existence of seminal torah. Israel as a nation represent the ultimate expression of seminal torah; that is, Israel are the expression of mankind. Thus, in Galatians Paul subsumes the Gentiles under Israel.



Yet, from the perspective of Christ's resurrection victory as last Adam, his salvation invades history before his coming, in the form of the promise. In this way, the promise brings a taste of the world to come; it invades sullied history, and so creates history within history, a new history. That is how Paul can *contrast* the Abrahamic promise to the Mosaic promise.

*The law as promisory.* We have said that Paul uses "law" negatively in two ways: in contrast to the Abrahamic promise; as representative of an era of condemnation. However, Paul uses "law" in a third way, this time positively.

M. Karlberg records how Murray reasons that "covenant" and "works" are antithetical. Works, believes Murray, belong to the pre-fall state. Karlberg replies that Reformed federalists were all agreed in saying that grace was evident in the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, but that these federalists differed on how the law-works principle was present in the Mosaic covenant. Karlberg goes on to rationalise that Murray's exegesis of Leviticus 18:5 as used in Romans 10:5-8 is inconsistent, for here he says that 'Paul abstracts the principle enunciated in Lev.18:5 out of the context of grace'. For Karlberg, Murray does not perceive that the apostle 'is not representing the proper intent of the law-principle in his Old Testament citation'.<sup>1352</sup> Karlberg proposes, instead, that 'The principle of works-inheritance as an administrative element in the Mosaic Covenant is limited to the sphere of the symbolic-typical.' The history of Israel is permeated with works-reward, and this history was a pre-type of the spiritual, or antitypical, work of Christ.<sup>1353</sup>

There is indeed a works-blessing "law" in the Old Testament. But Karlberg "out does" himself. Why would Paul condemn the work-principle if it were merely typological?<sup>1354</sup> The book of Hebrews informs us that Old Testament history was typological precisely because it conveyed continuity- see our discussion in *Union With Christ*. If there is a law-blessing principle evident in the old covenant, then, in order to be typological, it must be continuous with the same principle in the new covenant.

Once again, the key to understanding this aspect of law is the two Adams motif. We said in *Union With Christ*, that Adam both negatively and positively prefigured Christ. Two of the negative aspects we have discussed above in relation to the law. Adam's history, not merely his fall, and the history of his progeny, as specifically embodied in Israel, and as described in the Old

<sup>1352</sup> "Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant", *WTJ* 43 (Fall, 1980), pp.50-51.  
<sup>1353</sup> *ibid.*, p.55.

Testament, is indicative of how God will deliver his people: through a second head of humanity; through a Son; through a King; by a redemption; and so on. That is, the whole of the Old Testament is prophetic in the sense that it was pre-history, pre-faith or Christ history that foreshadowed the consummation of salvation in the last Adam. It is, in other words, promissory history. Because it was truly promissory, that is, that it did in its hour, in its day, point to an ultimate or consummate deliverance through a Messiah, salvation could come through adherence to the Mosaic covenant. However, it was adherence based upon the promise that saved, and not mere obedience to a system. Our view will be developed later in the chapter.

### Theology

In pointed terms, what is conspicuously missing from present day discussions on Paul's use of law is the apocalyptic nature of law itself. This brings us to the heart of interpreting the law, namely, the person of Christ himself.

(1) Christ was in Adam	The law is in Adam
(2) Christ revealed God, was good	The law revealed God, was good
(3) Christ was condemned in Adam	The law is condemned in Adam
(4) Christ rose out of Adam	The law is Spiritualised

The connection that we make between the continuity between law and Christ is not arbitrary. 2 Corinthians 3 reveals the continuity of glory between the old covenant and the new. *Christ* is the reconvening of the law of Moses; he, as risen Lord, is its proper and consummate expression.

The argument goes that the law is good, and the law *per se* is not evil, and therefore, the law cannot be abrogated as a whole. But this is to misconstrue Paul's use of the redemptive-historical. Yes, the law is good. But there is no such thing in time and space as law *per se*. The law is either promissory, via the resurrection, or destructive, via Adam and sin. The law is bound to one of two ethical categories: the category of condemned history; or the category of free history. The "goodness" of law, that holy character of law, is not an independent concept. The law's goodness can neither deliver from sin's curse, nor bring salvation. Instead, the *good* law is perverted as an instrument of death by sin itself, and so, law, *good* law, becomes death, and, in one sense, evil.

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<sup>1354</sup> See Thomas Schreiner, *The Law*, p.248.

At this point, we must recall that the glory of the law is continued in Christ, according to 2 Corinthians 3. Christ was *good*. But his goodness was not a *per se* concept, it did not float abstractly in history. His goodness was also dominated by the lordship of sin- see Union With Christ. However, what the law was unable to do, Christ did. The law merely exacerbated Adam's curse; Christ soaked it up. The law was not able to bring life from the dead; Christ rose from the dead and brought life.

Schreiner, with Moo, notes the unity of law. This lies behind δικαίωμα in Romans 8:4 (cf., Rm.1:32). Having said this, Schreiner perplexingly says that when Paul mentions that believers are to fulfil the law, it is the moral norms of the law that are denoted.<sup>1355</sup> It is the whole law that is "fulfilled" by believers- see discussion in Sanctification. Christ's obedience to torah entailed his death. From his exalted station as Mediator, he poured fourth the Spirit. By the Spirit, he repeats the history of himself on earth within his church: they also fulfil the law; they also die to sin- definitively and continuously. This is the background to Romans 12:1-2. In short, the ceremonial law, so called, is continuously being fulfilled by the Christian! The Pauline tension or paradox is that the *whole* law has been abrogated, yet the whole law is enforced.

To come next is the exegetical section.

## THE FORENSIC STATIVE AND ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑ

### Forensic stative?

Murray did not believe that in the New Testament δικαίωμα was in the stative. He says that the 'stative use reflects on character or behaviour and does not deal with the question how this condition came to be when it is predicated of men.'<sup>1356</sup> Luke 18:14 says, "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God." Murray thinks this verse may reflect a stative usage. His argument against this text reflecting a stative usage is that there is no other example of δικαίωμα in the stative found in the New Testament.

Where does his definition of the stative usage come from? He does not show how Luke 18:14 *per se* is not stative. If the man went down to his house righteous or justified, is this not a state or condition? Murray seeks to negotiate this problem by saying that there is a stative usage that

<sup>1355</sup> *ibid.*, pp.60-61.

<sup>1356</sup> Romans 1, p.336.

assimilates forensic notions. That is, the notion of justification in the case of the repentant man is hardly exhausted by the concept of mere declaration; there is also a status involved, which has been imputed. To our mind, Murray is wrestling with patent difficulties involved in a text like Luke 18:14. Surely Murray's view has to be partly correct? Or, we could say that those who criticised him are in a difficult spot, for if justification is merely the declaration that we are righteous, then it means that a believer is united with Christ by faith, clothed in his objective righteousness, and yet, logically speaking, is still waiting to be justified. This pushes us to say that the grounds of justification and its declaration must be chronologically and logically concurrent.

Yet Murray's own understanding of the stative usage in Luke 18:14 is contradictory, for the forensic and the stative are two *distinct* usages, according to him. We do partly agree with his interpretation of Luke 18:14 but it is still inadequate. To our mind, he has to posit so precise a definition of the stative, partly because, to him, Luke 18:14 reflects the doctrine of justification by faith, and he could not allow that a man is justified because of his *character*. It is our opinion that this is exactly what the text is saying. (By "character" we are not referring to merit but to submission to the covenant of grace- see later in chapter.) The specific character of the one who was vindicated was that he was a man of faith. In other words, repentance and faith are a condition of and reflective of the character of the man referred to. Further, Murray has to show that the person referred to in Luke 18:14 was not already a believer, because Murray's doctrine of justification by faith is only relevant at the point when someone initially comes to faith in Christ.

By concluding as we have, we are questioning the whole idea of the forensic stative. <sup>1357</sup>

#### ***Dikaíōw* and the causative sense** <sup>1358</sup>

Murray says that *δικαίωω* in 1 Corinthians 6:11 possibly does not have a causative meaning, and that it may be that it reflects the normal Pauline meaning of justification by faith. He then says that this view has a problem, for if Paul is referring to justification, we would have to say that justification comes through the Spirit, but this would not be biblical.

It is peculiar that Murray does not see the tension in his own reasoning. If justification by faith cannot come by the Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:11 cannot refer to forensic justification by faith. Must

<sup>1357</sup> Another question arises, is it possible to distinguish between the stative and demonstrative usages in Luke 18:14?

the forensic and the causative be considered as diametrically opposed? We demonstrated in another chapter that the justification of the believer is through being raised in the power of the Spirit. It is being spiritually clothed by the Spirit, that is, with Christ, that the believer is justified. His own resurrection is itself God's declaration of vindication (see Union with Christ). Therefore, we agree with the statement, 'Thus to ask whether [the Galatians] had received the Spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith was tantamount to asking whether they had been justified by works of law or by the hearing of faith.'<sup>1359</sup>

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### The righteousness of God

There are some who would not assent to Murray's view that when God is said to be righteous in the Old Testament that this refers merely to his attribute of righteousness. For example, does the phrase "righteousness of God" refer merely to his act of vindicating his name and/or his people, or does it also include the notion of retribution? Moo considers there to be four perspectives to the phrase "righteousness of God" in the LXX. First, it conveys God's salvation. Second, it is the motivation to save, namely his covenant faithfulness. Third, it denotes the judgement of God on his enemies. Lastly, it refers to the attribute of God: God will always do what is right and will always fulfil his promises. The last meaning has nothing to do with the covenant *per se*, Moo maintains.<sup>1360</sup>

We do not agree with Moo's last usage. He cites Psalm 143, Daniel 9 (cf., Is.46, 50) as examples. But Daniel 9 is wholly concerned with God's covenant relationship to his people. Moo does not demonstrate how the promises of God can be separated from covenant. All of God's dealings with men are covenantal (see later in chapter).

The question is, does "righteousness of God" in the LXX refer to an attribute in God? No and yes. No, inasmuch as it does not *directly* refer to the immanent nature of God, since God always works within his covenant, and his attributes are related to us as "conditioned" by that relationship. Yes, in that God's nature as revealed in the covenant is the expression of who he

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<sup>1358</sup> For comments on the demonstrative usage of *dikaion*, see our exegesis of James 2:21-25.

<sup>1359</sup> Colin G. Kruse, *Paul, the Law and Justification* (Leicester, Apollos, 1996), p.75. Kruse does not accept that the reception of the Spirit is the justification of the ungodly. This being so, we do not see how he can use the word "tantamount".

<sup>1360</sup> *Romans*, pp.81-86.

really is.<sup>1361</sup> So Murray's doctrine of the Old Testament's concept of God's righteousness should have been stretched to incorporate the notion of the covenant: "God's righteousness" is firstly a relational and dynamic term.

### The righteousness of God in Isaiah

To be righteous in the Lord (Is.45:25), said Murray, was to be delivered by him. To say God was Israel's righteousness is to say that he was their Saviour, according to Murray. We can understand from this how he could conclude that Israel's righteousness was "of" God. Also, says Murray, in Isaiah 45:24 we see how Israel is justified by the Lord. What does Murray mean by "justified"? If it means that definitive, once-for-all event, in what sense does God's deliverance of his people justify them in that manner? Moreover, it is the people *en masse* who are saved. Would Murray really want to say that every individual who left Babylon was justified by faith? Further, if justification by faith is faith in Christ, in what sense were the Old Testament saints "justified"? Murray draws out the parallels between Abraham and the New Testament believer, but he never says Abraham believed in Christ.

In his exegesis of Isaiah 53:11, "by his knowledge shall my Servant justify many", Murray concluded that both knowledge and justification are referents to the expiatory work of Christ. However, Murray is in the difficult position of defending the word "justify" (צדק) to mean

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<sup>1361</sup> By the immutability of God is meant that he is unchangeable. He is immutable in his being, perfection, and intra-divine ontological relations and counsel, says Murray. Although his relations to the created order do change, these changes are an expression of his immutability. All of his relationships in executing his economy in creation, providence and redemption are *ad extra*, not immanent and eternal. Thus, the intra-divine economical relationships and the relation he sustains to the whole of creation are *ad extra*. In providence, his punishment of sin remains constant. In his execution of redemption, he changes his attitude toward creation and thus reconciles, justifies, adopts, and glorifies sinners. His attitude toward the elect will never be moved. [*Theology Proper*, p.36.]

Murray notes how Robertson-Smith carries over the thought of Exodus 3:12, translating Exodus 3:14 to mean, "I who will be with you will certainly be with you." Murray says that the name יהוה would then stress Yahweh's presence with his people. However, the formula as it stands emphasises Yahweh's character as he is in himself. The title therefore denotes that in all that God does for his people he is self-determined, sovereign, self-dependent, and eternal. Because God is these things, then in his dealings with his people he is faithful or immutable. [*Biblical Theology*, p.39.]

According to Murray's interpretation of Exodus 3:14, God is immutable in his dealings with his people, because of his immanent attributes. Yet, Murray makes the inexplicable comment that יהוה does not refer to God's dealings with his people, but to his own natural attributes. The etymology of the divine name is indeed a disputed subject. Its meaning is also hotly debated. Yet, within the context, it is obviously a redemptive name, reflecting how God is towards his people. [*NBD*, p.475.]

The question is, how can God remain so faithful to his covenant? This leads us back to the immanent nature of God; he could not have said that he would always be the same towards his people if he never had the capacity to be so. Thus, the covenant character of God is grounded in his immanent, pre-temporal

something other than what it quite often denotes when referring to salvation, namely the declaration or vindication of righteousness. He is forced into his decision because of his view that only God the Father justifies. In our own estimate, a *prima facie* reading of the text is that Christ will “justify”. Though it is quite probable that “knowledge” denotes the wisdom and obedience of Christ, as Murray says.

The “justifications” of Isaiah 45 and 53 are never reconciled by Murray. It is possible to construe “justify” as a reference to the resurrection life of the Servant by which Israel was justified. D. Guthrie cites C. R. Noth [*The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (1948), pp.210f] and S. Mowinckel, [*He that Cometh* (Eng.trans., 1954), p.205] who teach that Isaiah 53:11 refers to the promise of vindication for the Servant in the form of his resurrection.<sup>1362</sup> The deliverance from Babylon, Israel’s resurrection, was its justification and God’s, for both were vindicated.<sup>1363</sup> In this context, God’s righteousness was an act of faithfulness to his covenant.<sup>1364</sup>

Indeed, Murray’s conception of the Old Testament’s doctrine of justification by faith seems to, in the main, miss the notion of covenant. It is the relation of the covenant and justification in the Old Testament that we will now develop.

### **The covenant and justification**

*Justification: a verdict.* In the Old Testament, says Clowney, justice ‘is shaped by the concept of a verdict, declaring one to be in the right or in the wrong.’ [emphasis his]<sup>1365</sup> The verb *hasdiq* (“to justify”) ‘always means “to declare in the right”, and therefore to acquit or vindicate. It never means to punish or condemn’ (cf., Dt.25:1; Job 32:2; Ex.23:7; 20:11). [emphasis ours] No man is just before God (Job 9:2; Is.6:5; Ps.14:3; 143:2) because his standard is the perfection revealed in the law.<sup>1366</sup>

The only way man can be acceptable before God, acquitted as righteous, is by the blood of the covenant. Clowney says:

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nature. However, his pre-temporal nature is there alongside and undergirding his economic relations to his people. Thus, even God’s immanent attributes are covenantally determined.<sup>1367</sup>

<sup>1362</sup> *New Testament Theology*, p.375.

<sup>1363</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, p.103.

<sup>1364</sup> Donald Macleod, *Behold Your God*, pp.74-83.

<sup>1365</sup> “The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith”, *Right With God*, p.22.

<sup>1366</sup> *ibid.*, pp.22-23.

Gerhard von Rad has pointed out that the formula 'He is righteous' as used in Ezekiel 18:9 is of the same sort as the formulae pronounced by the priest who had to declare what the status of an individual was: clean or unclean, blood-guilty or innocent (Lev.13; 7:18; 17:4). Von Rad thinks of this cultic declaration as offering one model of viewing a man as acceptable to God. The keeping of the commandments would represent another way (Deut.6:25).<sup>1367</sup>

The cultic and the moral were not, however, two different paths, since both were indistinguishable (1 Sam.15:22; Zech.7:5-6; Is.1:11-17; 6:6; 53:7, 10), continues Clowney. God's justification of his people was a declaration of their righteous status, as those who had been pronounced clean or guiltless in respect to the LORD'S covenant, having been cleansed by blood.<sup>1368</sup>

For us, Clowney could have been more clear on where the deeds of the righteous fit into the frame. He seems to be saying that that mere deeds is not the issue. Rather, it is whether the deeds are under the submission of the covenant Lordship of Yahweh, and whether they and the individual who performs them have been consecrated, in their doing, by the blood of the covenant.

Further, the very texts that Clowney cites- and for that matter the texts that Murray cites- to prove the Old Testament notion of justification and God's justice do not readily concord with Clowney's own view of justification by faith in the New Testament. This is because the examples of the "righteous ones" in the Old Testament given by him are people who are already believers: in Psalm 51 David was already a believer, and in Genesis 15 Abraham was already a believer. Whereas New Testament forensic justification by faith, according to Clowney- and Murray- is possessed by the sinner only in the initial act of faith. This reminds us of Luther's view of definitive and progressive justification. Another way of describing this process is the establishing and re-affirmation of the covenant.

We are aware that this section in the Old Testament might have been more voluminous, but, remember, Murray himself does not develop a full-blown doctrine of justification by faith from the Old Testament but reads back this doctrine from the New into the Old.

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<sup>1367</sup> *ibid.*, p.28.

<sup>1368</sup> *ibid.*, pp.28-29.



## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

### Romans 4

Murray says that the illustration of Abraham's faith in Romans 4 fixes for us the meaning of "faith" in Romans 3:21-5:11. Because of the importance of Abraham's faith, Romans 4 will be the first New Testament passage to be considered.

*When does justification take place?* According to Murray, justification by faith is a once-for-all, definitive event that occurs only at the moment of the initial exercise of faith. When was Abraham "justified", was it at the point of the initial act of faith, or after it? A *prima facie* reading of Genesis 15:6 (cf., Rm.4:4) indicates that Abraham was justified at the moment he exercised faith in God's promise. As Strimple's comments, Genesis 15:6 'is a verse which seems most naturally- when you just read it- to mean faith itself is the righteousness imputed.'<sup>1369</sup> In order to counter this, Calvin acknowledged that Abraham was already a believer, and that what is referred to is the efficacy of once-for-all justification in the life of the believer.

It is striking that in exegeting Romans 4:20-21, Murray argues that these verses refer to the true character of Abraham's faith. This is odd. If Romans 4 is concerned with justification by faith *per se*, why is Paul seemingly giving us a lesson on the true character of faith? Why is it that continuously, in order to prove definitive once-for-all justification, Paul feels obliged to refer to the life of faith in believers, such as Abraham and David? The awkward posture that a traditional interpretation of Romans 4 assumes is drawn out for us from the words of G. Bray, 'Abraham was justified because God had met with him and given him the assurance which he needed to put his trust in him.'<sup>1370</sup> Bray has successfully made irrelevant the promises given to Abraham in Genesis 12.<sup>1371</sup> Moreover, Bray has said that Genesis 15 relates the actual justification of Abraham. It seems to us that if we use Murray's definition of justification by faith, the most we can say of Romans 4:1-7 and of Romans 4 is that Paul is trying to show how the effects of justification by faith continue throughout the Christian's life; but Romans 4 cannot be cited as proof for justification by faith *per se*.

The reason why Paul cites Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:22 as a summary of 4:20-21 is *not to prove the value of faith as the instrument of definitive once-for-all justification*. The purpose is to

<sup>1369</sup> Tape, *Justification 4* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).  
<sup>1370</sup> "Justification".

reveal that faith *per se* is the reason why we are justified. In order to establish this, let us first exegete Psalm 106:30. <sup>1372</sup>

Psalm 106:30. In his commentary, Calvin does not care to think that Romans 4:3 is an *allusion* to Psalm 106:30. Neither does Murray. Genesis 15:6 says  $\text{אֱמָן לֹא עָשָׂה} (\epsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\eta \text{ αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην, LXX})$ . Psalm 106:30 has the same construction  $\text{אֱמָן לֹא עָשָׂה} (\epsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\eta \text{ αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην, (Ps.105:31) LXX})$ . Romans 4:3 says  $\epsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\eta \text{ αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην}$ . Robert G. Hamerton-Kelly writes, 'In Gal 3:6-14 Paul interprets the death of Christ against the background of a midrash on Numbers 25:1-13 in which Abraham and Phinehas are linked by means of Psalm 106 and Genesis 15:6.' Abraham's faith, that is perseverance under trial, was his zeal (1 Maccabees 2:52), continues Hamerton-Kelly. Paul reinterprets Abraham's life and makes Abraham's trust his zeal. <sup>1373</sup> As will be shown, Hamerton-Kelly is wrong to say that Paul reinterprets Abraham's life by making his trust his zeal. What is of interest, nevertheless, is the linking of Psalm 106 and Genesis 15. Phinehas' act was to maintain the covenant, and that is why he was declared as righteous. Don Garlington possibly tries to rearrange the wording, saying that God '*attributes* righteousness to Phinehas'. [emphasis ours] <sup>1374</sup> It is much simpler to take the term  $\text{עָשָׂה}$  as denoting "to impute". In short, Phinehas was justified (as in the Pauline sense) by God. The correspondence between Abraham and Phinehas is that both sought to adhere to the covenant. Abraham rested upon the covenant, and his faith was covenant obedience, for he was already in covenant with God (Gen.12:1-3). Thus,  $\epsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\sigma\theta\eta \text{ αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην}$  was quite an appropriate phrase to use of both men.

"Abram" and "Abraham". Dunn notes how Paul refers to "Abraham" in verse 3, and not, as we would expect, "Abram", since Genesis 15:6 says, "Abram" believed God. The Jews would have considered Abraham's life, and the promises that were central to it (Gen.12:2-3; 15:5; 17:4-5; 18:18; 22:17-18), as a whole. <sup>1375</sup> This particular view is identical to Calvin's. However, it merely underlines what we have said: faith *per se*, the life of faith, is Paul's interest, and not merely a "faith" that is the instrument to definitive justification. Of verse 3, Dunn says:

<sup>1371</sup> See Bill Dumbrell, "Justification and the New Covenant", *Churchman* 112:1 (1998), pp.18, 26.

<sup>1372</sup> Matthew Black says that in 1 Mac.2:52, Abraham's faith is considered as 'his constancy under trial, and it is this which is "imputed to him for righteousness". Some rabbis thought that Abraham's faith was a good work that was the ground of his righteousness. [*Romans*, The New Century Bible, second edition, (London, Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1989), p.68.]

<sup>1373</sup> *Sacred Violence* (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1992), pp.74-77.

<sup>1374</sup> "The Righteousness of God", *Reformation Today* 141 (1994), p.20.

<sup>1375</sup> *Romans 1-8*, WBC 38A, editors: D. A. Hubbard; G. W. Barker, (Dallas, Word Publishers, 1988), p.202.

Jewish exposition of the verse by reference to Abraham's faithfulness to God's command in Gen 22 would be assisted by Ps 106 [LXX 105]:31 where Phinehas' zeal (for law) is commended and the same phrase is used: *καὶ ελογισθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην*. For Phinehas was held forth as the ideal of zealous devotion to Israel's covenant with Yahweh, as one who preserved Israel's exclusiveness and separateness from other nations....<sup>1376</sup>

Another citation of Genesis 15:6 is found in James 2:23.

James 2:21, 23. It says, "Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?...And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" ". This text, to our mind, poses real problems for Calvin and Murray. If Genesis 15:6 is a retrospective reference to the efficacy of a past declaration of justification- so Calvin- then how can James use it to refer to the *action* of Abraham *after* that declaration? The whole of James is concerned with the need to express godliness by good living. Murray detects this, and thus argues that James 2:23 is demonstrative: the good works of believers demonstrates that they are righteous; good works vindicate them. He also would accept that the demonstrative usage comes close to the forensic. Yet, why does James use a text, Genesis 15:6, that teaches forensic justification- according to Murray- to prove the altogether different concept of demonstrative righteousness? James wants to show how a Christian is vindicated, justified as a Christian by godly living. If we consider that true faith and obedience are of essentially the same nature, that is, they are both acts of covenant faithfulness, then James can quite rightly use Genesis 15:6 to refer to a good *work* performed by Abraham within the context of God's declaration of him as righteous.

Coming back to Hamerton-Kelly, Paul's use of Genesis 15:6 to refer to faith as zealousness is quite appropriate, for faith and Abraham's act of offering up Isaac are both acts of zeal, of upholding the covenant. Thus, they can both be subsumed under the heading, "and it was credited to him as righteousness". This interpretation puts a question mark over Murray's thesis that the demonstrative and forensic usages are describing different works of God. Norman Shepherd, former faculty member of WTS in Philadelphia, also thought that James and Paul both

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<sup>1376</sup> *idem*.

taught forensic justification. Shepherd therefore concluded that justification is always both forensic and experiential.<sup>1377</sup>

*Faith and obedience.* What we have said, thus far, would make faith and obedience nigh synonymous. This is the picture that the rest of Romans paints. In 1:5, Paul refers to the "obedience of faith" (υπακοην πιστεως).<sup>1378</sup> Murray says that this phrase is appositional or expegetical, that is, "faith is obedience", and this is the meaning of the same phrase in 16:25.<sup>1379</sup> Yet, υπακοην πιστεως is not merely intellectual, for it is the commitment of the whole person to Christ and his gospel.<sup>1380</sup>

Garlington does not think that the phrase under examination is exhausted by a genitive of apposition. He also thinks that term indicates genitive of source, the subjective genitive, obedience which springs from faith. The Old Testament conveys "faith" is two-sided: trust and a commitment resultant from trust. Faith was embodied in works. Further, the Old Testament describes faith as a hearing of obedience. In Paul, every other usage of obedience language denotes behaviour, obedience to the risen Lord. Also, in Romans 5-8 Paul describes how the eschatological righteousness of God in Christ Jesus is to be expressed in the covenant-keeping of a people clothed in a garment of righteousness (cf., Is.61:10). Paul wants to encourage obedience of faith within the Roman church. Paul prays that the faith of the Romans would be strengthened (Rm.1:10f), and so a harvest would be reaped. These things indicate he could not have conceived of υπακοην πιστεως as a one-off event.<sup>1381</sup>

"Obedience" in Romans 16:19 is the Romans' faithfulness to God, argues Murray.<sup>1382</sup> However, Garlington believes it has a wider reference, denoting faith and obedience. In 16:17, Paul refers to "the teaching" which the Romans had learned. Even 'a cursory reading of 16:17-20 informs us

<sup>1377</sup> Shepherd's view is summarised by Andrew Sandlin, "Sola Fide: An Inviolable Tenet of Biblical Faith", *Calvinism Today* 3:1 (Jan., 1993), pp.20-22.

<sup>1378</sup> Traditionally, this phrase has had four interpretations. First, the objective genitive: "obedience to the faith" (that is, faith as the accepted body of doctrine); "obedience to faith" (that is, to the authority of faith); obedience to God's faithfulness attested in the gospel." Second, the subjective genitive: "the obedience which faith works"; "the obedience which faith requires". Third, the adjectival genitive: "believing obedience". Fourth, the genitive of apposition: "the obedience which consists in faith". [D. Garlington, "The Obedience of Faith in the Letter to the Romans Part 1: The Meaning of υπακοην πιστεως (Rom.1:5; 16:26)", *WTJ* 52 (Fall, 1990), p.205.]

<sup>1379</sup> *Romans* 1, p.13; *Romans* 2, p.243.

<sup>1380</sup> *Romans* 2, p.243.

<sup>1381</sup> "Obedience of Faith Part I", pp.206-212.

<sup>1382</sup> *Romans* 2, p.236.

that ethical matters are very much on the apostle's mind', says Garlington. The 'similarity of language between 1:8 and 16:19 is accounted for...because in [Paul's] thinking obedience is the inevitable and indispensable accompaniment of the faith which accepts Jesus Christ in the gospel.' <sup>1383</sup>

Garlington then gives consideration to Romans 1:5; 15:18. The latter refers to the "obedience of the nations". Firstly, 14:1-15:7 is a paraenetic section, teaching the quality of life incumbent upon the Romans. The section 15:8-13 grows out of the former section. Paul circumscribes God's purpose in Christ Jesus for the world. The Gentiles who were once disobedient may now experience joy, peace and hope, through faith in Christ. Consequently, both Jews and Gentiles in Rome are to strive to reach the goal of harmonious co-existence. In verses 14-16, Paul conveys how he is convinced of the goodness of the Romans. He also reminds them of their Christian duty. In verses 17-21 Paul reflects on the sanctified character of his work. The 'obedience of the Gentiles by word, deed, signs and wonders, and the power of the Holy Spirit is traced to its fountainhead in Paul's labor of an obedience consisting in faith and an obedience that springs from faith, only in reverse order.' <sup>1384</sup>

Certainly we agree with the thrust of Garlington's argument. But it is possible that Paul never meant to use an 'ambiguous phrase which expresses two ideas at the same time: the obedience which consists in faith and the obedience which is the product of faith.' <sup>1385</sup> Garlington effectively reasons that the obedience of wholehearted trust in God is the source for the obedience of wholehearted submission to his word. To our mind, this possibly makes too strong a division. Is there such a distinction as the obedience of trust and the obedience of outward action or event? Is it possible that the "doing" is itself trust, and believing is itself doing? To us, this is a more plausible background for texts such as Psalm 106 [LXX 105]:31; Romans 4; and James 2:21-23. There is nothing ambiguous about the Old Testament definition of faith. And yet, Garlington would have us believe that Paul has changed this effect, and introduced ambiguity by the use of *υπακοή πιστεως*.

Who are the "ungodly"? Abraham, David, and Phinehas were all "ungodly" men. Murray rejected Phinehas as an example of the justification of the ungodly, since he was already godly. This is to misunderstand the notion of justification in the Old Testament. It is in the context of

<sup>1383</sup> *ibid.*, pp.213-217.

<sup>1384</sup> *ibid.*, pp.217-220.

the Abrahamic blessing that Paul writes in Romans 4:5, "However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness." It was said that it was not the deeds or character of a man in and of themselves that were scrutinised by God, but as they relate to the covenant framework. All men are unrighteous. Or would Murray disagree with this? No man can justify himself before God. David committed sin; he proved himself to be ungodly. Moreover, he, Abraham and Phinehas, as believers, were all dependent upon the system of sacrifice to cover their own sins. Crucial to apprehend is the role of the blood of the covenant. The Abrahamic covenant was sealed with blood (Gen.15). Phinehas "sacrificed" the lives of the two culprits (Num.25:6-13), 'thus averting the wrath of God', says Garlington.<sup>1386</sup> Also, Phinehas' deed of righteousness was one that found approval within the wider context of a Levitical covenant sealed with the blood of sacrifice. David was cleansed by the blood of the covenant (Ps.51). It was not Abraham's faith or Phinehas' zeal or David's confession all considered as "quantitative" acts of virtue that Paul was concerned with, but with the Lord's verdict of "not guilty" being pronounced upon the acts of men unable to justify themselves because of their ungodliness. This is just to say that the acts themselves were "covenant-covered" or "blood-insured" acts, acts that were precipitated by faith in a covenant arrangement with sacrifice at its heart.

Paul says that God justifies the ungodly (ἀσεβῆ). Undoubtedly, ἀσεβεία (Rm.1:18; 11:26; 2 Tim.2:16; Tit.2:12; Jude 15), ἀσεβῶ (2 Pet.2:6; Jude 15) and ἀσεβῆς (1 Pet.4:18; 2 Pet.2:5, 7; Jude 15) can denote the man not in the covenant of grace, as opposed to the man in the covenant of grace. Romans 5:6 says that "Christ died for the ungodly (ἀσεβῆ)". However, "ungodly", in this instance, may be a reference to those who are represented by their covenant head (cf., Rm.5:12ff). This would create two classes of "ungodly" people: those outside of Christ the covenant head, and those in him. 1 Timothy 1:9 says, "We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly (ἀσεβῆ) and sinful, the unholy and irreligious". What are we to say to this statement, that the law has no relevance to the Christian, "the righteous"? Of course not, for "ungodly", in this case, denotes those who see their state of rebelliousness in the light of the law. The question is, if we are made righteous in justification, and are thereby delivered from ungodliness, is the law no longer of relevance to us? Murray's understanding of "ungodly" in Romans 4:5 would seem to necessitate an affirmative answer. Yet, the law

<sup>1385</sup> *ibid.*, pp.223-224.

<sup>1386</sup> "Righteousness of God", p.20.

continues to be relevant to us simply because we continue *as sinners* (cf., Rm.7). (In Sanctification, we will argue that the Christian is still a slave to sin.)

*Faith as the ground of justification.* Murray believes that justification is merely declaratory, the declaration that the sinner is righteous. But the notion of declaration, says Murray, incorporates within it the concept of God's creative power: he declares the sinner to be righteous, but also that the sinner is placed into the position of a righteous person because of his union with Christ.

Murray's reasoning is rather complex. He says that the imputed righteousness of Christ is the ground of God's declaration. Surely within this act of imputation the sinner is "constituted" righteous? Otherwise, what is the point of calling it "imputation"? Yet, Murray would have us to believe that the sinner is constituted righteous at the point of being declared righteous, which is, according to his theology, an event that takes place after imputation. Moreover, the logical terminus of Murray's reasoning is to say that faith is the ground of justification. This is because imputation necessarily involves an act of faith: we believe and unto us is imputed righteousness, and unto Christ is given our sin- so the theology goes. Now, if the declaration of God is creative- so Murray- creating a person righteous, then *that* creative act must bring about faith unto imputation. This is precisely why Murray was criticised by some fellow lecturers at Westminster, for they feared that he might be veering towards Roman Catholicism.<sup>1387</sup> We would say that they were far from being correct.

Murray is right to say that God's declaration is creative. We argued in *Union with Christ* that God's act of creating faith within us was his declaration, and, thus, our vindication. Luther argued that faith *per se* was the mediate ground for justification, since faith is the point at which we are united to Christ in real terms. Some Reformed divines have taken a different approach and said that the faith that is the instrument of justification is more properly its condition in a non-meritorious sense.<sup>1388</sup> Effectively, this makes faith a precondition of justification.<sup>1389</sup> Moreover, it means that, in logic terms, we can possess a soteric blessing, namely faith, and yet not be justified. The only way to avoid this pitfall- something, we believe, that Murray strenuously sought to do- is to say that faith and God's righteousness are synonymous. Faith does not merely

<sup>1387</sup> R. Strimple, Tape, *Justification 1* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

<sup>1388</sup> Robert Shaw, *The Reformed Faith: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith* (Inverness, Christian Focus Publications, 1974), p.131.

<sup>1389</sup> See Gunther Bornkamm, *Paul*, translator: D. M. G. Stalker, (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1988), p.142.

receive Christ, it *is* Christ expressing himself within us. What does Paul say of his being enabled to live the Christian life? He says, "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God"; "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain"; "I want to know Christ...the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death"; "For just as the suffering of Christ flow over into our lives" (Gal.2:20; Phil.1:21; 3:10; 2 Cor.1:5). The Christian does not merely identify with Christ, Christ expresses himself in the life of the Christian. In fact, all the "life" that a Christian has is Christ (his life) within him. Notice how in Galatians 2:20, Paul says that Christ lives in him, and therefore he lives; and then Paul says that he lives by *faith* in the *Son of God*. To us, Paul is saying that the faith that he enacts *is* the Son of God. In other words, faith does not so much reach up to heaven, but contains heaven within itself.

An argument Murray used was to say that our act of faith could never be the ground for God's declaration because all our acts are sinful. However, if our "righteous" acts are understood as Christ working in us, it is quite appropriate for God to accept them as righteous. David's confession is credited as righteousness because he has embraced Christ; David's faith is obedience to the covenant, it is the expression of the righteous one, Christ himself. Our faith is consecrated in union with Christ. More specifically, our faith is consecrated or purified through the blood of the covenant. Our confession of sin is the declaration that we are in union with Christ in his death and resurrection. Thus, God sees his Son, the covenant head, when we exercise faith; God sees his Son's person and work. We believe that this is the real union that Luther and Edwards referred to.

We have argued that the matrix for faith and God's creative power is the resurrection of Christ, and our resurrection in him. Ridderbos says that the resurrection of Christ is the 'content and cognitive ground of faith (Rom.4:24; 10:9; 1 Thess.4:14; Col.2:12).' <sup>1390</sup> Black says that in Romans 4:22-24 a clue for Paul's definition of faith is supplied; it is described as faith in the God who raised Jesus from the dead. Another analogous definition is found in 10:9ff, where faith is again described as belief that God has raised Christ from the dead. 'Faith (*pistis*) seems, therefore, in Pauline usage, primarily and fundamental...a *credo*, i.e. belief in the "mighty act" of God in the Resurrection of Christ.' Black adds:

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<sup>1390</sup> Paul, p.243.



...there is no discontinuity with the Old Testament. "Faith" in the Old Testament, where God is the object, is not just belief in God...but trust and loyalty to God (implying obedience as well as belief). Paul and the New Testament take over this fundamental meaning, but make Christ as well as God the supreme object of the believer's loyalty and trust.<sup>1391</sup>

One last point in conclusion. It is argued that the sinner cannot be declared righteous on the basis of a righteousness other than that belonging to Jesus Christ.<sup>1392</sup> We found the same problem in looking at the Reformed notion of substitution (see Union With Christ). It is the Reformed doctrine of substitution that underlies its concept of justification by faith. Therefore, Liberalism has been right to criticise Reformed theology for arguing a man can be accounted righteous on the basis of someone else's righteousness. Yet, once more, the solution is to apply to the doctrine of Christ's federal headship. We are righteous, for the righteousness that we *ungodly* people perform is Christ working in and through us, due to our covenant union with him. The "work" of the church is Christ at work within in us. Thus, the notion of forensic imputation *as taught by Murray* is not accurate, for we *are* righteous and are not merely considered as such.

### ROMANS 1:17

**"...the just shall live by faith"**

Having established a distinct role for faith, we will now proceed to look at further New Testament passages that teach justification by faith. We will continue by looking at Romans 1:17.

To our mind, the best point at which to start evaluating Murray's exegesis of Romans 1:17 is to scrutinise Paul's use of Habakkuk 2:4.

The textual differences between Romans 1:17 and Habakkuk 2:4 (LXX) cause a problem, in that Paul intends a different meaning, says Moo. Paul says that faith functions to grasp definitive justification, whilst in Habakkuk 2:4, the context is concerned with how those who are already righteous are to "live" in the midst of the vicissitudes of life and the apparent desertion of God. Further, says Moo, "by faith" must be taken with "righteous one", rather than with "will live" -

<sup>1391</sup> Romans, pp.30-31.

<sup>1392</sup> For example, W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *Romans*, ICC, fifth edition, editors: S. R. Driver, A. Plummer & C. A. Briggs, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1914), p.36.

*contra* Murray. In Romans, Paul 'consistently links faith with righteousness...and shows how "life" is the product of that righteousness'.<sup>1393</sup>

Moo's disagreement with Murray's construction is ultimately theological. Moo is seeking to create some ground of similarity between Paul and Habakkuk. For if Habakkuk is merely referring to the need for righteous men to live by faith, this would be incompatible with the Pauline doctrine of definitive justification by faith. Moo cannot deny that Habakkuk is speaking of believers. So Moo introduces the concept of justification by faith in a different manner: those who have been justified by faith, they will live.

We sympathise with Moo's interpretation. For in order to prove the justification of the ungodly- as Murray understands "ungodly"- Paul refers to the godly. W. Hendriksen agrees with Murray's rendition of Paul's usage of Habakkuk 2:4. In fact, Hendriksen concludes, 'Paul, accordingly, could not have chosen a better prophecy from which to quote than that of Habakkuk.'<sup>1394</sup> Should not Hendriksen have concluded the opposite? If Habakkuk 2:4 is concerned with the *believer's* stance of faith, what relevance does this have to the preceding clause in Romans 1:17, "from faith to faith", which supposedly teaches definitive justification of the "ungodly"? This is a repetition of the problem we found in our evaluation of Murray's understanding of Romans 4.

It has to be said that his reasoning that "faith" be taken with "will live" is probably more convincing than Moo's arguments, and probably for the reasons that he gave. However, there is a theological argument to be used, also. (It is one to which he would not assent.) Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4, precisely because it teaches justification by faith. We have already argued that the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith is concerned with covenant faithfulness, whether initially- Murray's view- or continuously. It is this widened meaning of justification that is in mind in Habakkuk. Habakkuk 2:4 is cited in Hebrews 10:38 to encourage the Hebrews to persevere in the faith. We said that "faith", to Paul, denoted covenant obedience. F. F. Bruce comments, 'Heb. *'emunah*, translated 'faith' in Habakkuk ii.4 (LXX *pistis*) means 'steadfastness' or 'fidelity'; in the Habakkuk passage this steadfastness or fidelity is based on a firm belief in God and His word, and it is this firm belief that Paul understands by the term.'<sup>1395</sup>

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<sup>1393</sup> Romans, pp.77-78.

<sup>1394</sup> Romans, pp.65-66.

<sup>1395</sup> Romans, p.80.

"...from faith to faith"

W. Hendriksen writes:

The expression "from faith to faith" is too short and simple to allow for complicated interpretations. So, for example, I cannot accept Barth's view that it means "from God's faithfulness to man's faith"; or Murray's that by means of this brief phrase the apostle would be saying "only by faith are we the beneficiaries of this righteousness and every believer is the beneficiary." The most simple interpretation of such a brief expression is usually the best. According to this rule the meaning is in all probability: "from start to finish (or: from first to last) by faith." In agreement with this interpretation are also the following: Cranfield, Erdman, Harrison, Hodge, and Ridderbos.<sup>1396</sup>

This "rule" of Hendriksen's, where does he pick it up from? His exegesis is arbitrary. In examination of Murray's position, we are perplexed as to how the parallel of "from faith to faith" is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all who believe" (Rm.3:22). There is no grammatical coincidence, whatever. To our mind, Murray has to say what he does in order to validate his overall thesis that Romans' main theme is definitive justification; to accept that the righteousness of God is revealed throughout the Christian life would be tantamount to undermining definitive justification. Moo believes that 'the only clear NT parallel to the construction' is οἷς μὲν ὁσμη ἐκ θανάτου εἰς θάνατον, οἷς δὲ ὁσμη ἐκ ζωῆς εἰς ζωὴν ("to those an odour of death leading to death, to others an odour of life leading to life") (2 Cor.2:16). Moo continues, 'the combination ["from faith to faith"] is rhetorical and is intended to emphasize that faith and "nothing but faith" can put us into right relationship with God.'<sup>1397</sup> Moo's interpretation may be incorrect. Yet, may it be that the clause in 2 Corinthians 2:16 implies continuous death and continuous life? The Pauline doctrine of justification would quite happily accommodate the meaning of continuous faith. Further, the clause "the just will live by faith", which, as Moo says, explicates the phrase in question, was shown to incorporate the notion of believers continuing in covenant obedience or faith.<sup>1398</sup>

There is another argument in favour of our interpretation. The clause δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ("For the righteousness of God is revealed") (Rm.1:17) has as its parallel and antithesis Ἀποκαλύπτεται γὰρ ὀργὴ θεοῦ ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ ("For the

<sup>1396</sup> Romans, p.63.  
<sup>1397</sup> Romans, p.76.

<sup>1398</sup> Cf., Barret, Romans, p.31.

wrath of God is revealed from heaven”) (Rm. 1:18).<sup>1399</sup> Murray thinks that the latter phrase refers to the continuing revelation of God’s anger against sin.<sup>1400</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the former phrase refers to God’s continual act of revealing his own righteousness in the gospel. Connected with the rest of the verse, the meaning would be, “The righteousness of God that is continuously revealed in the gospel in proportion to the righteous one exercising faith.”

### “The righteousness of God”

From the vantage point of the rest of Romans, we can say that the phrase “the righteousness of God” in 1:17 denotes, at least, God’s justifying righteousness. By deduction, if Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4, then his concept of justification by faith and the righteousness of God must be in accord with the book of Habakkuk, and by extension, with the whole of the Old Testament. It has just been demonstrated that Paul and Habakkuk taught the same doctrine of justification by faith. However, what about the phrase “the righteousness of God”, might Habakkuk unlock its meaning for Romans 1:17?

The term righteousness is not attributed to God, in Habakkuk. This does not mean, however, that the concept of the righteousness of God is absent in Habakkuk. The theological meaning of the phrase “righteousness of God” in the Old Testament was discovered to indicate God’s vindication of his own people and own name by deliverance from his and their enemies. This theology is certainly present in Habakkuk. Murray says of Romans 1:16-17 that the ideas of God’s righteousness, power, salvation, and revelation are found together in the Old Testament (Ps.98:1-2; Is.46:13; 51:5-8; 56:1; 62:1; cf., 54:17; 61:10-11). In Habakkuk, God’s power (Hab.3:4) and salvation (Hab.3:8, 13, 18) will be displayed in order to deliver his people. If the vindication of God’s people is the meaning of “righteousness of God” in Romans 1:17, then the phrase denotes God’s covenant faithfulness, and does not merely refer to a once-for-all imputed righteousness.

Romans 1:18 says, “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold down the truth in unrighteousness”

(Αποκαλύπτεται γαρ οργη θεου απ ουρανου επι ασεβιαν και αδικιαν ανθρωπων των την αληθειαν εν αδικια κατεχοντων).

To repeat Romans 1:17a,

δικαιοσυνη γαρ θεου εν αυτω αποκαλυπτεται εκ πιστεως εις πιστιν.

<sup>1399</sup> Murray, *Romans* 1, p.35.

Righteousness of God



Faith

Wrath of God



unrighteousness

Unrighteousness is the antithesis of faith. And, in one sense, the wrath of God is the antithesis of the righteousness of God. We suggested that in the Old Testament, the phrase "righteousness of God" might refer only to God's act of vindication and not of retribution. Though unrighteousness may be opposed to faith, God is not opposed to himself. Paul may be equating the act of faith with the believer's status of being a righteous one (if faith is the antithesis of unrighteousness). That is, the righteousness of the believer is faith.

The juxtaposition of God's righteousness and man's unrighteousness (*adikia*) is another possible lead. The unrighteousness of the uncovenanted is continuous. This may be a deliberate play by Paul to highlight the previous verse and its reference to the righteousness of God. He may be saying, "Righteousness, God's righteousness, will prevail; but unrighteousness, man's unrighteousness, will not prevail." Once more, this would give "righteousness of God" the connotation of continuity.

The phrase "righteousness of God", in Paul, is a term that denotes God's covenant faithfulness, his salvation or vindication of his name and of his people. To Douglas A. Campbell, the righteousness which God possesses- δικαιοσυνη θεου is seen as a genitive of possession- <sup>1401</sup> is expressed in Christ. 'Christ reveals God's righteousness and is basically salvation personified'. <sup>1402</sup> God's righteousness is revealed in the death and life of Christ. It is faith in this righteousness which changes the sinners relational and ethical conditions. Thus, justification by faith is a non-forensic blessing. <sup>1403</sup>

We would take Campbell a step further. Christ is the righteousness of God, its embodiment (2 Cor.5:21), and not merely the medium through which it comes. <sup>1404</sup> It was in his resurrection body and glory that Christ was vindicated. This transformation was in itself God's judicial

<sup>1400</sup> idem.

<sup>1401</sup> *The Rhetoric of Righteousness in Romans 3:21-26* (Sheffield, JSOT, 1992), pp.162-174.

<sup>1402</sup> ibid., p.162.

<sup>1403</sup> ibid., p.174.

<sup>1404</sup> See, Reconciliation.

pronouncement, or forensic declaration. In union with Christ's resurrection, our spiritual resurrection is our justification. And as with Christ, our relational and ethical transformation is also in itself a forensic declaration. His resurrection is expressed in the form of our spiritual resurrection, that is, in faith. Our act of faith *is* the righteousness of God. Dunn says of Romans 1:17, 'It is the fact that man's righteousness is always to be understood as faith which explains why man's righteousness is nothing other than God's righteousness'.<sup>1405</sup> What we have done is to make δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ a subjective genitive (God's own act of vindication, but as concretised in Christ) and we have also made δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ a gift, that which is not naturally of man. In this way, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is Christocentric.

### ROMANS 2:12-16

Murray's exegesis of Romans 2:12-16 is cogent. However, there are one or two issues that need raising. The "works of the law" are attributed, by him, to the Gentiles, howbeit in a derivative manner; he is bold enough to say that there is a sense in which the Gentiles are "under law". Moreover, he notes how the Gentiles embody or advertise the *Mosaic law*. All in all, his interpretation identifies the Gentiles, to some extent, with the Jews. It is a pity that he does not detect the underlying theology of Romans 2, namely the union of mankind with Adam (cf., Rom.5:12ff).<sup>1406</sup> This "identification" is crucial to Romans.

A contentious issue is how to interpret verse 13, "For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous." Murray's interpretation is under great strain. He teaches that this verse destroys the view that says a man can be justified by works. Hendriksen partly agrees with Murray. Hendriksen says that the contrast is not between justification by faith and justification by works, but between those who merely hear the gospel and those who hear and obey. The latter group includes believers, for they must prove their justification by their deeds.<sup>1407</sup> Hendriksen blurs what Paul is saying, for Paul patently states that it is by obedience that a person will be justified. It is probable that verse 13 is an allusion to Leviticus 18:5<sup>1408</sup> (a possibility that is not even considered by Murray). Leviticus 18:5 refers to how true believers *can* attain life through obedience. In the light of

<sup>1405</sup> Romans 1-8, p.42.

<sup>1406</sup> Cf., N. T. Wright, *The Messiah and the People of God* (Ph.d Thesis, submitted to Oxford University, 1980), pp.119-120.

<sup>1407</sup> Romans, pp.95-96.

<sup>1408</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, p.90.

Paul's negative use of Leviticus 18:5 in Romans 10:5, it is possible that Murray is right. In this case, we do not see what relevance it would be for Paul to say that not merely those who hear but those who obey will be justified, because whether by obedience or hearing or both, all men are condemned and will not attain to justification!

That there is a reference to believers in verse 13 is probably strengthened by verses 28-29. In 2:17-27, Paul is not condemning the works of the law by the Jews, but their sin, or lack of works of the law. He finishes the section by saying that a true Jew is a circumcised one (vv28-29). In Regeneration, we argued that the Johanine concept of the new birth was concerned with the lifestyle of the sinner, and that Paul taught that renewal or transformation came through faith. It is possible, therefore, that Paul's reference to spiritual circumcision in 2:28-29 is to the end of pinpointing the power for true obedience unto justification (cf., 8:4). In referring to the Gentiles as doing the works of the law, Paul is using sarcasm: "Even the 'repugnant' Gentiles (1:18-32) seem to be more in alignment with God's will than you Jews claim to be, because they actually do perform 'righteous' deeds." It is the one who obeys the law, who does the works of the law, that will receive God's blessing of salvation and vindication (2:5-10). Our view must also come under scrutiny. For might it not imply that the Gentiles are also justified by their works (vv14-15)? Not necessarily. In fact, such a teaching is incongruous compared with Paul's main contention that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ.

There is an inherent contradiction in Murray's interpretation. It entails that the declaration of righteousness in verse 13 is only an imaginary or potential matter. Yet, it seems to us that Paul is denoting the pronouncement of judgement that *will* take place on judgement day. His whole argument in Romans 2 is concerned not with imaginary judgements but actual pronouncements. There is also the theology of James that says a man will be justified by his works (Jm.2:24). H. Ridderbos summarises our position:

God will render to every man according to his works, for there is no respect of persons with God (Rom.2:6ff.). This whole passage of Romans 2:1-16 is governed to such an extent by this motif that some have taken it only in a "dialectical" sense; he is supposed to have wished here in the way of an untenable hypothesis to take the idea of righteousness from works *ad absurdum* and therefore to place himself here on the "pre-evangelical standpoint." But, however true it may be in itself that in Romans 2 and 3:1-10 Paul is elucidating over against Judaism the impossibility of justification by faith as the only way of salvation, this does not mean that on this latter, "evangelical", standpoint the judgement to come has been abrogated for believers with the death and

resurrection of Christ, nor neither that in this judgement the criterion would lie only in the presence of faith and not also of works. For, in the first place, Paul speaks of the latter not only in such passages in Romans 2 and 3, which impress on man who seeks his salvation in the law the unconditional requirement of God, but no less in his paraensis to the church in which he exhorts believers to the life that is from the Spirit and to the exhibition of the fruit of the Spirit (cf. Gal.6:7ff.); he points them there to the judgement seat of Christ, before which they must all appear (2 Cor.5:10; cf. Rom.14:10, 11; Eph.6:8; Col.3:22-4:1), and he places the emphasis on the inadequacy of human judgement or of man's own conscience (1 Cor.4:1-5).<sup>1409</sup>

Garlington focuses our minds upon the fact that the justification wrought in our experience is that decision which is being projected back from the day of judgement. More particularly, it is a judgement that describes the reversal of Adam's curse (Rom.1-2), through obedience to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam.<sup>1410</sup>

### ROMANS 3:5

Moo does not accept Murray's interpretation of 3:5. Moo interprets 3:4b as referring to God's faithfulness to his own person and word, particularly as shown in judgement of sin. Neither does Moo consider God's faithfulness (v3) to be covenant faithfulness.<sup>1411</sup>

Apart from the last statement- see previous discussion- we agree with Moo. Is it possible, however, that the judgement of sinners spoken of in verse 4, and the consequent vindication of God's judgement, infer that God will vindicate his own name and his people? Concerning judgement in chapter 2, Paul has referred to both the condemnation of the ungodly (2:1-6, 8-9, 12) and the vindication of the godly (2:6-7, 10). In referring to God's displeasure with the Jewish Christians (2:17-27), Paul balances this with pointing out what a true Jew is (2:28-29). N. T. Wright concludes that although the "righteousness of God" is not mentioned in Romans 2, it nevertheless is Paul's main theme.<sup>1412</sup> In condemning the Jews (3:3-8), Paul says in 3:3 that "some" Jews did have faith. Thus, throughout chapters 2-3, Paul balances out the false with the true, sinfulness with faithfulness. In verse 3:3b the lack of faith of some Jews is said not to nullify God's faithfulness. There is reason to think that God's faithfulness is his vindication of his people, and not his judgement upon the ungodly.

<sup>1409</sup> Paul, pp.178-179.

<sup>1410</sup> "Obedience of Faith Part II", pp.1-8.

<sup>1411</sup> Romans, pp.189-190.

<sup>1412</sup> Messiah and the People of, p.66.



It is possible that the same balancing act is being performed by Paul in verse 5: our unrighteousness magnifies the extent of God's salvation or covenant faithfulness. In our exegesis of Romans 5:12-21 (see Union with Christ), we saw how Paul continuously balanced "the sin" with the righteousness of justification. In Romans 1, the themes of righteousness, unrighteousness, faith and wrath are brought together by Paul. The exact same themes are present in 3:3, 5.

Righteousness of God  $\longrightarrow$  man's unrighteousness

God's wrath  $\longrightarrow$  God's injustice?

God's faithfulness  $\longrightarrow$  man's lack of faith.

In 3:5, "the righteousness of God" and man's "unrighteousness" are clearly contrasted. This corroborates our point made of Romans 1:17-18, namely that faith is the antithesis of righteousness, because in 3:5, unrighteousness is now contrasted to God's righteousness. Once more, the wrath of God is directed against man's unrighteousness. According to verses 3-4, man's lack of faith is compared to God's faithfulness, which suggests that God's faithfulness and righteousness are synonymous,<sup>1413</sup> since his righteousness was said to be revealed "from faith to faith", in 1:17. God's wrath is distinguished from his righteousness, indicating that his righteousness bears the meaning of vindication and not retribution. Robert Haldane says, 'The objection is this: if, then it be so that the righteousness of God,- the righteousness which is revealed in the Gospel, ch. i. 17, by the imputation of which men are justified,- if that righteousness which God has provided is more illustriously manifested by our sin, showing how suitable and efficacious it is to us as sinners'.<sup>1414</sup>

#### ROMANS 3:19-20

Not all people are "in the law", says Moo in criticism of Murray. For 'whatever access to God's law Gentiles may have, it does not come in this "written," "inscripturated" form.' Yet, Moo does

<sup>1413</sup> Cf., Moo, *Romans*, p.189.

<sup>1414</sup> *The Epistle to the Romans* (London, BOTT, 1958), p.112.

say that "every mouth" refers to 'all humanity', because of "every mouth" having as its parallel "the whole world".<sup>1415</sup>

Moo seems to misunderstand Murray slightly. Murray *is* saying that the second usage of "law" denotes the Old Testament, albeit in a "flexible" manner: it is the judgement *that the Old Testament teaches* that is poured out on the Gentiles also. With Moo, we must criticise Murray. Those who are "in the law" are those who are "in the Old Testament scriptures", under its authority and dominion. However, we agree with Murray that those "in the law" include the Gentiles. Moo says that Paul is working from the "greater to the lesser": "if the Jews are under God's judgement, so also are the Gentiles."<sup>1416</sup> We find Moo's position unconvincing. Paul begins the section 3:9-20 with a reference to both Jews and Gentiles being condemned (v9). He immediately goes on to prove this *by reference to the Old Testament scriptures* (vv10-18). He then concludes that all the world, every mouth, is in the law and condemned by it, and that no one will be justified by observing it, therefore.

The big question we have to answer is, how were the Gentiles under the Old Testament's authority? We argued in Faith, etc., that all the world is under the Mosaic economy, because all men, Jews and Gentiles, are in covenant with Adam and have the requirements of the law written on their hearts. It is the requirements of the *law* that are written on the hearts. Thus, just as Paul subsumes the human race in Adam (5:12ff), so he considers them as "in the law". The "law" *does*, in this instance, have that specialist meaning of being the special property of the Jews (3:2). However, in theological terms, Israel is the recapitulation of Adam<sup>1417</sup> and is therefore representative of mankind; just as the world was "in Adam" in his sin, so Israel represented the human race, creation.

In 3:9, it is said that all men are "under sin" (ὕφ ἁμαρτιαν). The section ends by saying that through the law comes sin (v19). This suggests that verses 9 and 19 serve as an inclusio, the subject matter being the sin of mankind.

Moo once again disagrees with Murray. "Law" on these occasions, he thinks, denotes the Mosaic law, the torah. This is because "law" has this meaning in 3:19-20, 21, 27-28; 4:13-25; 5:13-14,

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<sup>1415</sup> Romans, pp.205-206.

<sup>1416</sup> Romans, p.206.

<sup>1417</sup> See N. T. Wright, *The New Testament People of God* 1 (London, SPCK, 1993), p.262.

20, and it also has this meaning in 7:1-6.<sup>1418</sup> Moo is correct. However, he then says that it is only the Jews who are “under the law”. Nevertheless, this phrase implicates the Gentiles, because the situation of the Jews under the Mosaic law, as we will see in 7:4, is used by Paul as representative of the situation and need of all people.’<sup>1419</sup> Is this not to miss the point? Paul says to his audience “you are no longer under the law”. Who is his audience? It surely includes Gentiles. More pointedly, Moo gives us only one indicator that that Paul has changed from speaking to Jews and Gentiles to speaking to Jews only, and that indicator is the very verse in question. We would have expected more evidence than it.<sup>1420</sup>

This brings us full circle, to definitive and progressive justification. Possibly the comment *והקמתי את בריתי* is a reference to God magnifying his promises, with every new perspective added to the promises basically equating to the continuation of the construction of the covenant. Psalm 25:14 refers to God revealing his covenant to his confidants, just as Abraham was a confidant of God (Gn.18:17). In Psalm 25, the revealing of this covenant is a re-affirmation of it:<sup>1421</sup> a “re-pledging” of the covenant, to bring prosperity (Ps.25:13), and to bring Abraham’s seed into the land (Ps.25:13; cf., Gn.15:7).<sup>1422</sup> When we examine Numbers 25:10-13 (cf., Ps.106:30), we see that Phinehas was brought into a priestly covenant with God. We believe that he does enter into a new covenant, but only inasmuch as he enters into a new degree of intimacy within the covenant that God had made with the Levites in general, when they were first made a priestly people- he is re-covenanted, re-selected, re-constituted and vindicated. As we will shortly, discover, Romans 4 is an allusion to Numbers 25:1-13 and Psalm 106:30. Further, Romans 4 brings our attention to the believing Abraham, also. Phinehas, Abraham and David are all referred to, or implied, in Romans 4. Each was already a believer. David’s confession of sin as a believer (Ps.51; Rm.4), was the entering into, or re-affirmation of the covenant made with him as Davidic king.

<sup>1418</sup> Romans, pp.387-388.

<sup>1419</sup> *ibid.*, p.388.

<sup>1420</sup> The phrase “under law” in 1 Corinthians 9:20, does refer to those who belong to the Mosaic economy- the Jews. However, we have already argued for a wider, theological union of Jews and Gentiles, due to their union with Adam. Galatians 3:25; 4:5, 26, refer to some being under the law. In the last chapter, we saw how these verses referred to Jews and Gentiles. This is reinforced by Paul’s exhortation in Galatians 5:18, where he says that if his readers were led by the Spirit, then they were no longer under the law. It would take some work to prove that Paul is not referring to Gentiles also. Moreover, we must consider similar language in Romans 8:15, where it says that those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. And without a doubt, Paul is speaking of Jews and Gentiles. If Paul is addressing Gentiles, why does he say to them that they are no longer under the law? To extend Moo’s logic, this would be pointless, because being “under the law” did not impinge upon them in the first place.

<sup>1421</sup> Cf., R. G. Bratcher & W. D. Reayburn, *A Handbook on Psalms*, USB Handbook Series, (New York, United Bible Societies, 1993), p.251.

### "Apart from law"

"Apart from law" (v21) may include the notion of justification being outside of the works of the law, says Moo. However, this is not novel, because justification has always been by faith, apart from the law, Moo continues in criticism of Murray. "But now" reiterates the salvation-history movement: the new era of faith and salvation has superseded the Mosaic dispensation and its identity markers such as circumcision, the Sabbath and food laws. These markers have been made obsolete by the new covenant.<sup>1423</sup>

Moo's assessment of Murray is quite correct. The use of "righteousness of God" in 1:17; 3:5, 20, is in reference to the Mosaic dispensation or covenant. However, there are areas of ambiguity in Moo's account. If Paul means by "apart from law" the Mosaic covenant, why does Moo say that Paul is signifying that righteousness is found outside of the identity markers such as circumcision, the Sabbath and food laws? It is the Mosaic covenant as a corpus that is being implicated, and not merely the so called "Jewish" elements of it. Does not Paul refer to the words of God as being the primary Jewish blessing (3:1)? Moreover, peculiar to Jewishness was the adoption as sons, the divine glory, the covenants, the temple worship and the patriarchs (9:4-5). To our mind, Paul is saying that the whole "deal", the whole Mosaic covenant, is superseded and abrogated. Therefore, we cannot accept Murray's interpretation that all Paul is meaning by "apart from law" is the works of the law. It is the law considered negatively, that is, in relation to the flesh, that Paul is concerned with. The old dispensation is being equated to the dispensation of Adam and the flesh (see Faith, etc.). In short, the old covenant is being rejected for the new.

### ROMANS 3:21-31

Διὰ πιστεως Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ

There are no theological objections to saying that διὰ πιστεως Ἰησοῦ (Gal.2:16; 3:22; Phil.3:9) means the faithfulness of Jesus, says Murray. The exhaustive and scholarly argument mustered by him to prove that the phrase does not mean the faithfulness of Christ is irrefutable. Murray is also correct to say that the phrase does not denote God's faithfulness *and* our faith.

<sup>1422</sup> Cf., W. A. VanGemeren, *Psalms*, EBC 5, general editor: F. E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1991), p.231.

<sup>1423</sup> Romans, pp.222-223. One can see the obvious influence of Saunders and Dunn at this point.

The case is not closed, however. Herbert and Torrance would have been better to have said that the phrase denoted Christ's faith and not his faithfulness. This would allow πιστος to retain its meaning as "faithfulness". Faith is a *form* of faithfulness, so that they are *nigh* synonymous.

But probably the most potent argument against Murray's construction is the phrase ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ in Romans 3:26. To Murray, it denoted faith in Christ. Yet, as Murray noted, the identical structure is used in Romans 4:16, where Abraham's life of faith as the pattern of justification is cited. It is possible that Murray feared the conclusion that if Christ's life of faith was the *pattern* for our justification, then justification by faith *per se* would not merely be a definitive, once-for-all matter, but would be dependent upon the *life of faith* of the believer.

Of course, to say Christ's life was the pattern of our justification is not to reject the view that justification is through faith in Christ the mediator. The phrases διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ and ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ merely remove the emphasis from upon whom we believe in (Christ) to the nature of our faith (it is the same as Abraham's and Christ's). This interpretation fits nicely, in our opinion, with the conclusion we reached in Union with Christ: that just as Adam sinned, so we actually sin, and just as Christ was obedient, we are justified by our act of faith.

#### "Righteousness of God": the rectoral justice of God?

Murray says of God by-passing the sins of the old era (Acts 14:16; 17:30), the era before the coming of the gospel, that his forbearance was eventually complemented by his justice, in that Christ was punished for sin.

The content of 3:21-31 is what? It is the salvation of believers. The whole of mankind, Jews and Gentiles, have sinned against God (v23). Those Jews or Gentiles who believe, after the pattern of Christ, are justified in him (v22). Justification is by God's grace, and its specific means is the mercy seat that Christ was and by which he redeemed us (3:24-25a). Up until this point, the context is concerned with the sacrifice of Christ, faith, and justification, and their impact upon all kinds of believers. Yet, in 3:25b-26b, Murray wants us to accept that what Paul is now saying is that the righteousness of God must be understood in its influence upon all those who have sinned before his coming, and that, then, in verses 26c-31 Paul reverts to explicating justification by faith for the ungodly. The thrust of Acts 14:16; 17:30 is not being denied: God did "overlook" the sins of the Gentiles. For Murray's theory to work, these texts would have to include the Jews also, because it is "all" who have sinned. This is possibly the connotation of Acts 14:16. At last,

Murray's reading incurs an insuperable difficulty. In Acts 14:16; 17:30 Paul does not fear the miscalculations of the Gentiles. The doctrine of God's forbearance is related to show to them the comparative condition they found themselves in as they were confronted with the gospel- "Now there is no excuse!" What relevance, at all, has the doctrine of God's by-passing of the sin of the *non-elect* for the doctrine of God's justice in punishing the sin of the *elect* in Christ Jesus? Nowhere else in scripture is this position expounded.

The expression *την παρισαν των προγεγονοτων* is possibly an allusion to the Passover. In fact, the exact meaning of the term *την παρισαν* is "to pass over".<sup>1424</sup> Moo<sup>1425</sup> and Morris<sup>1426</sup> merely see a Day of Atonement background to Romans 3:24-25. T. Holland prefers a Passover background, because Romans 3:25 talks of "passing over" and "public display" (*endeixis*)-<sup>1427</sup> the Day of Atonement sacrifice was not publicly displayed.<sup>1428</sup> Holland explains that in the eschatological temple of Ezekiel, *sacrifices* were made during the Passover and not the Day of Atonement (Eze.45:25). Day of Atonement sacrifices were adapted to the Passover.<sup>1429</sup> We have already shown how the imagery of the mercy seat is harmonious with Romans 3:24-25 (cf., Heb.9:5) (see, Propitiation, etc.). It seems, therefore, that there is a blend of both Day of Atonement and Passover imageries, something hinted at by Wright,<sup>1430</sup> but, as Holland says, with the Passover being the main image.

During the Passover, the sins of God's people were remitted because of the blood of the sacrifice. The manifestation of God's righteousness in the creating of the new aeon is founded upon his justice in punishing the sins of his people, the sins of the old aeon. Dunn comments, '[God] demonstrates his righteousness by providing a sacrifice which fulfils the terms laid down in his covenant with Israel....That the shameful death of crucifixion could be thus presented as an

<sup>1424</sup> Holland, *New Exodus Motif*, p.106.

<sup>1425</sup> *Romans*, p.232.

<sup>1426</sup> *Atonement*, p.168.

<sup>1427</sup> Moo notes that of Philo's 11 uses of *endeixis*, '10 refer to a public demonstration or indication.' [*Romans*, p.237.]

<sup>1428</sup> *New Exodus Motif*, pp.103-104.

<sup>1429</sup> *ibid.*, pp.96-102, 177-180.

<sup>1430</sup> The sacrificial death of Christ is interpreted by all Reformed theologians to have its type in the sacrifices of the wilderness. We might say that these sacrifices are within the exodus-wilderness theme, and that for Christ's death to be their anti-type is no more than corroboration of the proposition that his death is a new exodus. N. T. Wright understands the sacrifices of Leviticus 1-7- burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings- as between God and the individual, and which correspond and point towards the corporate sacrifices of the festivals, especially the Passover. The Passover itself was a 'recitation of the exodus story'. [*Victory of God*, pp.408-410.]

expression of God's saving grace'.<sup>1431</sup> Our position and Dunn's are very similar; he interprets "righteousness" in verse 26 in the same fashion.<sup>1432</sup>

What we are arguing, though not Dunn, is that *believers of this present age belonged to the old age*. We said that all believers, Jews and Gentiles, are considered as part of the old economy; it's as if they truly were Israelites in the old covenant days (see, Faith, etc.). We said that this was theologically feasible because of the union of all men in Adam (the Adamic covenant being recapitulated in its essence in the Mosaic covenant).<sup>1433</sup>

Paul is certainly distinguishing between the old aeon and the new in 3:25-26.<sup>1434</sup> But it would seem that in context, Paul is stating that those whom belonged to the old aeon, and who now belong to the new aeon are believers. The phrase *ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ* (v26) is probably a repetition of the Pauline emphasis upon the introduction of the new aeon in Christ Jesus (3:21; 6:22; 7:6; 1 Cor.15:20; Eph.2:13; Col.1:22; cf., Rm.5:9, 11; 8:1; 16:26). *Νῦν καιρὸς* is used in 8:18 to refer to the present age of suffering, and in 11:5 to denote the present hardening of the Jews. Moo concludes, 'A reference back to "but now" at the beginning of the paragraph is obvious, as Paul focuses again on the time after Christ's coming as the climactic, eschatological age of salvation history.'<sup>1435</sup> The new age or aeon is undoubtedly the age of Christ and his people, the age of victory and faith. Thus, if the righteousness of God is revealed in the present age, it is a righteousness that participates in the realm and age of victory. In other words, it is the justifying righteousness of God.

There is more reasoning for accepting that the phrase "righteousness of God" denotes only the saving righteousness of God in 3:21-31. In 1:17-18; 2:3ff, we saw that the ideas of righteousness, wrath, revelation and faith are bound together in order to demonstrate God's salvation. The righteousness of God has been "made known" (v21). This phrase is synonymous with *ἀποκαλύπτω* (1:17, 18), believes Dunn.<sup>1436</sup> God "publicly displayed" his righteousness (v26). God's righteousness is mentioned four times (vv21, 22, 25, 26). There are also the obvious

<sup>1431</sup> Romans 1-8, p.173.

<sup>1432</sup> *ibid.*, pp.174-175.

<sup>1433</sup> Cf., Wright, *New Testament People* 1, pp.504-505.

<sup>1434</sup> Romans, p.159.

<sup>1435</sup> Romans, p.241. He also refers us to the phrase *ο νῦν αἰὼν* (1 Tim.6:17; 2 Tim.4:10; Tit.2:12; 2 Cor.6:2) [Romans, p.241.]

<sup>1436</sup> Romans 1-8, p.165.

references to faith, believing and justification. And finally, Christ is God's mercy seat, his Passover sacrifice (vv24-25), the subject of his wrath.

As a summary, Haldane represents our view of 3:25, ' "Righteousness" in [1:17; 3:21-22] is the same as the one before us, and in the following verse....Is it then supposed that, in repeating the same expression four times in the same breath, and with a view to establish the same truth, the Apostle used it in various senses...?' <sup>1437</sup>

### The law

In verse 27, it is said that boasting is excluded not because of the law of works, but "through the law of faith" (διὰ νομοῦ πιστεως). Murray thinks that the latter phrase cannot refer to the Mosaic law, because throughout Romans Paul contrasts the "works of the law" and the "law" to faith itself (cf., esp., 3:19-21, 28). Therefore, by "law of faith", Paul means the ' "system", "principle", "method", "order", or "rule" ' of faith. <sup>1438</sup> This is Moo's view as well. <sup>1439</sup>

Murray's stance that "law" denotes principle has already been argued against. It is preferable, therefore, to take "law" in the sense we have seen it used uniformly thus far in Paul, as the Mosaic dispensation, the old covenant. Dunn protests, 'And equally clearly v31 is an expansion of νομος πιστεως and in v31 νομος as Torah is not to be denied'. <sup>1440</sup>

## ROMANS 9:31-33

### "Law of righteousness"

The Jews did fail to attain to a "law of righteousness". McComiskey thinks that "law" means "principle" in 7:21, 23; 8:2 but not here in 9:31. He sympathises with Murray, for in 10:5 (cf., Gal.3:12) there is 'an apparent dichotomy between law and faith'. However, Paul uses "law" in 9:31a to refer to the Mosaic law. Therefore, Murray's understanding of "law" in 31b is unnatural, especially as Paul does not make any qualification for a shift. McComiskey concludes, 'Obedience alone, whether to the requirement of circumcision or the complex Mosaic legislation,

<sup>1437</sup> Romans, p.151. Cf., R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Minnesota, Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), pp.259-260.

<sup>1438</sup> Romans 1, pp.122-123.

<sup>1439</sup> Romans, p.248.

<sup>1440</sup> Romans 1-8, p.186.



could not grant the inheritance. It came by faith, but faith which manifested itself in obedience.'

<sup>1441</sup>

The view represented by McComiskey is not wholly accepted by Moo. <sup>1442</sup> He says that the language of "pursuing righteousness" is inharmonious with Israel's approach to the Old Testament revelation. <sup>1443</sup> Dunn says that Murray is wrong for saying "law" means "principle". And in contradistinction to Moo, Dunn argues that the phrase διωκων νομον δικαιοσυνης ("pursuing the law of righteousness") would have been familiar to Jews who saw their covenant obligations as obeying, pursuing the commands of God (cf., Phil.3:6). It was not the pursuit of righteousness of the law that was wrong but the manner of pursuit: the Jews did not pursue it by faith. <sup>1444</sup>

Moo continues his objections. He says that 'Paul would never view *nomos* as a witness to righteousness by faith.' Moo says that it is significant in 3:21 that Paul argues that the righteousness of God was witnessed to by the law *and prophets*. <sup>1445</sup> It is possible that Moo is right. However, what meaning does the term law take in "law and prophets"? Does it refer to the Mosaic law? And could "law and prophets" be a summary of the whole Mosaic or old covenant, with special reference to its revelation? It would seem impossible, therefore, to escape the conclusion that "law" in "law and prophets" does refer to Mosaic law. At the end of the day, Moo has to explain away how *this* law witnesses of God's righteousness. It is our contention that it witnessed of the righteousness of God in Christ by being a testimony to God's deliverance or faithfulness to his people in the Old Testament- more will be said on this in a moment. Moo's last argument is that when Paul associates *nomos* with *dikaiozyne*, he always points them in different directions. <sup>1446</sup> We will pick on this argument presently.

### Verses 32-33

Isaiah 8:14. Murray's exegesis of verses 32-33 is very helpful. Nevertheless, the passages in Isaiah need further examination. Exegetes correctly identify that Paul cites them, but the implications of these texts are, for us, never really developed- at least in the commentaries we have read. In Isaiah 8:12-22, the Israelites are under judgement. According to Isaiah, the

<sup>1441</sup> *The Covenants of Promise* (Nottingham, IVP, 1985), p.117, 119.

<sup>1442</sup> Moo also rejects Murray's idea that "law" means "principle". [*Romans*, p.622.]

<sup>1443</sup> *Romans*, p.623.

<sup>1444</sup> *Romans* 1-8, pp.581-582. However, for our critique of Dunn, see our previous discussion.

<sup>1445</sup> *Romans*, p.623.

Israelites did not see that the nation was completely putrid (cf., Is. 1; 6); they did not see their own ungodliness. Throughout Isaiah, God complains that his people, who have his law, do not listen to it, or to him, or to his prophets. The people of God are in covenant with him. But they are under covenant on their own terms- or so they think. Isaiah 28:16 addresses essentially the same matter as 8:14. The nation fears conspiracies, according to 8:12. Instead of consulting the law of God, the nation consults mediums (vv16-20). The faithful ones will look to the LORD in the day of judgement, and they will seal his law. It was by obeying the law and using it as a measure of God's will, that the Israelites were to display their trust in God in their time of trial. Moreover, accompanying obedience to the law was patient waiting upon the Lord's deliverance (vv16-22). Obedience to the law and the Lord's future deliverance were aspects of God's deliverance or salvation.

To our mind, Isaiah 8:14 is a classic text to use to reflect upon the justification of the old covenant saints. Obedience to the law in Isaiah 8:14 is itself part and parcel of vindication. It was the saint, the one who saw his sin, that submitted himself to God. This obedience or submission is reflected in two things: obedience to the law and patient waiting on God's final deliverance. This is just to say that the starting point for justification for the ungodly, *the saints*, was not obedience to the law *per se*, but dependence upon God. This dependence *or obedience* was itself part of God's vindication or justification.

It is in this way that Old Testament texts such as Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 27:26 must be understood. That is, condemned in the Old Testament is the position that law, seen as mere law, is "raw material" for justification, to which just needs to be added obedience. For this view eviscerates obedience of dependence, that is, faith, and thereby eradicates the primacy of faith. In other words, in the old covenant, law facilitated God's righteousness, it was a conductor of it, but in the hands of rebellious ones, it became death.

By citing Isaiah 8:14; 28:16, Paul is appealing to the wider context of Isaiah. The nature of faith explicated in the context of the verses under examination is that of *continual* reliance upon the law of God and *waiting* for his act of deliverance and vindication. This is exactly the same theology Paul seeks to create by his usage of Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:17. And as with Habakkuk 2:4, we do believe that Paul is citing the passages in Isaiah precisely because he does believe that they refer to justification by faith.

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<sup>1446</sup> idem.

Murray says that obedience to the Mosaic law is one of merit only, it could never bring life. With Gaffin, he would say that the obedience *to the law* by the old covenant saint was purified by adherence to the sacrificial system.<sup>1447</sup> Gaffin has to decide whether obedience to the sacrificial system was obedience to *nomos* or not. To argue that it is not *nomos* is indefensible, in our opinion. For, as Gaffin himself says, “works of law” is a reference by Paul not merely to things such as circumcision, the Sabbath and the food laws, but to the whole Mosaic dispensation.<sup>1448</sup> *Murray’s and Gaffin’s basic position is right: mere obedience to the law does not bring justification.* Nevertheless, the Old Testament *per se* was a gracious era, and it was so because justification came by faith-obedience.

“Law of righteousness”. In Romans 9:31, Paul refers to the “law of righteousness”. In the light of Isaiah 8:12-22, this phrase probably refers to the testimony of God, the Old Testament scriptures. The Jews should have submitted to God’s law, which was the symbol of his deliverance and the deliverance itself- but only for dependent ones. This is probably what Paul means by “law of righteousness”. It does not so much mean obedience to the law that is holy and good- so McComiskey- but that by submitting to the holy and good law, the believer knows he will be delivered and that God will vindicate him. This view harmonises with our own understanding of “the righteousness of God” in Romans, for we have argued that the phrase indicates God’s *deliverance* in Christ, his faithfulness to his covenant.

Philip Eveson rightly, in our estimate, criticises Dunn and Sanders for their view of covenant nomism. Eveson shows how legalism was more widespread in Jesus’ and Paul’s days that Sanders would care to think.<sup>1449</sup> A concession could be made to Dunn and Sanders, however. We wonder if “legalism” is the proper term to use, because Isaiah’s, Paul’s and Jesus’ complaint was that Israel did not truly fulfil the law. If “legalism” is to be used, then we would advise that it is used to describe the Jews’ adherence to a law that was completely reinterpreted by the addition of innumerable laws extraneous to true law. The Jews did put special reference upon their so called badges, of this there is no doubt. Yet, even these marks were reinterpreted by the Jews. For example, concerning the Sabbath, the Jews weighed it down with so many taboos that

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<sup>1447</sup> *Obedience of Faith*, II.  
<sup>1448</sup> *idem*.  
<sup>1449</sup> *The Great Exchange* (Bromley: Kent, Day One Publications, 1996), pp.126-130. See also, C. E. B.

Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to Paul”, *JSNT* 43 (1991), pp.89-101; Moises Silva, “The Law and Christianity: Dunn’s New Synthesis”, *WTJ* 53 (1991), pp.339-353.

they eviscerated it of its purpose- mercy (cf., Mk.2:23-3:6). In the Old Testament, the law was used by some as a mere commodity to secure life; it was being reinterpreted, in other words. The invariable accompaniment was that the law was eventually perverted to suit the end of self-fulfilment and self-gratification.

Also, Paul's condemnation of Jewish "legalism" must be seen within the context of *disobedience* to the law. In 1:18-32, the Gentiles who have the law of God written on their hearts (2:14) abuse the knowledge of God given to them in creation, and deliberately choose to reinterpret this knowledge by creating their own gods. In doing so, they are dismissing true knowledge for the "wisdom" of their own hearts (1:21). It is possible that the Gentiles of Romans 1:18-32 do not merely provide a parallel with the Jews, but that 1:18-32 is also an allusion to Judaism and its history of paganism.<sup>1450</sup> The Israelites who have the knowledge of God in the *torah* choose to manipulate it for their own perverted ends, which, throughout their history, have been inextricably bound with paganism. Paul is not worried about the Jews he is writing to falling into paganism, but he is concerned that they are distorting the law and the gospel, and have effectively made a new religion and a new god (cf., Gal.1:7-10).

### ROMANS 10:3-8

#### *Telos: termination or fulfilment?*

*Criticism of Murray.* In verse 4, it says that Christ is the "end" (*telos*) of the law. Cranfield says that Murray's position that *telos* denotes termination is incorrect. Cranfield adds, 'had Paul meant this, he would surely at least have placed εἰς δικαιοσύνην next to νόμου'.<sup>1451</sup> Black, following Cranfield's logic, also rejects Murray's interpretation. He concludes, 'Christ as the perfection/ consummation of law...must accordingly bring an end to the "old law" it supersedes, completes and perfects or perfectly fulfils.'<sup>1452</sup>

*Evaluation.* We are not wholly against the idea that *telos* involves the notion of termination as described by Murray. He said that in Romans 10:5 Paul gives his citation of Leviticus 18:5 a different setting to that of its original place. Instead of implying that the Mosaic covenant was of grace, Paul uses Leviticus 18:5 to prove abuse of the Mosaic covenant: salvation by works will

<sup>1450</sup> See, M. Seifrid, "Natural Revelation and the Purpose of the Law in Romans", *Tyndale Bulletin* 49:1 (1998), pp.115-121.

<sup>1451</sup> Romans 2, p.520.

<sup>1452</sup> Romans, p.142. See Moo, *Romans*, p.639.

never bring God's righteousness. As mentioned before, Murray's weakness is that he divides between law proper and law as principle.

W. S. Campbell proposes that *telos* denotes goal, and possibly, in a secondary manner, termination.<sup>1453</sup> However, Campbell does not venture to suggest what exactly the secondary reading, namely termination, would imply. He does wholly reject the thought that law in 10:4 denotes the legalistic abuse of the law by Judaism of Paul's time. Campbell's reasoning is to say, how is it possible that Christ terminated a Judaistic perversion of the law?<sup>1454</sup> Campbell misunderstands Paul's diverse uses of "law". "Law" in Romans 10:4 denotes the Mosaic economy. But as we have said before, it can reflect either a negative or positive connotation. Negatively speaking, the Mosaic covenant was a dispensation of death. It was the instrument of legalism, or more precisely, perversion of the true import of law- law against law! This is to say that we must distinguish between law Adamically considered and law considered in Christ, the last Adam. Christology is the key. Christ was in Adam, and was condemned. The law is an instrument of condemnation, but Christ bore its curse, essentially the result of its misappropriation, and in doing so fulfilled its true import. His resurrection was the reinstatement of *torah*. Campbell is right to say that *telos* usually implies a creative aspect.<sup>1455</sup> But we said that Christ's incarnation was resurrection governed. Unlike representative Adam, Christ was destined for glory. Thus, the creative aspect of *telos* does dominate.

Paul can therefore take up Leviticus 18:5 and use it negatively. In Galatians 3:12, he uses Leviticus 18:5 in order to prove that God brings condemnation upon those who seek to obtain righteousness by adherence to the law, "The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, 'The man who does these things will live by them.'"<sup>1456</sup> The citation of Leviticus 18:5 is a summary statement that must be seen in its typological setting, "The man who obeys the law will be enclosed within its boundaries, and will not be set-free from them; his "living" will be within that environment. To obey the law, *a law which is not fulfilled in Christ*, means that the *obedient* one is enclosed within a Christ-less, and therefore, cursed realm."

To once more see the law as a positive covenant, we need to look at Romans 10:6-8, wherein Paul cites Deuteronomy 30:12-14. We agree with Murray that this citation is given to teach the

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<sup>1453</sup> "Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10:4", *Studia Biblica* III (1978), pp.76-77.

<sup>1454</sup> *ibid.*, p.75.

<sup>1455</sup> *ibid.*, p.76.

<sup>1456</sup> *ibid.*, pp.126-127.

righteousness of God in Christ which comes by faith. McComiskey writes, 'The relationship of the two Old Testament passages in Romans 10 poses serious problems for the exegete.'<sup>1457</sup> In context, Deuteronomy 30:12-14 is a statement that the *law* of God is not too difficult to keep. Yet, Paul interprets these verses Christologically. It is the word of Christ that is near to us, and that we must have faith in. This teaching circumscribes our interpretation of the Old Testament law. It is because the law did have a gracious character- the old covenant saints were justified by obedience to law- that Paul can now cite it in reference to its fulfilment in Christ. In effect, Paul is equating the law with Christ, because he is its *telos*, he is the "righteousness of the law". But it also once more highlights that Murray's own understanding of *telos*, although partly correct, fails to appreciate the hermeneutical framework surrounding *telos*.

### Murray and "fulfilment"

Moo says:

...the syntax does not favor attaching the prepositional phrase directly to the world "law." It is much more likely that the prepositional phrase introduced by *eis* functions as a purpose or result clause attached to the assertion as a whole: "Christ is the *telos* of the law, with the result that there is (or with the purpose that there might be) righteousness for everyone who believes"....<sup>1458</sup>

The notion of goal is not too far away from Moo's lips- Christ was the goal of the old covenant, its fulfilment.<sup>1459</sup> Christ is the end of the law, in that he ushers in the new eschatological age, says Moo. The law pointed towards Christ as the one who would end it as an era (cf., 3:21). Moo ends by saying that this is more or less what Jesus taught when he said that he had come to fulfil the law (Mt.5:17).<sup>1460</sup>

But notice how Moo cannot evade the point that Christ ends an era. But he does not say why Christ had to end an era- Murray does. Moo focuses merely upon the positive side of law.

Ironically, Murray himself had the makings of this hermeneutical approach that we have outlined. To him, the Old Testament was a model that pointed toward the reality or ectype- Jesus Christ. He brought to fruition the Old Testament, he fulfilled it (Mat.5:17). However, Christ did not abrogate the law. So, the verb πληρωω in Matthew 5:17 means 'the full measure or complement

<sup>1457</sup> *ibid.*, p.122.

<sup>1458</sup> *Romans*, pp.637-638.

<sup>1459</sup> See, W. S. Campbell, "Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10:4", *Studia Biblica* 3 (1978), pp.73-81.

of something.’<sup>1461</sup> This is the same view as D. Carson. He adds that “fulfil” in Matthew 5:17 focuses on the ‘relation between the OT and Jesus’ teaching, not his actions.’ In the LXX, *pleroo* does for *male*, and denotes “to fill up” in volume or time. According to James 2:23, Abraham’s actions “fulfilled” Genesis 15:6, because it ‘in some sense remains “empty” until Abraham’s action “fulfils it”.’<sup>1462</sup>

The interesting thing about Matthew 5:17 is that it is immediately followed by 5:18. We agree that πληρωω in Matthew 5:17 is reflective of the meaning that Christ is the reality of which the Old Testament is the model. It is possible that Carson would want to say that as far as Christ is concerned, integral to fulfilling the law in this manner was obedience. For example, in James 2:23, Abraham fulfils Genesis 15:6 by his *action* of obedience. This is to say that Abraham’s action was a recapitulation of a similar (and in one sense identical) action that gave rise to God’s pronouncement, as recorded in Genesis 15:6. According to the system of Carson and Moo, Christ is referring to prophetic fulfilment of the law in Matthew 5:17-18, and- if they are to be consistent- he switches to a different understanding of law in verses 19-20: the obedience (actions) of the disciples to the law is to exceed the Pharisees’ obedience. We would suggest that just as Christ was to fulfil the law prophetically, so were his disciples. Central to fulfilment is obedience. The whole of Christ’s life was one of obedience, Murray said. It is not merely the teachings of Jesus but his whole submissive life that was a recapitulation of Israel’s history, its true fruition. (For example, he repeats or recapitulates Israel’s history by coming out of Egypt with his parents (Mt.2:15).) The disciples’ righteousness will only succeed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if central to their righteousness is faith in the Messiah. In this sense they will not teach a fellow to break one *yod* or *tittle*, and, just as important, the disciples’ righteousness is a recapitulation of Christ’s, and is thereby itself “prophetical”, fulfilling the whole of *torah*.

What is happening, is that we have once again come back to the point that the believer’s justification is to be proved by obedience; but, this time, according to Matthew 5:18, the obedience rendered is a reflection or fulfilment of Christ’s own prophetic fulfilment of the law.

From the positive side of the hermeneutical allegorising of Christ’s life and death, we can say that Christ’s life and death were the goal of the law, its purpose, and had righteousness as its end.

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<sup>1460</sup> Romans, pp.641, 642.

<sup>1461</sup> Principles of Conduct, pp.149-151.

## The Spirit and the Law

In finalising our exegetical section, one last point will be examined: the relationship between the Spirit and the law. It is Gordon Fee who ties together the relationship between the law and the Spirit. Of the debate over the meaning of *nomos* in Paul he writes:

The solution to all of this, I propose, is to take more seriously the role of the Spirit in Paul's understanding. The experience of the promised eschatological Spirit, after all, not "righteousness by faith," forms the core in Paul's argumentation in the one letter (Galatians) devoted primarily to this issue...For Paul the Spirit marks the effective end of Torah, both because the coming of the Spirit fulfils the eschatological promise that signals the beginning of the new covenant, thus bringing the old to an end, and because the Spirit is sufficient to do what Torah was not able to do in terms of righteousness, namely, to "fulfil in us who walk by the Spirit the righteous commandments of Torah" (Rom 8:4).

1463

This is an excellent summary of Paul, and one we think we have tried to argue in this thesis. There is one major weakness with it, however. Fee restricts the work of the Spirit to what has traditionally been called sanctification. In this chapter, we said that *in the Pauline system* justification by faith belongs to the province of the resurrection. It was demonstrated that, for Paul, faith was specifically said to be in the resurrection of Christ. To summarise our view, Christ's justification was our justification, since we were in him, our covenant head, when he was resurrected. This event is realised in our own experience through being raised from the dead spiritually and then physically. Faith *per se* is not merely *the* evidence of resurrection life, but is itself the resurrection life; for faith is the resurrected Christ living in us to will and to do his good pleasure. It was the event of Christ's resurrection which constituted God's declaration of righteousness or vindication. The Spirit-body of Christ was God's message to the world that his Son had been vindicated. Thus, the *sarx*-Spirit divide is central to justification, for our Spiritual resurrection is our justification, and faith *is* God's declaration that we are righteous.

The exegetical section completed, there is one last comment to make: our view in comparison to Roman Catholicism.

## JUSTIFICATION AND ROMAN CATHOLICISM

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<sup>1462</sup> Matthew, pp.142-143.



## A. E. McGrath

McGrath says, 'Trent understands by "justification" what the Protestant understands by "justification" and "sanctification" or "regeneration" taken together.'<sup>1464</sup> [emphasis his] He makes the same kind of statement in his recent biography of J. I. Packer, 'Roman Catholicism, from the Council of Trent (1547) onwards, has unequivocally rejected [justification by works]'.<sup>1</sup>

This is a poor commentary on 300 years of church history. McGrath does not record the *fact* that at the time of the Reformation, the Reformers and the Roman Catholic Church would not accept *one another's* respective doctrines of justification. The Council of Trent (Canon 26) states, 'If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof: let him be anathema.'<sup>1465</sup> As Packer himself says, 'The Church of Rome has always maintained that God's act of justifying is primarily, if not wholly, one of making righteous, by inner spiritual renewal, but there is no biblical or linguistic ground for this view.'<sup>1466</sup>

### Rome and our view of justification by faith

We think that Murray's evaluation of Romish theology is correct. It does teach salvation by works.

Do we teach salvation by works? No! Remember, Luther himself, the great father of the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith, does say that faith can, in one sense, be called a work; although it is preferable not to call it by this title. We agree. Paul does not put faith in the category of work. Works to him are a specialist category, specifically determined by a hermeneutical framework. We have argued that faith and faith-obedience (obedience that has a faith element) are integral to the definition of justification by faith. Roman Catholicism, like first-century Judaism, empties the word of God of the blood of the covenant. Catholicism begins from the premise of salvation by incorporation into the church. Christ's death is continually

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<sup>1463</sup> *God's Empowering Presence* (Peabody: Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), p.815.

<sup>1464</sup> "Justification the New Ecumenical Debate", *Themelios* 13:2 (Jan-Feb., 1988), p.44

<sup>1465</sup> "The Canon and Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent, A. D. 1563", *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, The Greek and Latin Creeds, editor: P. Schaff, (Grand Rapids, Baker), pp.115-116.

<sup>1466</sup> I would like to thank my friend, Colin Wilson, for this information.

<sup>1466</sup> *God's Words*, p.140. Packer does believe, however, that there are some modern Roman Catholic theologians who have parted with the doctrine of justification by works. We do think that Packer's assessment is erroneous, and that the position of these Roman Catholic theologians does not differ fundamentally with the Roman Catholic tradition. [See, *TBT* 393 (June, 1996), pp.1-5, 9-21.]

“tagged on” as an afterthought, as something that a little faith in will cause our achievements to be enhanced. In short, Catholicism is stuck back in the allegorical state of a cursed old covenant. Catholicism “lives” in the realm of mere works, works that have removed the sufficiency and perfection of Christ’s work, and so have subordinated his work to theirs.

We are saying that obedience that flows from a heart submissive to the covenant of blood and righteousness in Christ Jesus is a ground for justification, simply because this act of obedience or trust is itself the life of the risen Christ working within us, the application of his death and resurrection, his condemnation and justification.

### CONCLUSION

Murray did not acknowledge the diversity of opinion within Reformed scholarship concerning the doctrine of justification by faith. From Augustine up until the present, there is a common denominator within the Reformed doctrine of justification: faith secures God’s righteousness in Christ, and upon this basis alone are we justified. Murray’s doctrine of justification was seen to be identical to Calvin’s.

It became clear that Murray’s conception of justification by faith in the Old Testament was at points sketchy. This is no doubt a reflection of the Reformed predilection for Paul. Murray says that justification by faith is a declaration, a verdict, given upon one initially entering into the faith. However, both Abraham (Gn.12; 15; 17) and David (Ps.51) were already believers when their faith was credited to them as righteousness. We, with Luther, argued for a definitive justification, and also progressive justification. This equated to entering into covenant with God, and the continual re-affirmations of the same covenant.

Thus, Romans 4 was said to be an allusion to Phinehas. His act of righteousness was the point of his justification, the moment of a re-affirmation of the Levitical covenant. The Hebrew notion of faithfulness (*emunah*) was said to incorporate both what we call faith and faith-obedience (obedience that has at its foundation, *integral to it*, faith). Indeed, we argued the obedience is possibly trust. Phinehas, Abraham and David were justified because they had surrendered to, were submissive to, God’s covenant provisions described in the law, and which were especially and most particularly evident in the sacrificial system. It was the starting point of all acts of faith and faith-obedience. Each act of faith and faith-obedience were in themselves declarations that

they were just men, since they were acts which were acknowledging personal sin, and the need of submission to the divine will.

Murray said that justification by faith was merely declaratory, and was a forensic verdict. In response, we have said that each act of faith and faith-obedience is forensic, inasmuch as they are acts of ungodly people- for what man can stand before God? who are pronounced as not guilty before the judgement seat of the covenant. Further, justification by faith cannot be merely declaratory. Even Murray said that God's declaration was creative, bringing about the status of righteousness. However, we said that Murray's view ultimately was prone to a contradiction: justification is merely the declaration that we have had Christ's righteousness imputed to us through faith; justification is a status imparted, a status which has at its heart an act of faith. That latter view is Luther's. We agreed with Murray that God's declaration was creative; but we amended things, arguing that faith *per se* was what was created or declared: that is faith was Christ within us, expressing his obedience through us, so that God declared our act of faith as righteousness.

Another major part of our evaluation of Murray was his understanding of *nomos*. For him, *the law* was the expression of a the gracious Mosaic covenant. The Israelites were in covenant with God when the law was given. Thus, exhortations to obey the law and live were originally given, said Murray, to encourage the Old Testament people of God to enjoy their existing covenant relationship with God.

But Murray struggled to reconcile this position with the New Testament perspective that the very exhortations which were unto life, now were warnings to the Israelites against seeking justification by works. We said that Murray lacked a hermeneutical framework for both these correct readings of the old covenant's nature. *Telos* (Rm.10:4) and "law of righteousness" (Rm.9:31) were said to reflect both termination and goal, end or fulfilment. They reflected termination because the old covenant was a pre-Christ era and therefore, from an allegorical or hermeneutical viewpoint, was Christ-less. Into this Christ-less zone was poured a theology of negativity, by Paul. Each man is born rebellious, due to his union with Adam. Therefore, each man is considered as belonging to the old zone, the old covenant. The Jews sought deliverance without Christ at its heart, and so their works were considered as the creating of a noose for their own necks.

Even so, the old covenant had a positive side to it, when the hermeneutical framework was put in place. The whole old covenant was an advert or signpost prophesying of one to come who would deliver Abraham's seed. It was through interpreting the law in this manner that the old covenant saints were obedient, by faith and faith-works, unto justification.

The two aeon or allegorical approach to Pauline theology also threw up the doctrine that, to Paul, justification by faith was the expression of faith in Christ's justification at his resurrection. More particularly, faith was the resurrected Christ expressing himself in us, raising us from the dead and thereby vindicating us at God's covenant judgement seat. Thus, our justification was our endowment with the resurrection-Spirit, the Spirit who delivered us from the zone of flesh or *nomos*.

## Chapter 15: Adoption

In his article "The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship", Sinclair Ferguson writes, 'If one paints the history of theology with a broad brush, it is clear that neither the early nor the mediaeval church expressed much interest in the idea of the Christian life of sonship.' Ferguson traces the beginnings of the decline of the doctrine of adoption in the Reformed tradition back to the theologian Turretin (1623-1687), who subsumed adoption under the doctrine of justification. Luther, in Ferguson's opinion, also subordinated adoption, teaching that it was the positive side of justification. This view 'never really died', writes Ferguson. He cites Murray as one of those theologians who has sought to restore the proper position of adoption as the acme of soteric blessing; due to the influence of men such as Murray, adoption may at last receive the recognition that it deserves. <sup>1467</sup>

For Murray, adoption is the complement of the doctrine of regeneration, for it underlines what the process in regeneration finally leads to for the sons of God.

### STATEMENT

#### THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

##### Intertrinitarianism

Within the trinity, the Father's Fatherhood over the Son is 'immanent, eternal and exclusive', as expressed 'in the title *monogenes* to Christ and in such expressions as the Father's own Son (Rom.8:3, 32).' <sup>1468</sup>

##### Creative

God created all things. His creatorhood is referred to in terms of him being Father (Acts 17:28-29; Heb.12:9; Jm.1:17-18). 'Since all three persons of the Godhead were the agents of creation we cannot restrict this Fatherhood to the first person of the Trinity but we must think of the Godhead as sustaining this relation to angels and men.' <sup>1469</sup>

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<sup>1467</sup> p.81.  
<sup>1468</sup> CW 2, p.223.  
<sup>1469</sup> idem.

In Matthew 5:45-48, God is called the Father of the disciples, and not the Father of all. 1 Corinthians 8:6 does not reflect the Father's 'fatherly relation to men', but, in 'accord with Paul's usage it is the relation to the Son that is in view and, when he reflects on the fatherly relation to men, he calls him our Father.' In Ephesians 3:15, it is said that God is the Father of his family, the church. Ephesians 4:6 speaks of God's fatherhood over the saints, for Paul goes on to say that grace has been given 'to each one of us'. Of Malachi 2:10 it can be said:

...it is characteristic of the Old Testament to use the language of creation with reference to the work of redemption. Compare especially Isaiah 43:1, 7, 9 where *bara* and *yatsar* are used plainly in a restrictive and redemptive sense (cf. Isaiah 64:8, 9). Besides, the latter part of Malachi 2:10 refers to the covenant of the fathers and indicates that the theocratic relationship to Israel is in view in the earlier part of the verse.<sup>1470</sup>

In Luke 3:38, although the term *huios* does not appear, it is implied from verse 24. This does not entail, however, that God is the Father of all men in the sense that he was Adam's Father: first, Luke is emphasising the Adam 'owed his origin to God as no other man did....'; and second, Adam was 'a son of God by creation, but not in his fallen state.'<sup>1471</sup>

### Theocratic

God's *redemption* of Israel from Egypt was its adoption (Ex.4:22-23; Dt.14:1-2 (cf., 1:31); 32:5, 6, 20; Is.43:6 (cf., Is.1:2); 63:16; Hos.11:1; Mal.1:6; 2:10; Rm.9:4). It was the adoption of the people or community of Israel. It was not, therefore, 'the exclusive property of the first person.'<sup>1472</sup>

### Adoptive Fatherhood

Adoption in the Old Testament revealed the immaturity of God's people: they were treated as slaves rather than full grown sons. Whereas, in the New Testament, the saints have matured, and have received the full rights of sons:

[Adoptive Fatherhood] must be distinguished from...[theocratic] fatherhood...not because it is principally different but because it is the full-fledged sonship in the Old Testament period. The distinction is clearly drawn by Paul in Galatians 3:23-4:6. The difference is in line with the difference in general between the Old Testament and the New; the

<sup>1470</sup> *ibid.*, p.224.

<sup>1471</sup> *ibid.*, p.225.

<sup>1472</sup> *idem.*

Old is preparatory, the New is consummatory. The Old is prepadeutic, the New is graduatory. The children of God in the Old Testament were as children under age. The grace of the New Testament appears in this that by redemption accomplished and by faith in him all without exception are introduced into the full blessing of sonship without the necessity of undergoing a period of tutelary preparation corresponding to the tutelary discipline of the Old Testament period. That is to say, New Testament believers from among Gentiles do not have to undergo in the realm of their individual development a preliminary period which corresponds to the Old Testament period in the broad sphere of progressive revelation and realization. There is no recapitulation in the individual sphere of what obtained in the realm of dispensational progression.<sup>1473</sup>

## BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY

There are only five texts in the New Testament that bear the term adoption (υιοθεσια): Romans 8:15, 23, 9:4, Galatians 4:5, and Ephesians 1:5. The most important texts on adoption are John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1-2, 10.

In the New Testament, sonship is conveyed by terms such as *huios*, *teknon*, *teknion*,<sup>1474</sup> and *paidion*. Although *pais* is used in reference to Christ, and on two occasions to David (Lk.1:69; Acts 4:25), it 'is not used to express the relation with which we are now concerned.'<sup>1475</sup>

Murray adds:

*Paidion* is the regular word for child and is used of this relation in Hebrews 2:13, 14- cf. Isaiah 8:18- *teknion*- cf. John 13:33; 1 John 5:21, 12, 28; 3:7 (some mss.*paidia*), 18; 4:4; 5:21.

The standard terms are however *huios* and *teknon*. John uses *teknon* almost exclusively. Only in Revelation 21:7 does he use *hiou*s, in quoting 2 Samuel 7:14. Paul uses both *huios* and *teknon*. Romans 8:14-21 provides an interesting example of the facility with which Paul can pass from one term to the other.

<sup>1473</sup> *ibid.*, pp.225-226.

<sup>1474</sup> Murray says:

It is questionable if *teknion* is used to express this relationship. Jesus uses it (John 13:33) and it may not here reflect upon the adoptive relationship but be a term of endearment. John has almost a monopoly since outside John it appears only in Galatians 4:19 where Paul addresses believers as *teknia mou* and the proper text is probably *tekna mou*. In John's usage it is a term of endearment as in John 13:33 (in addition to these occurrences all the instances are 1 John 2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21.) In this respect it is like *paidion* in John 21:5; 1 John 2:13, 18 and possibly 1 John 3:7 though the revised text reads *teknia*. [CW 2, p.226.]

<sup>1475</sup> CW 2, p.226.

*teknon* is derived from *tiktein* which means to bear or bring forth. *tekna* is the usual word for children in the New Testament and is used of both sexes, that is of son or daughter (cf. Luke 15:31; 16:25; Acts 7:5).<sup>1476</sup>

## THE NATURE OF ADOPTION

Murray does not know whether the background to the term adoption comes from Semitic or Graeco-Roman practice.<sup>1477</sup>

He writes:

Since *teknon* is derived from *tiktein* we might readily suppose that the word *tekna* would reflect upon divine parentage by generation...in Johannine usage so much emphasis falls upon the fact those who are begotten of God bear lineaments of him who has begotten them that we might readily conclude that in the background of the term *teknon* is the assumption that they are children by divine begetting.<sup>1478</sup>

It must not be assumed that *teknon* implies that we are children of God by regeneration:

Although it has been maintained in this connection that we become children of God both by deed of adoption and by participation of nature, it is not by any means so apparent that regeneration is to be co-ordinated with adoption as the way by which we become sons of God....It is questionable whether the generative act of God in regeneration is to be construed as an aspect of God's grace whereby we are constituted sons of God.<sup>1479</sup>

It is toward God the Father *par excellence* that the children of God sustain the relation of sons of God, whilst regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit. Adoption is a judicial or forensic category; regeneration is a subjective work. That is, 'a person who is not a natural son is received into the rights and privileges of a son' (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:5; Eph.1:5). Adoption is a forensic act like justification, because it describes the fact that we become sons by a legal act, 'by a act of translation and instatement'.<sup>1480</sup> This legal relationship is evident in John 1:12-13. Murray notes, 'Sonship, [John] indicates [in John 1:12], is instituted by the bestowment of a right and this is to

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<sup>1476</sup> idem.

<sup>1477</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.36.

<sup>1478</sup> *CW* 2, p.227.

<sup>1479</sup> idem.

<sup>1480</sup> *Soteriology II*, p.36.



be distinguished from the regeneration spoken of in verse 13...regeneration (v. 13), the reception of Christ, the bestowal of authority, and becoming thereby children of God (v. 12)'. <sup>1481</sup>

Those who have been called, regenerated and justified are now in a position to be adopted:

Calling, regeneration, pardon and justification are presupposed, and adoption supervenes upon the condition and status established by these other acts of God and initiates a status and introduces to a privilege which calling, regeneration and justification enlarged to the fullest extent do not themselves define or explicate....it is in the act of adoption that God becomes to the redeemed a Father in the highest sense that divine Fatherhood...can be predicated of creatures.... <sup>1482</sup>

Adoption is the act of God, whereby those who have been justified, etc., are then declared to be sons of God, and are brought into God's family. Adoption is the apex of grace and privilege, surpassing all other blessings of salvation. <sup>1483</sup>

### THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION

In adoption we receive the Spirit of adoption. However, he does not constitute our adoption, for he is the consequence of it, bearing witness to its reality. <sup>1484</sup>

It is the Father who sends the Spirit of adoption. The Spirit witnesses to the fact of our adoption (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:6). This has two elements: he creates and encourages within us confidence in God, which is the 'reflex in our consciousness of' our status; and the Spirit witness with our Spirit. <sup>1485</sup>

### THE ADOPTION OF OUR BODIES

The bodies of believers will be raised up on the last day, at the consummation of all things. This is the redemption of their bodies, the full fruition and maturation of their sonships. <sup>1486</sup> The revelation of the sons of God (Rm.8:19) 'is but another aspect from which the glory to be

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<sup>1481</sup> CW 2, pp.228-229.

<sup>1482</sup> *ibid.*, p.228.

<sup>1483</sup> RA, p.134.

<sup>1484</sup> Romans 1, pp.295-299; CW 2, pp.229-230, 271-274.

<sup>1485</sup> CW 2, p.229.

<sup>1486</sup> Romans 1, pp.307-308.

revealed in unto them is viewed...and not until [the saints] are glorified together with Christ will the body of Christ be manifested in its integrity and unity (cf.Col.3:3,4).’<sup>1487</sup>

## THE TITLE “FATHER”

“Father” is the title of the first person of the trinity; he is immanently the Father. Due to this, it is appropriate that he sustains the name and role of Father in his relations with men. In John 20:17, Christ said that he was going to ascend to “my Father and your Father.” Christ always refers to his Father in the first person. It is the same Father in view when he says “your Father”, referring to the Father of the disciples. In variant forms, Jesus refers to “my Father in heaven”. In similar fashion he says to his disciples, “your Father who is in heaven” (Mt.5:16, 45, 48; 6:1; 7:11; Mk.11:25-26). The similarity of language leads us to believe that it is the same person referred to by both phrases. “The Father” and, often, *ho theos* are the particular titles of the first person (Rm.15:6; 2 Cor.1:3; 11:31; Eph.1:3; Col.1:3; 1 Pet.1:3). “God the Father” denotes the first person, also (Gal.1:1; Eph.6:23; Phil.2:11; 1 Thes.1:1; 2 Thes.1:2; 1 Tim.2:2; Tit.1:4; Jm.1:27 (?); 1 Pet.1:2; 2 Pet.1:17; 2 Jh 3; Jude 1; Rv.1:6). God is called the Father of believers and he is also distinguished from Jesus (Rm.1:7; Gal.1:3-4; Phil.4:20; Col.1:2; 1 Thes.1:3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thes.1:1; 2:16).<sup>1488</sup>

## COMMENT

### CALVIN

#### Sum of gospel

To begin with, Calvin makes it clear that there are two central blessings in salvation, ‘The sum of the Gospel is, not without good reason, made to consist in repentance and forgiveness of sins.’ These blessings are also known as newness of life and reconciliation, respectively.<sup>1489</sup> Existential reconciliation is doing service therefore for justification by faith, according to Calvin. In sum, blessings which are not internal are objective to us, although received through union with Christ. In reference to union with Christ, to the subjective belongs existential redemption,

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<sup>1487</sup> *ibid.*, p.303.

<sup>1488</sup> *CW* 2, pp.231-232.

<sup>1489</sup> *Inst.*3:3:1.

repentance, regeneration, sanctification and faith; to the objective belongs justification, existential redemption, forgiveness, existential reconciliation, and adoption.

## Reconciliation

In his exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, Calvin makes reconciliation continually synonymous with the forgiveness of sins.<sup>1490</sup> He also says:

And truly faith does not justify us for any other reason, than that it reconciles us unto God; and that it does so, not by its own merit; but because we receive the grace offered to us in the promises, and no doubt of eternal life, being fully persuaded that we are loved by God as sons....But we apprehend righteousness by faith, when God freely reconciles us to himself.<sup>1491</sup>

In other words, faith reconciles us to God, and upon this we are justified. What Calvin means is this: the sacrifice of Christ which we put our faith in- historical reconciliation- is the means by which God's enmity is propitiated and we are thereby made at peace with God- existential reconciliation. Christ's righteousness as embodied in his sacrifice covers our unrighteousness. In this exchange we are justified.

The clause 'and no doubt of eternal life, being fully persuaded that we are loved by God as sons' is a reference, probably, to the assurance of faith. For of Romans 10:14, Calvin comments:

...we cannot rightly pray unless we are persuaded for certain of success. He is not here referring to implicit faith, but that certainty which our minds conceive of His fatherly kindness, when He reconciles us to Himself by the Gospel and adopts us as His children. By this confidence alone we have access to Him, as we are also taught in Eph.3.12.<sup>1492</sup>

God's *fatherly* kindness is the impulse with which he *reconciles* us to himself *and* adopts us. In the chapter Faith, etc., we saw that Calvin believed that the Spirit of adoption witnesses to our souls of our salvation, creating confidence in his word. The Spirit of adoption witnesses to our reconciliation, thus proving it. Is there the suggestion by Calvin that adoption is a basis for justification?

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<sup>1490</sup>

<sup>1491</sup> *Genesis*, p.407.

<sup>1492</sup> *Romans*, pp.230-231.

### Justification by faith and adoption

To answer this, let us examine the relationship between adoption and justification, according to Calvin. Referring to the witness of the Spirit to our adoption, Calvin says, 'the fatherly indulgence of God, by which He forgives His people the infirmity of the flesh and the sins under which they still labour'.<sup>1493</sup> The Spirit of adoption brings forgiveness. Justification by faith in Calvin's system was considered as a definitive event. However, forgiveness to Calvin is ongoing, the fruit of justification; continuous forgiveness is a "witness" to justification. If the "witness" of the Spirit of adoption brings forgiveness, it is possible that adoption is synonymous with justification by faith.

Also, Calvin says of adoption, 'none others are *reckoned* the sons of God, than they in whom the promise is ratified by faith.'<sup>1494</sup> [emphasis ours] "Reckon" is a term he uses of justification. Calvin also comments, 'adoption comes, not by the *merit of the law*, but from the grace of faith.' [emphasis ours]<sup>1495</sup> When Calvin otherwise refers to merit he invariably does so in the context of salvation by works contrasted to justification by faith.

The picture being established is this: justification is God's declaration that we are just in his sight. This is because we have put on the Son, our reconciliation. Because it is *Son* that we have put on, we also are sons. God can therefore declare us righteous. In short, to Calvin, those justified *are* sons; more precisely, justification is the declaration that we are sons.

Calvin makes a distinction between adoption and *ἐξουσία* in John 1:12. Of John 1:12, he says in referring to adoption that believers possess the 'rights of adoption'; and that *ἐξουσία* means 'honour' and 'being reckoned worthy'. By faith 'we attain the *right* of adoption as the sons of God. And inasmuch as He is the only Son of God, this *honour* does not belong to us at all except so far as we are members' of him.<sup>1496</sup> [emphasis ours] Calvin is arguing that the deeds of sonship are given to us when we are united to the Son by faith. Upon this, we are reckoned worthy sons, that is, justified. By *ἐξουσία* in John 1:12, Calvin also means 'power'. This 'power is given to those who already believe', he says. 'Power', on this occasion, is the equivalent of "right" or "reckoned as worthy". In fact, he says that "power" is deliverance from 'condemnation', so that

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<sup>1493</sup> *Romans*, p.168.

<sup>1494</sup> *ibid.*, p.449.

<sup>1495</sup> *Galatians*, p.76.

<sup>1496</sup> *John 1-11*, pp.17-18.

sinners ‘suddenly began to be sons of God.’ <sup>1497</sup> We saw in Regeneration, how Calvin said that sonship begins in secret regeneration, yet here he seems to say that it begins in adoption and justification. The way of solving this riddle is to consider the difference between the grace of adoption and *ἐξουσία*. The latter refers to the deeds of sonship, the formal declaration of it; the former refers to the creation of the nature of sons unto that deed.

### Regeneration and adoption

The plot thickens. Calvin adds, ‘For if faith regenerates us so that we are the sons of God, and if God breathes faith into us from heaven, the grace of adoption offered to us by Christ is obviously not only potential but actual, as they say.’ <sup>1498</sup> The grace of adoption is said to equate to regeneration by faith and the impartation of faith. Yet, regeneration by faith is, as we saw before, sanctification, according to Calvin. The solution to this difficulty is to see that, on this occasion, adoption is serving to mean the simple concept of sonship. This being so, to the human eye- as we pointed out in Regeneration- regeneration (or adoption) *begins* when we are sanctified.

### The witness of the Spirit

It is universally accepted that the witness of the Spirit to our adoption is distinct to our adoption. Calvin writes:

Adoption by God precedes the testimony of adoption given by the Holy Spirit.

But the effect is the sign of the cause. And you dare to call God your Father only by the instigation and incitement of the Spirit of Christ.

Therefore it is certain that you are sons of God.

This means, as [Paul] often teaches elsewhere, that the Spirit is the earnest and pledge of our adoption, so that we are surely convinced of God’s Fatherly attitude towards us. <sup>1499</sup>

### The Old Testament

Commenting on Galatians 4:1, Calvin says that the fathers of the Old Testament partook of the same adoption as we participate in the New Testament. <sup>1500</sup> To him, Romans 8:15 alludes to the Sinaitic covenant:

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<sup>1497</sup> *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>1498</sup> *John 1-11*, p.17.

<sup>1499</sup> *Galatians*, p.75.

<sup>1500</sup> *Galatians*, p.71.

To the outward eye appeared nothing but slavery. Paul says the same thing to the Romans (chapter 8.15), "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." Those holy fathers, though inwardly they were free in the sight of God, yet in outward appearance were no different from slaves and so are related to their mother's [covenant of Sinai's] condition.<sup>1501</sup>

Again:

As, therefore, under the law there was the spirit of bondage which oppressed the conscience with fear, so under the Gospel there is the spirit of adoption, which gladdens our soul with the testimony of our salvation.... There is, therefore, no other remedy for pacifying our souls than when God forgives us our sins, and deals kindly with us as a father with his children.<sup>1502</sup>

## EVALUATION

### The Old Testament

Murray fails to root his doctrine of adoption within an old covenant context. In other words, the New Testament *huiiothesia* paradigm is the Old Testament *huiiothesia* paradigm. H. Ridderbos writes, 'The term [adoption] stems from Hellenistic world of law; its content, however, must not be inferred from the various Roman or Greek legal systems...but must rather be considered against the OT redemptive-historical background of the adoption of Israel as sons of God.'<sup>1503</sup>

The Old Testament "nature" of New Testament adoption is seen from other perspectives, in particular those of inheritance and freedom.

### The inheritance of the saints

For example, we might look at the Old Testament background to the "inheritance-heir" theme of adoption in Romans 8. Romans 8:17 comments that the children of God are "heirs of God, and co-heirs with Christ." What is meant by these phrases? Murray believes that by "heir of God" is meant that the sons of God are partakers of God's inheritance that he 'has laid up for them.' This inheritance is that which Christ received as co-heir with believers. The believer's inheritance is, due to union with Christ, participation in his messianic glory, says Murray. He also argues that

<sup>1501</sup> *ibid.*, p.86.

<sup>1502</sup> *Romans*, p.169.

<sup>1503</sup> *Paul*, pp.197-198. Present scholarship has determined that the term *huiiothesia* in Paul is actually Roman in origin.

the idea of "heirs of God" includes the notion of inheriting God.<sup>1504</sup> Murray makes no *explicit* connection between the Abrahamic promise and the inheritance of Romans 8.

Now, let us look at Romans 4. In Romans 4:13, Abraham is described as the heir of the world. Not only Abraham but all the faithful are heirs of the world (v14). What is meant by "world"? Murray's definition is hard to surpass- Romans 4 does *not* describe adoption, to him. Of the "world" he says:

We naturally think of the promise to Abraham that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed (Gen.12:3) and the correlative promises given later (cf. Gen.13:14-17; 15:4, 5, 18-21; 17:2-21; 22:15-18). In the light of Pauline teaching as a whole, however, we cannot exclude from the scope of this promise, as defined by the apostle, the most inclusive messianic purport. It is defined as the promise to Abraham that he should be heir of the world, but it is also a promise to his seed and, therefore, can hardly involve anything less than world-wide dominion promised to Christ and to the spiritual seed of Abraham in him. It is a promise that receives its ultimate fulfilment in the consummated order of the new heavens and the new earth.<sup>1505</sup>

Notice two things in Murray's definition: the messianic purport of the promise; and the inheritance of a literal heavens and earth. Is his exegesis of the inheritance of Romans 4 compatible with his exegesis of the inheritance of Romans 8, or are there two different inheritances? Murray never makes himself clear. Turning to the biblical teaching on Abraham the patriarch will unveil that both passages do have the same concept in mind. Abraham was to inherit the land (Gen.17:8; Gal.3:18). The land was bound up with God being Israel's God (Gen.17:1-7). This would suggest that the inheritance of the land had no meaning without God being Israel's God. Which in turn suggests that to have God was the reason behind receiving the land. God also declares to Abraham that he would be his "portion" or "reward" (Gen.15:1). Christ, the seed of Abraham (Gal.3:16), receives glory, and consequently rules over the whole physical earth (Mat.27:18). This "world" is one which God inhabits; to inherit the world is to inherit God. To put it more clearly, for Christ to have received glory was to receive authority, was to receive God as his portion.<sup>1506</sup>

Romans 4 does not mention "adoption". Yet, Romans 4 refers to the same theology as Romans 8. This suggests that justification by faith and adoption are two ways of describing the same event or

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<sup>1504</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.298-299.

<sup>1505</sup> *ibid.*, p.142.

<sup>1506</sup> Moo, *Romans*, pp.504-506. Cf., Calvin, *Romans*, pp.91, 168; *Galatians*, p.86; *Hebrews*, p.200.

action whereby God secured for his people an inheritance. Further, the inheritance of Romans 4 is the kingdom of God. If so, then the inheritance of Romans 8 is also probably the kingdom of God. Which means that adoption brings us into the family *and* kingdom of God. In fact, they are two ways of describing the same realm and relationship: we are princely sons.

Another way of describing the inheritance is to say that the Spirit is the inheritance. In Galatians 3:14, the Spirit is specifically named as the inheritance of the saints (cf., Gal.3:2, 5; cf., Eph.1:14). In Galatians 3:14, Paul is referring to the doctrine of justification. It is as the new world Spirit, the resurrection Spirit, that the Spirit raises us from the dead unto justification and adoption. To inherit him is to enter the atmosphere of the new world; he and it are *functionally* synonymous.<sup>1507</sup>

### The freedom of the saints

Coming to the doctrine of freedom, we once more come across Old Testament concepts, since the freedom referred to is from bondage to the Mosaic dispensation.

Freedom comes through faith, and is proved by adoption. Calvin writes, 'The fact of their being the children of God proves their freedom. How? *By faith in Christ*; for to all who believe in Him is given the privilege of being the sons of God. Therefore it is at the same time brought to pass that we are set free by faith when we are adopted by means of it.'<sup>1508</sup>

To be a son, in Pauline language, is to be free from the bondage of the law, "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus"

<sup>1507</sup> The kinship between adoption, inheritance and justification is found in other texts. Galatians 3:26-29 says, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." To be a son is to put on Christ, is to be Abraham's offspring, is to be an heir. In Galatians 3:6, 10-14, Abraham's offspring are those who are of faith. The faith spoken of here is that which leads to justification, "Consider Abraham: 'He believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness' ". "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.' Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith.' The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, 'The man who does these things will live by them,' Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.' He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the Spirit."<sup>1508</sup>

<sup>1508</sup> Romans, p.68.



(Gal.3:24-26), and, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir", (Gal.4:7). In Romans, Paul, in the same breath, moves from speaking about the freedom involved in justification, to that same freedom in adoption (Rm.8:1-13; cf., Rm.8:14-17). Deliverance from bondage of the law and freedom, in the Pauline epistles, specifically Romans and Galatians, is united with the doctrines of justification (Rm.5:1, 9-11, 12-21; 8:1-3; Gal.3:1-25; 4:8-5:1) and sanctification (as traditionally defined) (Rm.6-7; 8:4-13).

### **The forensic nature of justification**

Murray's case for the forensic nature of adoption is that it is an objective status conferred, a relationship established, and is therefore judicial. Yet, the mere conferring of an objective status is not a legal or forensic category. His view is the same as Calvin's understanding of *ἐξουσία* in John 1:12. However, as with justification, the doctrine of forensic adoption as taught by Calvin and Murray encounters the difficulty of declaring someone to be a son when they are not in reality sons. Of course, Calvin says that believers are sons before and at the point of faith. This does not, however, deal with his concept of adoption proper or *ἐξουσία*. Before the point of *ἐξουσία*, the son is not forensically a son. The answer, as with justification by faith, is to make faith God's declaration of sonship, because faith is the expression of the resurrection Spirit, the Spirit of the Son.

### **Adoption and two aeon theology**

Throughout this thesis, we have argued that in Pauline thought, at least, theology is divided into the two eschatological realms or provinces: the realm of negativity, that is, the Mosaic dispensation and the cross; and the province of positiveness, that is, the new covenant dispensation and the resurrection. Included in this framework is the Pauline doctrine of redemption: redemption was discovered to belong to the province of the cross. Further, redemption was seen as the necessary platform upon which to place the doctrines of adoption and justification. This would fit in with Calvin's exegesis of Romans 8:15- though we are not suggesting that Calvin believed the same. We no longer have the spirit of the old Mosaic dispensation, the dispensation of bondage, for we have been redeemed from it and have received the Spirit of the new dispensation, the Spirit of adoption.

If we develop Murray's baptism into Christ theology of Romans 6, we think it right to say that if Christ was our representative, then whatever happens to us in our experience, say adoption, must also have happened to Christ in his experience. If we were adopted in Christ's resurrection, and

he was our representative, then he must also have been adopted. Adam sinned, and so his seed sinned in him; their sin comes from him. For Calvin, we were adopted when we were baptised into Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>1509</sup> Murray does not resort to such language. Gaffin develops Murray's doctrine of our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, and uses it to eventually say that our adoption occurred when we were existentially raised in union with Christ.

<sup>1510</sup> If we develop Gaffin's thesis- which is based on Murray's theology- then the moment of Christ's own resurrection was also the moment we were adopted. His adoption is fulfilled in our lives when we come to faith in Christ: we are existentially resurrected unto adoption. Moreover, it is consummated when we are raised bodily from the dead.

Further, if the *sarx*-Spirit distinction is considered, then there might be a different understanding of existential adoption. Christ's adoption was the moment he was endued with Spirit, says Gaffin. If our adoption is patterned after Christ's, then we receive adoption when we are endued with the Spirit. It is in this manner that we are "declared to be sons of God with power." This declaration is, on the face of it, a witness. The immediate problem with our theory is that the texts referring to the Spirit of adoption refer to the *Christian* receiving assurance from God. This is not an insurmountable difficulty, however. If our justification is definitive and continuous, and if we bear in mind the co-ordination and interrelation between justification and adoption, then it is possible that the witness of the Spirit referred to in Paul is the progressive aspect of adoption.<sup>1511</sup>

The freedom referred to by Paul belongs to the province of the resurrection. It is the inevitable fruit of redemption from slavery from the law. Adoption is the act by which we are united to the Son of God and, in him, considered as sons of God. Justification is the *same* event wherein by faith we *sons* are considered free from condemnation. That is, our resurrection, which is God's declaration, is a pronouncement of our sonship and of our innocence as sons. Thus, we in some measure can agree with Calvin making justification and adoption synonymous.

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<sup>1509</sup> *Galatians*, p.68.

<sup>1510</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.132-133.

<sup>1511</sup> Notice the parallels between the "Spirit of adoption" and the other usages of "Spirit". The "Spirit of life" sets the believer free from the law of sin and death (Rm.8:2). The Spirit of adoption is given because the sinner has been delivered from the law, and is there to remind him of this (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:6-8). This is like saying that "we live according to the Spirit" (Rm.8:4-5). The "Spirit is life and peace"; the Spirit of adoption witnesses to the fact of our being at peace with our Father, due to being his sons (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:6). We are "controlled" by the Spirit, the Spirit of God and Christ who "lives in us" (Rm.8:9). Those who are sons have "received" the Spirit of adoption (Rm.8:15; Gal.4:5). The Spirit enables us to "put to

So Murray's insistence that adoption is the pinnacle of all soteric blessings is only partly correct. It is correct in that it reflects the intimacy of the union we have with Christ and thereby with the Father. However, adoption is not to be seen as a greater blessing than justification by faith.

### CONCLUSION

In our introduction, Sinclair Ferguson cited John Murray as one of the modern day theologians who has sought to recover the status of the doctrine of adoption. To him we are indeed indebted for his erudition and skill in rediscovering and re-emphasising more of the fullness of the doctrine of adoption.

When we consider Calvin's own doctrine of adoption, with its two perspectives, we see that adoption proper or *εξουσία* is considered as the equivalent of justification. There is also the overlap in the content of both adoption and justification in the form of the doctrines of freedom and inheritance. When these two things are considered, it is not so surprising that Reformed theology had subsumed adoption under justification by faith or made it its equivalent.

The near synonymy of justification by faith and adoption does not allow adoption *per se* to be the acme of salvific blessings, as Murray says. Even Calvin's wider description of adoption, which embraced the general concept of sonship, did not allow this. For him, *sonship* was the great blessing of the church. This does not undermine his view of justification, because he believed that it is as sons that we are declared as righteous.

Central to adoption, as with justification, is the doctrine of the death and resurrection motif. Christ was adopted into the province of the resurrection. Our spiritual resurrection is our adoption, in union with the adopted Son. Murray's notion of forensic adoption was rejected because it made sonship an objective fiction. Faith *is* adoption, because it is spiritual resurrection or the giving of the Spirit.

Unlike Murray, we argued that there is probably a progressive adoption; because adoption is inextricably bound with the Spirit, his witness to our adoption may mean that we are continuously

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death the misdeeds of the body" (Rm.8:13), which is the leading of the Spirit; all those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God (Rm.8:13-14).

adopted, especially when we consider that justification is ongoing, as well as definitive, and that both justification and adoption are nearly synonymous.

To continue our thesis concerning the Pauline two aeon theology, it was argued that Paul assigned the doctrine of adoption, with its concomitants of inheritance and freedom, to the province of the resurrection.

The next step in Murray's *ordo* is Sanctification.

## Chapter 16: Sanctification

The Christian has been united to Christ in justification and adoption, believes Murray. Both of these doctrines were forensic or objective in nature. Salvation or union is meaningless without the new life that the believer has received expressing itself in the life of the believer. Only the man submissive to the word of God will be able to heed the command, "Be holy, for I am holy".

But how accurate is Murray's view? If justification is expressed in faith, as we have argued, what part does sanctification play? These are the questions we will answer in the rest of the chapter.

### STATEMENT

#### REASONS FOR STUDYING SANCTIFICATION

1. Rome has perverted the doctrine of justification by faith. Rome thinks that justification is renovation and sanctification or the infusion of grace. Protestantism regards justification as God's declarative act on the basis of Christ's righteousness.
2. Some Protestants equate justification with ethical moralism, overlooking the work of the Holy Spirit. Pelagians consider man to be essentially good, and that all he needs is improvement. The bible, however, tells us that man is totally depraved.
3. In scripture, there is the tension between gift and demand, law and grace, etc.. These tensions need to be understood.
4. There is the necessary distinction between progressive and definitive sanctification. A progressive work cannot be applied to justification.
5. Sanctification has personal implications, demanding holiness of the individual and the church.<sup>1512</sup>

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<sup>1512</sup> Sanctification II, p.60.

## DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

### The terms used

*Hagiazw*. Definitive sanctification is a non-repetitive, once-for-all event, unlike progressive sanctification, which by nature is continuous. Paul says to the church in Corinth that it has been sanctified, called to be saints (1 Cor.1:2); and he later comments that it has been washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Cor.6:11). Apparently, Paul places sanctification in the same category as the definitive acts of calling, regeneration and justification. "Sanctified" is also used in a definitive sense in 2 Timothy 2:21. In Ephesians 5:25f, Paul says, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word". It is probable that the sanctification spoken of is explained in the words "by the washing of water by the word". In Acts 20:32 and 26:18, "the sanctified" may refer to the final sanctification in the age to come, but Paul's usage in his writings would favour the view that it denotes the sanctification of believers.<sup>1513</sup>

*Hagiasmos*. The substantive "sanctification" also connotes definitive sanctification (1 Thes.4:7; 2 Thes.2:13-14).<sup>1514</sup>

*Katharizw, katharismos*. The terms for purification are used to denote definitive sanctification (Acts 15:9; Eph.5:26; Tit.2:14).<sup>1515</sup>

### The character of definitive sanctification

*Paul's teaching*. No passage more precisely describes definitive sanctification than Romans 6:1-7:6.

Verse 2 says, "We who died to sin, how shall we still live in it?" The aorist ἀπεθανομεν ("died") is properly rendered "we who died", and not as "we that are dead to sin" (A.V.). Απεθανομεν is in the aorist tense, and therefore denotes a definitive act in the past. The apostle is telling us that the believer has made a once-for-all definitive breach with sin, and no longer lives in the realm of

<sup>1513</sup> CW 2, pp.277-278.

<sup>1514</sup> *ibid.*, p.278. Murray thinks that *hagiasmos* always denotes a status and never a process (1 Cor.1:30; 1 Thes.4:3, 4, 7; 2 Thes.2:13; 1 Tim.2:15; Heb.12:14; 1 Pet.1:2). To Murray, the goal of definitive sanctification is 'the holiness of heart and of life without which no man shall see the Lord (cf. Heb.12:14; 1 Cor.1:20; 1 Thes.4:3, 4, 7).' [Romans 1, p.234.]

<sup>1515</sup> *idem.*

sin (cf., Pss.37:35-36; 103:15-16). Therefore, for a man to live in sin is to reveal that he is not a true believer.<sup>1516</sup>

In union with Christ, we died and rose with him (see Union with Christ). Romans 6:3 tells us that the believer has been baptised into Christ's death. Baptism signifies union (cf., 1 Cor.10:2; 1:13; Matt.28:19). To be baptised into Christ's death is to be united to his death. More specifically, it is baptism into all that he is and every stage of his mediatorial activity.<sup>1517</sup> Christ died to sin (v10). In his death, he was identified with sin in such a way that he bore its guilt and power. The power of sin ruled over him in that he lived his life under the curse of sin and died, but by his resurrection he conquered it, once-for-all.<sup>1518</sup> As his death and resurrection were once-for-all events, so the believer's existential death and resurrection are also definitive events (vv8-9).<sup>1519</sup>

"Old man" in Romans 6:6;<sup>1520</sup> Ephesians 4:22-24;<sup>1521</sup> and Colossians 3:9-10<sup>1522</sup> is described by Murray:

...to the effect that the old man has been crucified...the definitive cleavage with the world of sin, which union with Christ ensures. The old man is the unregenerate man; the new man is the regenerate man created in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no more feasible to call the believer a new man and an old man, than it is to call him a regenerate man and an unregenerate.<sup>1523</sup>

A *prima facie* interpretation of Colossians 3:9-10 corroborates the exegesis of Romans 6:6 that says the old man has been once-for-all crucified and no longer indwells the believer. As for Ephesians 4:22-24, its close parallel with Colossians 3:9-10 suggests that it conveys a decisive breach with sin. Further, the "old man" is a man who lives in vice. It is not possible that a believer could lead such a life. This is corroborated by, "You, however, did not come to know Christ that way" (v20), for this quote reveals that Christians answer to a radically different identification. Thus, the Ephesians had "learnt" of Christ by the removal of the old man. If the

<sup>1516</sup> Romans 1, pp.212-213; CW 2, pp.278-279..

<sup>1517</sup> Romans 1, pp.213-215.

<sup>1518</sup> *ibid.*, pp.224-225.

<sup>1519</sup> *ibid.*, pp.223-224.

<sup>1520</sup> "For we know that our old self was crucified with [Christ] so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless".

<sup>1521</sup> "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

<sup>1522</sup> "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

old man has been taken off, its corollary is that the new man has been put on (which is also to have "learnt" Christ).<sup>1524</sup>

As for the "new man" mentioned in these verses, he 'is surely the new creation' spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 2:10.<sup>1525</sup>

*Romans 6.* The believing sinner used to- before he accepted Christ freely from the heart- give himself to the obedience of bondservice to sin unto death that kept him from true righteousness (vv6, 13, 16-17, 19, 20; cf., Jh.8:34; Lk.16:13).<sup>1526</sup> Sin, that is our lusts, used to reign and express themselves in our mortal physical body (v12; cf., vv6, 8, 10, 11).<sup>1527</sup> The believer used to be under the dominion of law (v14). "Law", here, means law as principle, and does not denote the Mosaic economy, for freedom from subjection to the Mosaic economy 'does not of itself place persons in the category of being under grace.'<sup>1528</sup> All men are under the law (v14), and are the bondservants of sin.<sup>1529</sup> The phrase "under law" (υπο νομον) is used in 6:14-15. For Murray, it designates law as a principle, as commandment.<sup>1530</sup> Murray is forced to this conclusion because Paul is speaking also to Gentiles in chapter 6.

In Romans 6:5, Paul is not dealing with physical but spiritual death and resurrection. Our old unregenerate man, the old self or ego, was crucified with Christ (v6). The once-for-all death of Christ entails that the death of the old man in union with him is also once-for-all; the old man cannot be re-crucified any more than Christ can be. The consequence of the "old man" being crucified is the putting away of the "body of sin". This is the physical body of the individual believer, the body controlled by sin.<sup>1531</sup>

Romans 6:7 literally says that we have been "justified (δεδικαιωται) from sin". This is not justification by faith, the usual meaning of the term "justification" in the Pauline epistles. The

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<sup>1523</sup> *Principles of Conduct*, pp.216, 218. See, *CW 2*, pp.285-293.

<sup>1524</sup> *ibid.*, pp.214-217. The aorist infinitives αποθεσθαι and ενδυσασθαι in Ephesians 4:22-24 and Colossians 3:9-10, do not have an imperitival force. Therefore, it is preferable to construe them as 'infinitives of result', describing a definitive content. [*Principles of Conduct*, pp.214-215.]

<sup>1525</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1526</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 221-222, 226-227, 231-232, 235. By "death" in 6:16 is meant death in all its facets, culminating in eternal damnation (cf., 1 Thes.1:9).

<sup>1527</sup> *ibid.*, p.227.

<sup>1528</sup> *ibid.*, pp.228-229.

<sup>1529</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1530</sup> *ibid.*, pp.228, 231.

<sup>1531</sup> *Romans 1*, p.220.



context has unfolded the believer's breach with the *power* of sin in his life. Therefore, "justification" denotes sanctification (cf., Jh.12:31).<sup>1532</sup>

The believer is one who is obedient unto righteousness in all its aspects. Obedience culminates in the righteousness of the new heavens and earth (v16) and eternal life (v22).<sup>1533</sup> It is upon the indicative of sin being unable to reign in our lives- it is impossible for it to reign- that Paul says that we must not let it reign in our lives (v12).<sup>1534</sup> The man who has been freed from sin (vv7, 18) is no longer under the law, but under grace (v14). 'Believers have come under all the resources of redeeming and renewing grace which find their epitome in the death and resurrection of Christ.'<sup>1535</sup> The believer is to present himself to God as a slave of righteousness, because he has been delivered once-for-all from sin (vv13, 19).<sup>1536</sup> The believer is now a bondservant unto sanctification (v19). In verses 19 and 22, *αγιασμος* does not refer to progressive sanctification, 'but to the state of holiness or consecration'. This circumscribes the definitive breach with sin the believer has made.<sup>1537</sup>

*Romans 7.* The "brothers" whom Paul speaks to in verse 1 are those who know the law. "Law" in this case denotes the Old Testament, particularly the Mosaic law. Paul uses "law" in this manner in 3:19; 5:13; 1 Corinthians 9:8-9; 14:21, 24 and Galatians 3:10. 19. This law has dominion over a man so long as he lives.<sup>1538</sup>

In verse 4, it says that we "died to the law through the body of Christ," that we "might belong to another, to him who raised us from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit to God." Because in the illustration of verses 1-4 it is the husband who is said to have died, we would have expected that verse 4 would convey that the law had died. But it is the believer that is said to have died to the law through the body of Christ. Nowhere else in the Pauline writings is there mention of the law dying (cf., 7:6; Gal.2:19).<sup>1539</sup> The law the believer is freed from is the same law referred to in 6:14:<sup>1540</sup> law as a principle and power. There is a dislocation, for in the illustration in verses 1-

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<sup>1532</sup> *ibid.*, pp.222.

<sup>1533</sup> *ibid.*, pp.231, 237.

<sup>1534</sup> *ibid.*, p.227.

<sup>1535</sup> *ibid.*, p.229.

<sup>1536</sup> *ibid.*, pp.228, 234.

<sup>1537</sup> *ibid.*, p.234.

<sup>1538</sup> *ibid.*, pp.239-240.

<sup>1539</sup> *ibid.*, pp.239-242.

<sup>1540</sup> *ibid.*, p.243.

3, it is the church who is the wife, and it is the husband, Christ, who dies. Paul fails to carry out the 'precise terms of the parallel':

The main point in the application (vs.4) is how we may be released from the law. In this latter case there cannot be release by a method that literally follows the pattern of analogy drawn from marital relations. But, nevertheless, there is a death of the husband in the other case. And this death is our death to the law in the death of Christ.<sup>1541</sup>

Union with Christ in his death must never be severed from union with the resurrected Lord. 'It is union with him, therefore, not only in the virtue and power of that historical event but union with him now and for ever in that identity that belongs to him as the resurrected Lord...and [Christ's] immortality seals the indissolubility of [the] marital bond (cf. Eph.5:22-23).' <sup>1542</sup>

The believer is now free from bondage to the old written Mosaic law (2 Cor.3:6) in order to serve God by the Spirit. <sup>1543</sup>

*Peter's teaching.* 1 Peter 2:24 says, "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness" (KJV). ΑΠΟΓΕΝΟΜΕΝΟΙ ("having died") is *hapax legomenon* in the New Testament, and must be given the force of "having died". In this passage the thought is the same pattern found in Paul. Once more, "Since, therefore, Christ hath suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, because he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, to the end that no longer should he live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God" (1 Pet.4:1-2) (KJV). Just as Christ suffered in the flesh, so the believer has suffered once-for-all in the flesh. "Suffered in the flesh" is the indicative, and the consequence of ceasing from sin is an imperative. This pattern is reminiscent of Paul's system. <sup>1544</sup>

*John's teaching.* A particularly relevant text is 1 John 3:6-9, "No-one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No-one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No-one who is born of God

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<sup>1541</sup> *ibid.*, p.242.

<sup>1542</sup> *ibid.*, p.243.

<sup>1543</sup> *ibid.*, pp.246-247.

will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God." It is too much to say that this text teaches sinless perfection, for the scope of the cessation of sin is commensurate with those who have been born again. In the same epistle John himself leads us to the Father's provision for our sin (1:7; 2:1), and expressly declares, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1:8). Our hope is that one day we will be conformed to the image of the Father (1 Jh.3:2). This hope is the basis for the believer's immediate purification from sin (1 Jh.3:3). Finally, John implies that a brother will sin (1 Jh.5:16).<sup>1545</sup>

Neither is sinless perfection evident in John 9:3, where of the man born blind Jesus says, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned" (Jh.9:3). Jesus does not mean that the blind man or his parents never committed particular sins, but that it was not a particular sin that caused the man to be blind. And when Jesus says in John 9:41 that the Pharisees "should not have sin" (KJV), he is referring to the eradication of the Pharisee's specific sin of self-complacency and self-infatuation, pending their act of repentance. If Jesus had not spoken to the world, it would not have known sin (Jh.15:22). 'Obviously Jesus is speaking of the great sin of rejecting him and his Father (cf. Jn.3:19).'<sup>1546</sup>

There is a sin that leads to death and a sin that is not unto death (1 Jh.5:16-17). It is the latter sin that the believer commits and not the former. It is justifiable to conclude that the sin that the believer does not commit (1 Jh.3:6-9; 5:18) is the sin that is unto death. The sin that is unto death is identified in 1 John 4:2-3. The believer will not deny that Jesus came in the flesh (v2; cf., 5:1), whereas the one with the spirit of antichrist will deny that Jesus came in the flesh (v3). The true believer cannot apostasize from the faith; he overcomes a world that is dominated by the evil one, by his faith (1 Jh.5:4), and refuses the lust of the flesh (1 Jh.2:16). 'It is, therefore, in these terms that we are to interpret the sin that the person begotten of God does not commit and cannot commit sin.'<sup>1547</sup>

Murray concludes the section of definitive sanctification by this comment:

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<sup>1544</sup> CW 2, pp.280-281.

<sup>1545</sup> *ibid.*, pp.281-282.

<sup>1546</sup> *ibid.*, p.282.

<sup>1547</sup> *ibid.*, pp.282-283.

John's language and patterns of thought differ from those of Paul, but the doctrine is to the same effect, that for every believer in Jesus the Christ and as the Son of God there is the decisive and irreversible breach with the world and with its defilement and power. And on the positive side the characterization is no less significant of the radical differentiation from the realm of the wicked one. The person begotten of God does righteousness, loves and knows God, loves those who are begotten of God, and keeps the commandments of God (1 Jn.2:3-6, 29; 4:7, 20, 21; 5:2, 3).<sup>1548</sup>

## THE AGENCY IN DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

### Faith and definitive sanctification

Our activity was not enlisted in Christ's death and resurrection. We were also passive in the application of them:

...when these events are viewed as taking effect actually and practically in the persons concerned, we are not permitted to think of human agency as enlisted in the decisive breach with sin and commitment to holiness. Even faith may not be construed as the agency in death to sin and life to righteousness. The language used is clearly to this effect [(Rom.6:3, 4, 6, 17, 18; 7:4; Eph.2:4, 5)]. Furthermore, the bond that makes effective in us the efficacy of Jesus' death and resurrection is union with Him. It is by the call of the Father that this union is established. And this call may never be defined in terms of human agency. Again the operative principle by which we are freed from the law of sin and death is the Holy Spirit. Thus, the agency of all three persons is brought to bear upon this decisive change.<sup>1549</sup>

<sup>1548</sup> *ibid.*, pp.283-284. Murray reviewed Dr W. E. Sangster's *The Path to Perfection. An Examination and Restatement of John Wesley's Doctrine of Christian Perfection* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1943). Murray does not agree with Sangster's argument that says that laxity in pressing toward the goal of all-pervasive holiness arises from a belief that this end will not be accomplished in this life. The demands of God's holiness do not slacken because of the failure of believers. Perfectionism disintegrates the organic unity between the present and the future. Perfectionism says that holiness is concerned with moment by moment perfection, and in doing this it ignores the realities of the presence of the disembodied spirits with Christ and the consummate glory of Christ, which 'are brought to bear in the fullest way upon the life of holiness here and now.'

Wesley's doctrine of perfection is more consistent than that of his followers. However, he is most inconsistent, for he does not contend for sinless perfection, nor for absolute and infallible perfection. He allowed 'for infirmities, ignorance and mistakes, indeed for such shortcomings as needed forgiveness.' Entire sanctification that came instantaneously upon the act of faith consisted in pure love, to Wesley. In short, he was concerned with sin's presence in the believer and acts of sin, the immanent disposition of 'he heart and overt acts.'

Unfortunately, Wesley merely defined sin as "voluntary transgression of a known law". Sin is lack of conformity to God's law, whether that sin is known to the sinner or no, says Murray. There is the victory over the power of sin (Rm.6:14), and this is the portion of all believers. Perfectionists appeal to 1 John 3:9. But this is a most ineffective and illogical argument, for the text would require that every regenerate person be sinlessly perfect. [CW, pp.308-311.]

<sup>1549</sup> "Sanctification (the Law)", Basic Christian Doctrines, editor: C. F. Henry, (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1962), pp.231-232.

### Effectual calling, regeneration and definitive sanctification

The Father effectually calls men into fellowship with his Son (Jh.6:37, 44, 65). 'The action bespeaks the radical character of the change.' The Holy Spirit regenerates and instates us into the kingdom of God. In this, the momentous and definitive nature of God's power is recorded:

While regeneration is an all-important factor in definitive sanctification, it would not be proper to subsume the latter under the topic 'regeneration'. The reason is that what is most characteristic in definitive sanctification, namely, death to sin by union with Christ in his death and newness of life by union with him in his resurrection, cannot properly be referred to regeneration by the Spirit. There is multiformity to that which occurs at the inception of the Christian life, and each facet must be accorded its own particularity. Calling, for example, as the action of the Father, must not be defined in terms of what is specifically the action of the Holy Spirit, namely, regeneration. Definitive sanctification, likewise, must be allowed its own individuality.<sup>1550</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain, but Murray seems to be saying that there is one breach with sin that has three stages: effectual calling, regeneration and definitive sanctification. Each are pre-faith. Effectual calling is the work of the Father; regeneration the work of the Spirit; and definitive sanctification is the activity of Jesus Christ.<sup>1551</sup> The specific virtue of Christ's death and resurrection is the basis of the action of both the Father and the Spirit.

In conclusion, the bearing of Jesus' death and resurrection upon sanctification has not been sufficiently appreciated.<sup>1552</sup> Union with Christ in his death and resurrection means a definitive breach with sin, ensuring that those who are recipients do not live unto themselves (Eph.2:1-6; 2 Cor.5:14-15; Col.2:20-3:4 [3:1-3]; 1 Pet.4:1-4).<sup>1553</sup>

### PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

#### The agent of progressive sanctification

It is the Father who progressively sanctifies the people of God (Jh.17:17; 15:2). Even so, the Holy Spirit is eminently the agent of sanctification (1 Thes.5:23; 2 Cor.3:18; Eph.1:17; Rom.8:13; Gal.5:22; Rm.5:5). 'We are always liable to distort emphases. Out of deference to all the stress that falls upon God's agency in sanctification, we must not fall into the error of

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<sup>1550</sup> CW 2, p.285.

<sup>1551</sup> See, *Soteriology II*, p.63.

<sup>1552</sup> CW 2, p.286.

quietism and fail to take account of the activity of the believer himself. The imperatives directed to the believer imply nothing less [(Cf., Rm.6:13, 19; 8:13; 2 Cor.7:1; Gal.5:16, 25)]'. <sup>1554</sup>

### Definitive progressive sanctification

According to Romans 6:13, *believers* are to present themselves to God as those alive from the dead. The aorist tense 'in this instance indicates the once-for-allness of the dedication involved in our presentation of ourselves and of our members.' <sup>1555</sup> It would seem that to Murray, this does not negate the believer's responsibility to continue as a bondservant to God. <sup>1556</sup>

Progressive sanctification 'embraces both mortification and sanctification' [*sic*]. <sup>1557</sup>

### Mortification

'In Romans 6 the accent falls upon...definitive transition...But in Romans 8:13 the apostle addresses believers and clearly intimates that their own agency is to be enlisted in putting to death the deeds of the body'. <sup>1558</sup> Romans 8:13 refers to believers mortifying the flesh, ' "Put to death" refers to activity on our part.' <sup>1559</sup> The "body" has already been destroyed (Rm.6:6; 7:4, 6). This definitive event is the reason why Paul can exhort believers to put to death the deeds of the body. Colossians 3:5 is an exhortation bound to a reflection of definitive sanctification as found in 2:20, "If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as living in the world do you subject yourselves to ordinances?" (KJV), and 3:3, "For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (KJV). <sup>1560</sup>

Sanctification also contains transformation. <sup>1561</sup>

### Transformation

The whole goal of the redemptive process is conformity to the image of Christ; it is also the goal of sanctification (Rm.12:2; 2 Cor.3:18; cf., Mt.17:2; 9:3), therefore. 2 Corinthians 3:18 is the most instructive text concerning the goal of transformation. Both beholding (Jh.1:14; cf.,

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<sup>1553</sup> *ibid.*, p.287.

<sup>1554</sup> "Sanctification", p.232.

<sup>1555</sup> *Romans* 1, p.228.

<sup>1556</sup> *ibid.*, p.234.

<sup>1557</sup> *CW* 2, p.295.

<sup>1558</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1559</sup> *Romans* 1, p.294.

<sup>1560</sup> *ibid.*, pp.295-296.

<sup>1561</sup> *CW* 2, p.297.

Heb.1:3) and reflecting the glory of Christ are implied in 2 Corinthians 3:18. It is from the Spirit of the Lord that transformation proceeds. This expression probably means "from the Lord of the Spirit". Even so, a reference to the Spirit is present, referring back to verses 6 and 8 where the Spirit's quickening, new covenant ministry is marked. It is the Spirit who glorifies Christ (Jh.16:13-14).<sup>1562</sup>

The church is to grow in holiness (Eph.4:12-16; 1Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet.3:18; Phil.1:9). The believer is to grow in knowledge of truth (Eph.1:17-18; 4:13-15; 2 Pet.3:18). In proportion to the believer's growth in knowledge is the increase of love, joy and peace. Love must increase (Phil.1:9; 1 Thes.3:12; 4:10). What 'monstrosities and tragedies have marred the witness of the church by failure to take account of the law of growth!' <sup>1563</sup>

The church, and not only the individual, is to progress in holiness. The growth of the individual does not occur except in the church which is the Spirit's fellowship. Eternal election was in Christ (Eph.1:14); the believers' redemption was accomplished in Christ (2 Cor.5:14-15; Eph.1:7); they are ushered into fellowship with Christ when redemption is applied (1 Cor.1:9). Sanctification will be consummated only when the body of Christ is complete and presented without fault and blemish. <sup>1564</sup>

The fact of the individual's inter-dependence with the body, the church (1 Cor.12:26; Eph.4:11-13; cf., Rm.12:4ff; 1 Cor.12:12ff; Col.2:19), exposes the peril of being absorbed in his own sanctification. An individual's indifference to the sanctification of others interferes with his own sanctification. A lack of concern for others is the manifestation of a lack of zeal for the honour of Christ. The indifferent brother fails to enrich others by his ministry, and their consequent impoverishment disables them from ministering to him. <sup>1565</sup>

Nothing more appropriately expresses the growth of holiness in the believer, than the idea of the fullness of Christ being imparted to him (Eph.4:11-13). What is this "fullness of Christ"? To begin with, we will examine Colossians 1:19, "It pleased the Father that all the fullness should take up its abode in him" (KJV). Some say it reflects upon the fullness that belongs ontologically to the eternal Son. This is not a correct reading, however. The text relates the mediatorial

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<sup>1562</sup> *ibid.*, pp.297-298.

<sup>1563</sup> *ibid.*, pp.298-299.

<sup>1564</sup> *ibid.*, p.299.

<sup>1565</sup> *ibid.*, pp.299-300.

fullness of Christ. It is as Mediator that Christ is labelled "head of the body, the church" (v18). "First begotten from the dead" (v18) is a title derived from the virtue of his resurrection. Christ's fullness is the reason for pre-eminence being attributed to him. Also, if verse 19 is interpreted ontologically, we have to answer how the Son derives his deity from the will of the Father, for, properly speaking, deity is not communicated. The "fullness" attributed to Christ is his mediatorial abundance in life, grace, truth, wisdom, knowledge, goodness, righteousness and power. It is true, nevertheless, that Christ's mediatorial glory is accorded to him only due to the fullness of deity being ontologically his.<sup>1566</sup>

Coming to Ephesians 1:23, what is meant by "fills"? Does it mean that he is continuing to receive his fullness? This cannot be so, because he is already perfectly full (Col.1:9). "Fills" may refer to Christ being head over the whole cosmos (Eph.1:22), and filling all things (Eph.4:10). But "all in all" may merely refer to Christ filling the church thoroughly.<sup>1567</sup>

We must ask, what is the antecedent of "the fullness", is it Christ or the church? Christ is not the antecedent. The syntax of verse 23 does not allow for the antecedent to be found in verse 22. Moreover, he would have to be the one who is the fullness of another person. He is not the fullness of the other members of the Trinity. Only he fills all in all (4:10). In what way is the church the fullness of Christ? Christ possesses the fullness (Col.1:9; 2:9; Jh.1:16). It is unto this fullness that the church attains (Eph.4:13). Christ is the mediatorial head of the church. It might be that "fullness" denotes the church completing, complementing his headship (cf., Mt.9:16; Mk.2:21). Preferable is another meaning. In Ephesians 3:19 and 4:13, "fullness" is used to describe 'that which is the receptacle of something.' The church is the receptacle of Christ's own fullness; the church is to become the fullness that Christ has. Therefore, this fullness is received by individuals only as they are members of the body, the church.<sup>1568</sup>

### Romans 7:7-8:13

7:7-14a. Through the law is knowledge of sin (Rm.3:20). Paul expresses that his knowledge of sin in his own experience arose from the good law exposing his sinful nature. The law concerning covetousness, the tenth commandment, exposed the sin of covetousness in his heart (Rm.7:7).<sup>1569</sup> Sin was hidden, was dead, but it sprung to life and used the commandment to smite

<sup>1566</sup> *ibid.*, pp.301-302.

<sup>1567</sup> *ibid.*, p.302.

<sup>1568</sup> *ibid.*, pp.302-304.

<sup>1569</sup> *Romans* 1, pp.248-250.



Paul (Rm.7:8). It is not correct to argue that, on this occasion, sin was not in existence because there was no law (Rm.4:15; cf., 5:13; 1 Cor.15:56). For sin was merely inert, inactive; it later exploded into life.<sup>1570</sup> Once Paul was alive apart from the law. He was living in self-righteousness, without any disturbance of conscience. When sin took occasion through the commandment, Paul died. He did not die to sin (Rm.6:2), for this comes through union with Christ and the gospel. On the contrary, his death was sin's revival; his self-righteousness was exposed, and he died to self-confidence (Rm.7:9).<sup>1571</sup> 'The purpose of law in man's original estate was not to give occasion to sin but to direct and regulate man's life....By reason of sin, however, that same law promotes death, in that it gives occasion to sin....' (Rm.7:10).<sup>1572</sup> Sin used the law, deceiving Paul: 'The more cognizant he became of its demands, the more he relied upon it as the way of life, the more he relied upon it as the way of life, the more the opposite fruit was borne....' (Rm.7:11).<sup>1573</sup>

There is no indication that Paul wrote these things whilst in a regenerate state. The most striking argument for saying that he was not regenerate is that the lusts (ἐπιθυμια) referred to in 7:8 are the passions (παθηματα) spoken of in 7:5. The time of the passions of 7:5 is "when we were in the flesh" (KJV), and this is the pre-regenerate state.<sup>1574</sup>

*Romans 7:14-20.* "But I am carnal, sold under sin" (v14) (KJV). Both "carnal" and "sin" are in contrast to "Spiritual" in verse 14a. Because "carnal" is co-ordinated with "sold under sin" and contrasted to "Spiritual", it must convey ethical quality. Paul's carnality (σαρκικός) is that he is against God. This is not the same as being "in the flesh" (v5; 8:8) or being "after the flesh" (8:5). Paul is speaking as a regenerate man. He accuses the Corinthians of carnality (1 Cor.3:1, 3). The flesh still remains within Paul (Rm.7:18, 25), which is associated or synonymous with indwelling sin (vv.17, 20). Ahab, an unregenerate man, sold himself to do evil (1 Kg 21:20, 25; cf., 2 Kg.17:17). But this was to sell himself to iniquity; it is another thing to be sold under the power of sin. Ahab was an active agent, whilst Paul was subjected to an alien power. Paul wished to do good but instead does evil (Rm.7:15-16). This proves that his will is in agreement with the word of God (cf., v16) but that his flesh is forcing him to sin.<sup>1575</sup>

<sup>1570</sup> *ibid.*, pp.250-251.

<sup>1571</sup> *ibid.*, p.250.

<sup>1572</sup> *ibid.*, p.252.

<sup>1573</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1574</sup> *ibid.*, p.255.

*Romans* 7:21-25. "Law" in verse 21 probably denotes the law of sin (cf., vv23, 25), and not the law of God. "Law", in this instance, is the rule or principle of action; it also retains the usual meaning of law, namely, that which demands action. Thus, "the law of sin" is both the demand of action against the law, and being impelled to act against the law. <sup>1576</sup>

"The law of God" (v22) is the same as the "law of the mind" (v23). '[The law of the mind] is...the law of God as the law that regulates the mind and which the minds serves.' <sup>1577</sup> "The inward man", that is, the mind (vv23, 25) or the spirit (1 Cor.2:11), is contrasted by Paul to the outward man, the flesh (2 Cor.4:16). "Flesh" (v25) is not the body, but the whole man, body and soul, as against God. Paul is developing the contrast of verses 17 and 20. In them, he identifies himself with his volition, and contrasts it to the power within him impelling him to disobey his will. It is the determinate will to the good that is denoted by "inward man". "The law of sin" (v23) is contrasted to the law of God, and therefore continues the contrast of the previous verses. "The law of sin" is the law that arises from sin and which sin demands. "The law of sin" wars against the law of Paul's mind. The *other* law brings Paul into the captivity of the law of sin (v23). This imagery is analogous to "sold under sin" (v14) and must be interpreted in the same manner. The law of sin controls Paul's "members" (v23); they have the same meaning as found in 6:13, 19. The law of sin that has as its seat in soul, expresses itself through our physical body. It was Paul, "me", who was brought into captivity by the law of sin. <sup>1578</sup>

Paul longs to be delivered from the "body of death" (v24), his own physical body that is captivated by the law of sin and death. <sup>1579</sup> Therefore, the deliverance that Paul rejoices in verse 25 is none other than the resurrection of his body from the dead (Rm.8:23; 1 Cor.15:54, 57; 2 Cor.5:4; Phil.3:21). <sup>1580</sup>

*Romans* 8:1-4. Verse 1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (KJV). "Condemnation" is the opposite of justification (cf.5:16; 8:34) and justification implies the absence of condemnation.' The lack of condemnation is drawn from what preceded in

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<sup>1575</sup> *ibid.*, pp.259-263.

<sup>1576</sup> *ibid.*, pp.264-265.

<sup>1577</sup> *ibid.*, p.267.

<sup>1578</sup> *ibid.*, pp.265-268.

<sup>1579</sup> *ibid.*, pp.268-269.

<sup>1580</sup> *ibid.*, pp.269-270.

3:21-7:25. What is thrust into the foreground in "condemnation" is freedom from the guilt of sin (3:21-5:21), and freedom from its power (6:1-7:25).<sup>1581</sup>

Verse 2. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death."<sup>1582</sup> Verses 1 and 2 are bound by the particle "for". There is also the repetition of "in Christ Jesus" in verse 2. It develops, therefore, the implication of union with Christ taught in verse 1. The "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit (Rm.8:6, 10, 11; Jh.6:63; 1 Cor.15:45; 2 Cor.3:6, 17, 18; Gal.6:8). He is the "Spirit of life" because he is its author (cf., v10).<sup>1583</sup>

"The law of sin and death" harks back to 7:21, 23, 25, where, because the wages of sin is death, "the law of sin" is also "the law of death". "Law" in these verses meant a 'regulating and actuating power as well as a legislating authority.' Therefore, "the law" of the Spirit refers to the 'regulating and actuating power of the Holy Spirit' that makes us free from the power of sin unto death.<sup>1584</sup>

In verse 3, Paul is 'concerned with deliverance from the law of sin and death and, therefore, from sin as a ruling and regulating power.'<sup>1585</sup>

Verse 4. Murray says, "The ordinance of the law" is the righteous requirement of the law (2:26; cf. Luke 1:6). Holiness is fulfilment of the written law's requirements. "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit. He indwells and directs the Christian unto holiness. In this manner is the written law fulfilled. The law of the Spirit caused a once-for-all breach with sin, and the effect of the breach, the effect of the law of the Spirit, is that the "law-Spirit" renews us.<sup>1586</sup>

*Romans 8:5-13.* "After the flesh" (vv4-5) and "in the flesh" (vv8-9) have the same effect, but with this difference: the latter reveals that the persons concerned are conditioned by the flesh; the former that their lives are after the pattern of the flesh. "After the Spirit" (vv4-5) and "in the

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<sup>1581</sup> *ibid.*, pp.274-275.

<sup>1582</sup> There is the choice of  $\mu\epsilon$  ( $\alpha$  B F G) or  $\sigma\epsilon$  (A C D E K L P) in verse 2. In either case, the sense is not affected. [*Romans 1*, p.276.]

<sup>1583</sup> *Romans 1*, pp.275-277.

<sup>1584</sup> *ibid.*, p.276.

<sup>1585</sup> For Murray's and our comments on *Romans 8:3*, see *Union with Christ*.

<sup>1586</sup> *ibid.*, pp.283-284.

Spirit" (v9) reflect the same distinction: the latter refers to persons who are conditioned by the Spirit; the former to those who live in the pattern of the Spirit. <sup>1587</sup>

"To "mind the things of the flesh" (vs.5) is to have the things of the flesh as the absorbing objects of thought, interest, affection, and purpose.' "The mind of the flesh" (v6) is the dispositional complex of the soul controlled by the flesh. "The things of the Spirit" (v5) are those objects of the Spirit that absorb the soul. "The mind of the Spirit" (v6) is dispositional complex of the soul patterned and controlled by the Spirit. <sup>1588</sup>

"The mind of the flesh is death" (v6). Death has as its principle separation. Spiritual death is our estrangement from God (Eph.2:1). The mind is spiritually dead, estranged from God. <sup>1589</sup>

"The mind of the Spirit is life and peace" (v6). "Life" is contrasted to "death", and denotes the knowledge and fellowship of God (Jh.17:3; 1 Jh.1:3). "Peace" is subjective, the tranquillity of the heart. <sup>1590</sup>

The flesh is death because it is at enmity with God (v7). 'Enmity with God is the actuating principle and governing propension of the mind of the flesh.' Enmity to God expresses itself in insubjection to the law of God (v7). It is impossible for those who are in the flesh to please God. Not only is the flesh against the law (v7) but the flesh can do nothing to elicit approval from God (v8). <sup>1591</sup>

A person is "in the Spirit", if the Spirit dwells in him (v9; cf., Eph.2:22). The indwelling of the Spirit and being in the Spirit are distinguishable but inseparable. The man who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to God (v9). The "Spirit of Christ" is another way of saying "Spirit of God" (2 Cor.3:17-18; Gal.4:6; Phil.1:9; 1 Pet.1:11). Every believer is indwelt by the Spirit and is therefore a believer. In this way, every believer is Spiritual. <sup>1592</sup>

If Christ is in the believer, the body is dead because of sin (v10). This is not the death to sin related in 6:2, for in 8:10 the body is dead *because of sin*. Verse 11 refers to the resurrection of

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<sup>1587</sup> *ibid.*, pp.284-285.

<sup>1588</sup> *ibid.*, p.285.

<sup>1589</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1590</sup> *ibid.*, pp.285-286.

<sup>1591</sup> *ibid.*, pp.286-287.

our mortal bodies. Thus, verse 10 also refers to the physical body. The body is dead because death is the wages of sin (Rm.6:23; 5:12). "Death" is the dissolution of the physical body, the separation between spirit and body.<sup>1593</sup>

"The Spirit is life because of righteousness." That the Holy Spirit is signified in verse 10 is shown in that in verse 11 and the preceding context, the Holy Spirit is in view. The Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of life" because he is the Spirit who raises from the dead (v11). The human spirit is not the proper antithesis of the body, for in death the spirit and the body are separated. It is the Holy Spirit who is the antithesis of the death of the body. He is "the Spirit of life *because of righteousness*", for 'it is on account of the righteousness which the apostle calls "the righteousness of God" and which is the righteousness and obedience of Christ that the Holy Spirit is life in relation to and annulment of that death which conditions our sinful situation.'<sup>1594</sup>

Speaking to believers, Paul says that if they live in accordance with the flesh, they will die. This is death in its ultimate scope- eternal separation from God. The believer must put to death the sin that is in his members, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of mortifying the flesh is life from the Spirit, eternal life and fellowship (v13). Putting to death the deeds of the body is to be led by the Spirit (v14). And those who are led by the Spirit are sons of God (v14).<sup>1595</sup>

## THE PATTERN OF SANCTIFICATION

### Conformity to God

The pattern of sanctification, both definitive and progressive, is transformation into the image of the Father (Lev.11:44-45; 1 Pet.1:15-16; Mt.5:48). Because man is made in God's image, restoration to it and nothing less than it 'can define the restoration which redemption contemplates.'<sup>1596</sup>

### Conformity to God's word

The law of God is the transcript of God's glory. The law is good, just and holy, reflecting God's attributes. The will of God is the zenith, ' "the good and the acceptable and the perfect" '

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<sup>1592</sup> *ibid.*, p.288.

<sup>1593</sup> *ibid.*, p.289.

<sup>1594</sup> *ibid.*, pp.290-291.

<sup>1595</sup> *ibid.*, pp.293-295.

<sup>1596</sup> *CW* 2, p.306.

(Rm.12:2), it is God's will, the reflection of God. Any lack of conformity to God's law or to his will is a failure to conform to the goodness of both, a failure to conform to God's image.<sup>1597</sup>

### Conformity to Christ

The supreme revelation of God's will is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is the image of the Father (Jh.1:18; cf., 14:9). The incarnate life of Christ as it is brought to bear as an example is applied to the singular details of day-to-day life (cf., 2 Cor.8:7-9). Most strikingly it is the sufferings and death of Christ that bear directly upon the pattern the believer is to follow in concrete situations (Jh.13:15; Mk.10:44-45 (cf., Mt.20:27-28); 1 Pet.2:21; Phil.2:5). We cannot perform the same obedience that Christ attained to; our obedience is merely patterned after his. His example is relevant to us because it was in the flesh that he was an example. Yet, his example was derived from his unique personage as the Son of God.<sup>1598</sup>

The saints are to be transformed into the Father's image (1 Jh.3:2). "Seeing" the Father does not denote physical sight, but the fullness of revelation that will be imparted to our understandings, which will be, at last, undimmed by sin. In the finite realm, this irradiation will be a perfect reflection of God's glory, that is, it will be a full conformity to the image of Christ; the saint will be conformed to his glorified status.<sup>1599</sup>

## GLORIFICATION

### The glory of God

The goal of sanctification is twofold: the promotion of God's glory (Eph.1:6, 12, 14; Phil.1:11), and the glorification of believers.<sup>1600</sup>

The promotion of God's glory is the only foundation for the glorification of believers. There is reason to believe that the glory of God spoken of in Romans 5:2 is God's own glory (cf., Jh.11:4; Rm.1:23; 15:7; 1 Cor.10:31; 2 Cor.4:6, 15; Phil.1:11; 2:11; 1 Tim.1:11; Tit.2:13; Rev.21:11, 23), and not the glory bestowed on us by God (cf., Rm.2:7, 10; 8:18, 21; 9:23b; 1 Cor.2:7; 15:43; 2

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<sup>1597</sup> *ibid.*, pp.307-308.  
<sup>1598</sup> *ibid.*, pp.308-310.  
<sup>1599</sup> *ibid.*, p.310.  
<sup>1600</sup> *CW* 2, p.313.

Cor.3:18b; 4:17; Col.1:27; 3:4; Heb.2:10). Believers anticipate not only their own glorification, but also long for the manifestation of God's glory (cf., 1 Thes.2:12; 1 Pet.5:10).<sup>1601</sup>

On judgement day the exposure of the sins of believers will redound to God's glory, as therein will his justice be vindicated (Ps.96:13). Inability to concord with this is evidence that we have restricted our understanding to our own glorification.<sup>1602</sup>

'God will be glorified in all his works.' He will be glorified in the damnation of the wicked, for by this will his justice be magnified. His glory will be seen supremely in the glorification of the church, for all his perfections will be manifested in its exaltation. This has to be so, for the Son's final glorification will be in the glorification of the church; the consummation of the church's redemption is one with the incarnate Son who is the embodiment of the Father's glory. Thus, the glorification of Christ is the ultimate display of God's glory (Jh.13:31-32; cf., 14:13; 16:14; 17:1, 4-5).<sup>1603</sup>

## Glorification

Murray writes:

Glorification is the final phase of the application of redemption. It is that which brings to completion the process which begins in effectual calling. Indeed it is the completion of the whole process of redemption. For glorification means the attainment of the goal to which the elect of God were predestinated in the eternal purpose of the Father and it involves the consummation of the redemption secured and procured by the vicarious work of Christ.<sup>1604</sup>

Glorification is not the state of moral perfection and blessedness in heaven, which the disembodied soul enters into upon its death. The last enemy, death, must be defeated before glorification is accomplished (Rom.8:23; 1 Cor.15:54; Phil.3:21).<sup>1605</sup>

Yet, "glorify" (δοξάζω) is seldom used of the church, and almost uniformly used of glorifying Christ or God.<sup>1606</sup>

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<sup>1601</sup> *ibid.*, pp.314-315.

<sup>1602</sup> *ibid.*, p.313.

<sup>1603</sup> *ibid.*, p.314.

<sup>1604</sup> *R4*, p.174.

<sup>1605</sup> *ibid.*, pp.174-175.

Believers will together be glorified at the coming of Christ (1 Cor.15:51-52; 1 Thes.4:16-17). This glory is achieved in union with Christ (Eph.5:27). The glorification of the saints will coincide with the revelation of both God's and Christ's glory (Is.2:11; Mat.16:27; 25:31; 24:30; Rm.5:2; 8:17; Tit.2:13; 1 Pet.4:13; Jude 24). In Romans 5:2, "the glory of God" can further be defined as the glory of Christ in his glorified resurrection body. The saints will be conformed to his image by wearing their resurrection bodies; they will therefore reflect God's own glory (Jh.17:22, 24; Rm.8:17, 29; 9:23; 1 Cor.2:7; 2 Cor.3:18; 4:17; Phil.3:21; Col.1:27; 3:4; 1 Thes.2:12; 2 Thes.2:14; 2 Tim.2:10; Heb.2:10; 1 Pet.5:1, 4, 10; 1 Jh.3:2).<sup>1607</sup>

The epitomy of the glorification of believers at the coming of Christ will be that they are made heirs and co-heirs with Christ. The liberty of the glorification of believers is the event that creation groans for; it is the moment when creation will be released from bondage to sin and be renewed (Rm.8:20-23; 2 Pet.3:12-13; Rev.21:27). This is not an arbitrary or merely coincidental event, for it is a correlative hope.<sup>1608</sup>

Specifically, Christians will be conformed to the image of Christ the firstborn (πρωτοτοκος) (Rm.8:29). "Firstborn" refers to Christ's pre-eminence amongst his brothers, for the elect will share in the glory of the firstborn (Rm.8:17; cf., Col.1:15, 18; Heb.1:6; Rev.1:5). This title is not a reference to the Son's ontological nature (cf., Rm.8:3, 32), therefore. The glorified Christ does not cease to be the divine Son of God.<sup>1609</sup>

The glorified bodies of Christ and the saints belies the thought that material substance is the source of evil (cf., 1 Jh.4:1-3). Neither should salvation be construed as the separation of the body from the soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul cannot be divorced from the that of the resurrection/glorification of the saint's body.<sup>1610</sup>

## COMMENT

### DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

<sup>1606</sup> CW 2, p.315.

<sup>1607</sup> RA, pp.176-181; *Romans* 1, p.162.

<sup>1608</sup> RA., pp.178-180.

<sup>1609</sup> CW 2, p.316.

<sup>1610</sup> RA., pp.180-181.



### Definitive sanctification and the *ordo salutis*

*New doctrine.* Murray's definition of definitive sanctification is probably a later development in his thought. In 1953 he wrote his first article on sanctification, and it contained no reference to definitive sanctification.<sup>1611</sup> Moreover, in his articles, "The Order of Salvation (1)"<sup>1612</sup> and "The Order of Salvation (2)",<sup>1613</sup> the very places we would expect to find a mention of definitive sanctification, Murray, once again, does not speak of it.

*Effectual calling, regeneration and definitive sanctification.* He said that regeneration and definitive sanctification were not the same blessing. Yet, he also says that 'regeneration is an all-important factor in definitive sanctification'. In establishing his doctrine of definitive sanctification, he cites texts that he has previously asserted taught regeneration: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10; 4:22-24; and Colossians 3:9-10.<sup>1614</sup> Murray does not advise us just how the same text can teach two different doctrines at the same time. This weakness is conspicuous in his citation of the Johannine texts on regeneration. He does not cite texts concerning regeneration to prove his own doctrine of effectual calling. Why, then, does he cite texts concerning regeneration to prove his doctrine of definitive sanctification? These are two distinct blessings, according to him. Throughout his *ordo*, there is no interpenetration between the various loci. As he himself says, effectual calling is the Father's work alone, regeneration is the Spirit's work only, and definitive sanctification is due to the action of the Son. Effectual calling may carry within its bosom the power of regeneration- so Murray- but there is no interpenetration between effectual calling and regeneration, each has its own parameters.

He is adamant that effectual calling, regeneration and definitive sanctification are the components of a once-for-all breach with sin. But in his doctrine of regeneration, he tells us that the transformation of the sinner is decisive, once-for-all. So what is the difference between regeneration and definitive sanctification? Murray never properly tells us. Possibly the former deals with sin in us, and the latter with the power of sin that holds us in bondage.

Robert Strimple and Murray are criticized by Dr. R. Godfrey of WTS for arguing for definitive sanctification. He perceives two problems: firstly, it is confusing to speak of definitive

<sup>1611</sup> The article was called "Sanctification", *The Presbyterian Guardian* XXII:12 (1953), republished in *Redemption Accomplished*.

<sup>1612</sup> *The Presbyterian Guardian* XXI:10 (1952).

<sup>1613</sup> *The Presbyterian Guardian* XXI:11 (1952).

<sup>1614</sup> See, *CW* 2, p.190.

sanctification, because, historically, sanctification has always denoted progressive sanctification; secondly, there is no difference between definitive sanctification and regeneration. Strimple says two things. If the bible speaks of definitive sanctification, then we have a right to refer to definitive sanctification. But, Strimple then admits that he cannot tell the difference between definitive sanctification and regeneration!<sup>1615</sup> His first comment is common sense, but his second comment is amazing. Both he and Murray “live and die” by their *ordos*, yet, here is Strimple effectively passing-by the difficulties involved in distinguishing between definitive sanctification and regeneration!

### The agency of definitive sanctification

*Double sanctification.* In Regeneration, we noted how Calvin’s dual perspective on regeneration was tantamount to double regeneration- a contradiction. Murray is, it seems, guilty of a similar error. Regeneration is the transformation of the *habitus* of man, said Murray. Acts 15:9- for argument’s sake we will accept that it does refer to definitive sanctification- teaches that the believer’s *heart* is sanctified through faith, says Calvin.<sup>1616</sup> This is transformation. Thus, Murray posits *definitive* transformation of the heart in regeneration, and argues for *definitive* transformation of the heart in definitive sanctification. If Murray is referring to one and the same definitive deliverance, then he may still be criticised for not detailing the precise relationship between regeneration and definitive sanctification.

*Faith and definitive sanctification.* He cited 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 and Acts 15:9 as proofs of definitive sanctification. Yet, the former refers to sanctification through faith, and the latter to purification through faith. Of *hagiasmos* in Romans 6:19, Murray said that it denoted a state rather than a process. In disagreement with him, Moo thinks the term always denotes an activity.<sup>1617</sup> If he is correct, this would entail amending Murray’s doctrine of definitive sanctification. This could be done by stating of *hagiasmos* in Romans 6:19 that the goal of our definitive deliverance is the pursuit of holiness.

It is the case that faith is instrumental, that is, integral to, definitive sanctification. In criticism of Murray, Moo thinks that in Ephesians 4:22-24, the infinitives *αποθεσθαι* and *ενδυσασθαι* depend

<sup>1615</sup> Tape, *Sanctification Part 1* (Philadelphia, Westminster Media, 1989).

<sup>1616</sup> Acts 14-28, pp.34-36.

<sup>1617</sup> Romans, p.405. Murray says that 1 Thessalonians 4:7 denotes definitive sanctification, but uses the same text to refer to goal of definitive sanctification, namely holiness.

on the verb *ενδυσασθαι*, and 'make an imperitival force more likely.'<sup>1618</sup> Surely a *prima facie* reading of Colossians 3:9-10 implies that the taking off of the old man and the putting on of the new man were done by believers themselves? To our mind, Ephesians 4:22-24 is irrelevant for Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification, for it merely relates that the *believer* is to take off the old man and put on the new man.<sup>1619</sup> Gaffin has demonstrated that Romans 6 teaches, amongst other things, definitive sanctification through faith.<sup>1620</sup> Ephesians 5:26 refers to the cleansing of water by the word. Stott<sup>1621</sup> and Hendriksen<sup>1622</sup> are convinced that this is an allusion to water baptism- and thus faith.

*The roles of the Father, Spirit and Son.* Murray said that regeneration is the work of the Spirit and definitive sanctification is the activity of Christ. But, way may ask, who definitively sanctifies us, is it Christ or the Father, or the Spirit? We are definitively sanctified in union with Christ- that much is obvious. But who definitively sanctifies us in union with Christ? Murray thinks the Father is the primary agent in Christ's resurrection.<sup>1623</sup> The Spirit also raised Christ from the dead, concluded Murray. Moreover, he thinks Christ raised himself from the dead.<sup>1624</sup> We would say that this entails that we, in union with Christ in *his* death and resurrection two thousand years ago, were raised by the Father, the Spirit and the Son. And because at the moment of faith we were existentially raised in union with Christ, it is reasonable to say that the Father (Eph.2:5-6), the Spirit (cf., 2 Thes.2:13-14) and the Son raised us existentially in union with the Son.<sup>1625</sup> This is to say that regeneration and sanctification are different ways of describing our union with Christ in his resurrection. Union with Christ in his resurrection was, to Murray, a central metaphor for describing regeneration.<sup>1626</sup> Gaffin says that it is an inversion to say Paul thought union with Christ in his resurrection was a metaphor for regeneration.<sup>1627</sup>

<sup>1618</sup> Romans, p.374.

<sup>1619</sup> F. Foulkes, *Ephesians*, TNTC, (London, Tyndale Press, 1971), p.130; A. T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, p.284; C. Hodge, *A Commentary on Ephesians* (Edinburgh, BOTT, 1991), p.187; J. B. Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, fifth edition, (London, MacMillan and Co., 1876), pp.214-215; J. Stott, *God's New Society*, p.180; W. Hendriksen, *Galatians and Ephesians*, p.214; J. D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, (Carlisle, Paternoster Press, 1996), p.221.

<sup>1620</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.44-52.

<sup>1621</sup> *Ephesians*, p.227.

<sup>1622</sup> *Galatians & Ephesians*, p.251.

<sup>1623</sup> *CW* 4, p.83.

<sup>1624</sup> *ibid.*, pp.89-91.

<sup>1625</sup> G. Fee says, "... "washed" occurs as the activity of the Spirit in Titus 3:5; "justified," in the form of its cognate noun "righteousness/justification," occurs as the work of the Spirit in 2 Cor 3:8-9 and Gal 5:5; for obvious reasons "sanctified" occurs often as a Spirit activity (1 Thes 4:7-8; 2 Thes 2:13; Rom 15:16)."

[*Empowering Presence*, p.130.]

<sup>1626</sup> *CW* 2, pp.188-191.

<sup>1627</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, p.128.

## ROMANS 6:1-7:6

### The Pauline paradox

The "old man" has been crucified (Rm.6:6). Colossians 3:9-11 says that the Colossian Christians have put off the old man. Whereas, Ephesians 4:22-24 teaches that the old man is still to be removed. We half agree with Murray, therefore. But how can we be free from the "old man" and still be bound to it? Moo says that *the church* has been transferred from Adam to Christ. "Old man" was our solidarity with Adam. It has ended, and this accounts for the old man's definitive death. However, there is the continuous temptation to live in Adam; we are to flee this by putting on the new man.<sup>1628</sup>

It is perceptive of Moo to write that it was the church and not merely individuals that was delivered from Adam. However, the rest of Moo's logic suffers from the same fallacy as Murray's: why does Paul exhort Christians to put off the old man, if there is no old man to put off? Nygren's understanding is similar to our own; Murray summarises it: the Christian belongs at the same time to the old and new aeons. Murray replies, 'Nygren...has not helped us in resolving the question how the believer who is free from the law is at the same time bound by the law as the rule of life and behaviour.' For Murray, Nygren's aeon framework has blinkered him to seeing the subjective or ethical aspect of the Christian's relation to the law (Rm.7:22-23), and to understanding that the sinner has been once-for-all freed from the power of sin (Rm.6).<sup>1629</sup> It is Moo who says that deliverance from the "old man" is not deliverance from our sinful nature, but deliverance from solidarity with Adam in the old aeon; release from the "old man" denotes a change of relationship and not a change of nature.<sup>1630</sup> The external or relational denotation of "old man" is the continuation of Paul's argument in Romans 5:12ff. In our exegesis of this text, we determined that sin is like a slave master, objective to all men, holding them in captivity (see Union with Christ). Cranfield sums up our view of Murray, 'Murray's objection...seems to stem mainly from the failure to reckon with the several different senses in which Paul speaks of the Christian's death to sin and of his new life.'<sup>1631</sup>

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<sup>1628</sup> Romans, pp.374-375.

<sup>1629</sup> CW 3, pp.354-355.

<sup>1630</sup> Romans, p.373.

<sup>1631</sup> Romans 1, pp.316-317.

Calvin does not hesitate to say that the believer has died once-for-all to sin, 'Although spiritual death makes continual headway within us, yet we are properly said to die once, when Christ reconciles us by His blood to the Father, and regenerates us also at the same time by the power of His Spirit.'<sup>1632</sup> Again, 'their deliverance from sin, which followed when they ceased to be what they were before'.<sup>1633</sup> Once more, 'It is not fitting...for believers to be brought again under the dominion of sin, from which they have been set at liberty by Christ...."You have been liberated from bondage of sin"'.<sup>1634</sup> Lastly, 'It is to be noted that no one can serve righteousness, unless he has first been liberated by the power and kindness of God from tyranny of sin'.<sup>1635</sup>

The believer is still able to serve sin, thinks Calvin, 'the mortifying of the flesh must be done once and for ever, while the life of the Spirit must never cease. This is not...because our flesh is mortified in a single moment, but because we must not shrink from putting it to death. If we return to our own filthiness, we deny Christ, for we can have communion with Him only by newness of life'.<sup>1636</sup> 'Though sin resides in us, it is ridiculous that *it should* have the power to exercise dominion over us, for the power of sanctification *ought* to be superior to it, so that our life may testify that we are truly members of Christ.' [emphasis ours]<sup>1637</sup> 'When sin has once acquired *dominion* in our mind, all our faculties are immediately applied to its service. Paul, therefore, here describes the reign of sin by its consequences, in order to point out more clearly what course we must follow if we would cast of its yoke....If, therefore, [Christians] prevent the proper use of any of their members, they are serving sin.'<sup>1638</sup> So we see that Calvin did think that the Christian was dominated by sin.

Murray has to answer how it is possible for the saint to be decisively delivered from the power of sin, and yet sin wars, as a *power*, within him (Rm.7:23). Sin, therefore- to use Murray's theological logic- is a two-fold power. But if sin's power has been destroyed, how is it that the *power* of sin still prevails?

Probably the key to understanding the terms "old man" and "new man" is to understand Christ's incarnation. In Union With Christ, we argued that Christ was under the dominion of sin. Sin

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<sup>1632</sup> *Romans*, p.127.

<sup>1633</sup> *ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>1634</sup> *ibid.*, p.133.

<sup>1635</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1636</sup> *ibid.*, p.126.

<sup>1637</sup> *ibid.*, p.128.

<sup>1638</sup> *ibid.*, p.129.

dominated his existence. But it was only sin in an objective sense, as we mentioned before: the emphasis was not upon the internal or subjective; Christ could not sin. Christ was victor throughout his life, and especially in his resurrection. Thus, he was free from the dominion of sin. And therein lies the paradox of being human *and* a believer. The believer has been delivered from the lordship of sin *in that* he lives out in the present the new life of the age to come. The unbeliever has not been raised with Christ and does not participate in Christ's victory, or in the new life of the new age. The believer "breathes the air of heaven", at this very moment.<sup>1639</sup> However, *he is still under the lordship of sin, in that he lives within the domain of sin and daily fights it and is overcome by its influence, he is still, in this manner, bound to Adam.*

### The corporate nature of deliverance

"Old man"/"new man". We need to return to Moo's corporate understanding of "old man". It is difficult to discern whether he thinks "old man" refers to the church *en masse*, the group, or the church as represented by individuals. If he means the latter, he has to explain how Paul can refer to how "our" (plural) "old man" (singular) has been crucified. It is preferable to consider "old man" to refer to *the church as a group*. It is probable that terms old man and new man are uniformly corporate, as Holland argues.<sup>1640</sup> This is to reflect the Pauline theology of the corporate nature of the church (1 Cor.12:12-26). In Ephesians 2:14-15, the reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles is said to be in order to create one new man. As R. Strimple says, 'both reconciliations hang together.'<sup>1641</sup> Once more, Paul is emphasising the mystery of the gospel, that Jews and Gentiles are one body in the new Adam, Christ. Yet, Murray does not give this aspect of reconciliation any recognition whatever (see the chapter Reconciliation).

"Body of sin". In Romans 6:6, it says, "our old man was crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be done away". "Old man" was seen to have a corporate reference. This suggests that in Romans 6:6, "body of sin" might also have a corporate reference. However, Murray does not think so. He says that it means the physical body as conditioned and controlled by sin. F. F. Bruce says that the "body of sin" is 'that old solidarity of sin and death which all share "in Adam", but which has been broken by the death of Christ, with a view to the creation of the new solidarity of righteousness and life of which believers are made part "in Christ".'<sup>1642</sup> Even although Bruce is speaking of internal sin and of the individual, he does root the phrase "body of

<sup>1639</sup> Cf., Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1988), pp.298-299.

<sup>1640</sup> *New Exodus Motif*, pp.334-361.

<sup>1641</sup> "Reconciliation, I".

<sup>1642</sup> *Romans*, p.139.

sin" in Adamic theology. Holland takes the term to refer to the church as crucified to Adam in Christ's death.<sup>1643</sup>

"Body of death". Romans 7: 24 says, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Could it be that "body of death" is another reference to the church- so Holland?<sup>1644</sup> In this case, we do not think so. It is our own position, that Paul is speaking of himself here- we will develop this argument later. In accordance with modern interpretations of Romans 7, there is probably Adamic theology present.<sup>1645</sup> Barth referred to all men being Adam (see Union with Christ). We disagree, yet agree with this. They are not Adam, for he was a distinct historical figure, the federal head of mankind- *pro* Murray. However, each individual is Adam, in that his sin is recapitulated by them, and they are his image.<sup>1646</sup> For example, in Romans 5:12ff it was individuals from the Jews and Gentiles that sinned against God, thus recapitulating Adam's sin.

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<sup>1643</sup> *New Exodus Motif*, pp.334-359.

<sup>1644</sup> *idem*.

<sup>1645</sup> See Moo, *Romans*, pp.425-426.

<sup>1646</sup> Murray believes that because scripture speaks about man pre-fall and post-fall as possessing the image of God, then the image of God consists of that which is intrinsic to man as man. The two aspects or constituent parts of the image are body and spirit, or body and persona, 'a self-conscious, rational, free, moral, and religious agent.' Man has the ability, or framework where with, to obey God's commands (moral aspect) and have fellowship with God (religious aspect). However, the image that the regenerated man is conformed to consists of moral excellence (moral virtue); he is re-created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness (Eph.4:24; Col.3:10). There is no proof that Adam's image comprises moral excellence. This is not to deny that Adam was created in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. In other words, the "image" of Genesis 1:26 is not the same as that of Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10, for the former belongs to man intrinsically as man (cf, Jm.3:29), and the latter is virtue which has been imparted only to the regenerate man. [*CW* 2, pp.34-46.]

We agree with Sinclair Ferguson, who believes that man as man is the image of God. ["Image of God", *NDT*, p.329.] Because Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; James 3:9, make no mention of the image of God as imparted to the regenerate *per se*, this does not prove that Adam's original image did not also consist of knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

"Image" is a relational term. Adam was created in God's image, which meant, amongst other things, that Adam was not only capable of relations with God and man, but could perform as man ought to toward God and his fellow man. Man is not to be conceived of in terms of systematic statements concerning his composition, for his essence is found in how he acts. Otherwise, what would distinguish an angel from man? Paul writes, "You have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self" (Col.3:9). Why should Paul use such a clause as "being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator" (Col.3:10), if there is no need to renew an image, or more pointedly, to renew knowledge? 'Man is renewed. But a renewal presupposes previous condition', writes G. H. Clark, 'and its previous condition to which "according to the Creator" refers.' [*Colossians* (Phillipsburg: New Jersey, Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979), pp.115-116.] The "knowledge" the saint is renewed in is that which propels him to know God and to be "known" of God. Unregenerate man is in relationship with God and with his fellow man, for he does exercise his moral and religious framework, but in a way which is contrary to God's commands: the unregenerate man's relations to God and man are perverted, that is, they are unrighteous (Rom.1:18-32). For the saint to be renewed in Christ's image is to be conformed to the relationship that Christ has with his Father and with his brothers, and to experience the reciprocation of love.

*Three levels of Adamic unity.* There are possibly three perspectives to Adamic unity. (1) the historical personage of Adam was the representative of Jews and Gentiles; they were present with him in his sin; *they* sinned in him. (2) the church is the "body of sin". It does not merely belong to the Adamic realm, *it* is also "the body of sin". It is so, because just as Adam *was* mankind (the representative head of mankind), so those whom he represented are him, inasmuch as they recapitulate his crime and are his image. This is what accounts for the singular "body of sin" being attributed to a group. (3) the individual is also Adam. Giving examples from the individual's union with Christ may help. Christ works through the church, but he also works through individuals. So much so, that he becomes identified not only with his church but with individuals, "For to *me*", says Paul, "to live *is* Christ and to die is gain"; "I want to know Christ...the fellowship of sharing in *his* sufferings, becoming like him in his death"; "For just as the suffering of Christ flow over into our lives" (Phil.1:21; 3:10; 2 Cor.1:5). Just as Christ is embodied in his individual saints, so Adam is embodied in those individuals who come under his influence via sin. <sup>1647</sup>

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<sup>1647</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the terms body of sin, body of death, old man, and new man are primarily *individualistic* terms for they refer to corporate figures who were individuals- Adam and Christ. Thus, the emphasis of these terms is not upon the church or the individual person, but upon Adam and Christ. That is why these terms can be used both individualistically and corporately. Geoffrey Grogan writes:

Group personification...occurs in various texts. This is true, for instance, of Ezekiel 16, where the ancestry and history of Jerusalem is recalled as if the city were a single figure (cf. 2 Sa.20:19). Robinson used the categories of corporate personality to interpret the Servant Songs, maintaining that the servant could be both the nation and an individual summing up personally by fulfilling its proper mission. Elsewhere, a people may be identified with its ancestor, as in Genesis 25:23 and 36:1, and Rahab is said to have dwelt in Israel "to this day" (Jo.2:1ff), presumably through her descendants. Later generations are treated as if they experienced the Exodus (e.g. in Am.3:1). King and nation can have a common identification (Nu.20:14-21; 22:5); accordingly, some scholars have argued that the "I" of the Psalms is the voice of the king as the representative of the nation. Numerical and gender oscillation is common. There may be oscillation between the collective and the distributive within a few verses (Dt.32:15-18; Je.31:32). Personification and gender change may be combined. When Israel is represented as a woman (e.g. Je.18:13; Ho.2:2ff; cf. Ho.5:3), the personification has become so conventional that it completely overshadows the gender of individuals. One may act or be acted upon as a group's representative. Such was the kinsman who redeemed and perpetuated the family name by Levirate marriage. Most social representation, however, is connected with headship. The father, as the family head, represented it (Gn.49:1, 18; Jos.24:15). All twelve spies were heads of the people (Nu.13:1-16). Representation of this sort is of major theological importance, for God often dealt with a people along these lines, as with Noah (Gn.9:8ff) and the patriarchs (Gn.12:1-3; 26:1-5), who were also the ancestors of those for whom they stood. Mediation involved a divinely chosen representative, so that priests and kings owed their offices to divinely given prescriptions and prophets to a divine call. ["The Concept of Solidarity in Hebrews", *Tyndale Bulletin* 49:1 (1998), pp.163-163.]



*Romans 7:1-6.* To Moo, Murray is right to say that in the allegory of *Romans 7:1-4*, Paul does not find significance in the details. Yet Moo thinks that Murray goes too far:

...too far in minimizing some of the striking parallels between vv.2-3 and v.4: the use of "join to" to express the relationship, respectively, of wife and husband (vv.2-3) and of the Christian and Christ (v.4), and the emphasis on the new union that follows "death." Not only, then, does Paul in vv.2-3 illustrate the general principle that "a death frees one from the law" (v.1); he also sets up the theological application in v.4 by citing an example- marriage- in which severance from the law enables one to enter into a new relationship. <sup>1648</sup>

We are not convinced that either Moo or Murray have fully grasped the significance of the allegory. First, we must determine the meaning of "law" in verses 4-6. To Murray, "law" in *Romans 7:2, 5*, merely denotes the principle or power of the Mosaic law. However, of verse 1, he says "law" denotes the Mosaic law. The whole point of the allegory of *Romans 7:1-6* is to show how the believer is freed from service to the Mosaic law (v.1). Further, Murray himself says that verse 6 describes the believer's freedom from the written or Mosaic law. Dunn accepts that "law" in verse 4 denotes the torah. <sup>1649</sup> But his view is deficient due to his "boundary marker" theory (see *Justification by Faith*). Moo says that it is wrong to distinguish between the law as a condemning power and the law as a rule of life- he is effectively rejecting Murray's reasoning. Moo then says that, as in 6:14, we should not say that Paul is referring to the whole of the Old Testament, but only to the Mosaic law as a body or system. <sup>1650</sup> In criticism of Moo's interpretation of 6:14, we said that he was wrong to say that only the Jews and some Gentiles were under the law. Moreover, we argued that law is equivalent not merely to the Mosaic law, but also to the Mosaic dispensation, the Old Testament (see *Justification by Faith*). In typological terms, all men are by nature bound to the realm of Adam and Moses, and do not participate in the new aeon.

It is deliverance from the old or Mosaic dispensation that is the governing thought of *Romans 7:1-6*. As Murray said, *Romans 7:1-6* and *Romans 6* relate the same doctrine of definitive sanctification. And it does not go without notice that Jesus' baptism (Rm.6:3) is the antitype of baptism into Moses (1 Cor.10:1-3). <sup>1651</sup> And in *Romans 6*, it is the condition in Adam that is

<sup>1648</sup> *Romans*, pp.413-414.

<sup>1649</sup> *Romans*, p.362.

<sup>1650</sup> *Romans*, p.416.

<sup>1651</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Romans*, p.137; Charles Hodge, *Romans*, p.193; William S. Plummer, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications, 1971), p.274. Everett F. Harrison, *Romans, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, editor: F. E. Gaebelein, (London, Pickering and Inglis Ltd, 1976), 10, p.69; John Stott,

contrasted to the condition in Christ.<sup>1652</sup> Moses tried to succeed where Adam failed. This accounts for the coinherence of all men and the Mosaic law.

Because it is deliverance from the Mosaic dispensation that is the subject of Romans 7:1-6, we would do well to recall the Paul's typological understanding of law. The new covenant saints are no longer to use the law as considered outside of Christ. From the point of view of redemption history, Christ was not living in the old covenant. Thus, from one perspective, the old covenant, the law, was a Christ-less, and therefore, faith-less, era. Paul takes this fact typologically, so that faith becomes a specialised term equating to the new era, even although the saints of the old covenant believed in the promise. Whereas, all men are considered belonging to the old era, for all have sinned and come short of God's glory. From the typological perspective, in other words, the old covenant is wholly corrupt.

It is this typological understanding of law that permeates Romans 7:1-6. Moo makes no attempt to integrate the death of Christ into his interpretation of verses 2-3. In verses 2-3, we can assume that the church is the former wife of the deceased man. In verse 4, there are two references to death: the death of believers and the death of Christ. How can this be? If it is the man who died, and the "law" of marriage with him, why does Paul say that both the believer and Christ died? The answer to this is to recount the believer's history. In union with the condemned Christ, the believer died (Rom.6:3). Christ became sin, a curse; in effect, *he became*, the province of the law, sin, and death. In other words, upon the cross, Christ is considered as failed Adam, albeit a different Adam. He is the husband who dies for his people, and they die in him. For them, this meant the eradication of the binding power of the Mosaic law and dispensation. However, a new man or Adam arose from the dead- the last Adam, Jesus Christ. It is through the realisation of Christ's resurrection in our lives that we have been raised to newness of life and become one with, married to, Christ. It is failure to understand the dual role of Christ and his people, that is, the typological nature of salvation, that causes both Moo and Murray to dismiss the details of the allegory.

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*The Message of Romans* (Leicester, I.V.P., 1994), p.173; A. Robertson & A. Plummer, *First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians*, second edition, (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1963), p.200; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of First and Second Corinthians* (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p.391. Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* (Leicester, I.V.P., 1987), p.139; Gordon. D. Fee, *1 Corinthians*, p.445; Paul Gardiner, *The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian* (London, University Press of America, 1994), pp.112-119.

<sup>1652</sup> Nygren, *Romans*, pp.232-233.

## PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

### Definitive progressive sanctification?

If believers have been definitively delivered from sin- so Murray- what is the point of dedicating themselves once-for-all to God? Is this not tantamount to double sanctification? Further, the use of the aorist in Romans 6:13 hardly warrants the meaning of a definitive once-for-all presentation.

<sup>1653</sup> There is another extreme problem with Murray's interpretation. If Paul is exhorting people who are already believers to dedicate themselves once-for-all, what status or spiritual condition were these same believers in before they offered themselves up once-for-all?

### Romans 7:7-25

*Critique of Murray.* Ziesler criticises Murray for his view that Romans 7:7-25 is a record of Paul's internal experiences. Philippians 3:6 sets forth Paul's obedience to the law. This does not comport with Romans 7:9, which says "I was once alive *apart from the law*". Therefore, Paul never knew what it was to be "apart from law". Murray's view is a psychological analysis of Romans 7. <sup>1654</sup>

Ziesler's case is essentially a re-application of Stendahl's famous argument. Western introspection has culminated in an interpretation that describes the will or ego as the centre of depravity, says Stendahl. He helpfully shows how 'ego, is not simply identified with Sin and Flesh.' Paul, says Stendahl, is acquitting, not condemning, the ego. Instead, Paul puts the blame on sin itself. <sup>1655</sup>

Why is Philippians 3:6 incompatible with a personal interpretation of Romans 7:7ff? Is it not possible that Paul could say that from one perspective he was bound by the law, and from another that he had never really felt the law's condemning force until a certain moment? What is so incongruous with this reasoning? Were not the Jews a nation who submitted to the law? But it was not until Christ taught the true meaning of the law- thus the Sermon on the Mount- that the sin of the Jews was exposed (cf., Jh.15:22).

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<sup>1653</sup> Moo, *Romans*, p.385.

<sup>1654</sup> *Romans*, pp.181-184.

<sup>1655</sup> "Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West", *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles* (SCM Press, 1977), pp.212-213.

Also, Ziesler flings the term psychoanalytical about without any consistency. Is there no passage of scripture that does not recount the "internal conflicts" of a saint? Because for Zeisler to be consistent, he would have to say that there is not one.

Stendahl does not comprehend the apocalyptic nature of law. The law is conceived of by Paul both negatively and positively- see our discussion in Justification by Faith. The law is good; yet the law is the instrument of wickedness. Stendahl wants to make the ego a *per se* category. But as with law, there is no such thing as "I" *per se*. It is Paul's ego that fails to do good, a concept flagrantly flouted by Stendahl. Yet, conversely, and paradoxically, Paul's "I" also delights in the law of God after the inward man (v23). This tension is a reflection in Paul of being in Adam and in Christ at the same time. Thus, Paul concludes, "Wretched man that I am", and "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

*Moo's account.* It 'is impossible to remove autobiographical elements from ego in Romans 7:7-25', says Moo.<sup>1656</sup> Throughout Romans 7, the "law" refers to the Mosaic law, Moo continues.<sup>1657</sup> This forces him to conclude that it is specifically the Jews that Paul is writing of in Romans 7. Paul is an individuation of Israel, and his experience 'has application to all people because what is true of Israel under God's law through Moses is true *ipso facto* of all people under "law" (cf. 2:14-15...).' <sup>1658</sup> Therefore, Paul is Israel, states Moo. Paul is re-enacting the giving of the law at Sinai. Before this law came along ("apart from law") Israel were alive. But when the law came Israel died. Moo concludes that Paul was speaking rhetorically (cf., Jer.10:19:22; Micah 7:7-10; Lam.1:19-22; 2:20-22; Rm.3:7); his own experience was representative of the condition of Israel, and the acceptance of the Messiah by some Jews. Paul had spiritually died long before his conversion (Eph.2:1).<sup>1659</sup>

We partly agree with Moo's view of law. Once again, his understanding that law must apply only derivatively to the Gentiles is faulty. He says that what is true of Israel is true *ipso facto* of all people "under law". But we have seen that Moo *denies* that all men are, properly speaking, under law! Therefore his argument begs the question. He cites Romans 2:14-15. This refers to mankind's *Adamic* condition: each man has the requirements of the law of God written on his heart. However, because of the restricted application of the Mosaic law, Moo denies any *Adamic*

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<sup>1656</sup> Romans, p.427.

<sup>1657</sup> *ibid.*, p.428.

<sup>1658</sup> *idem.*

<sup>1659</sup> *ibid.*, pp427-430.

connotation to Paul's personal testimony in Romans 7.<sup>1660</sup> So, once more, Moo plays two hands: he tries to retain an Adamic element- else how could we apply Romans 7 to all men? but says there is no Adamic element, for the Mosaic law is naturally delimited. As we have said on numerous occasions, all men, Jews and Gentiles, are under the Mosaic law.

The clause, "I was once *alive apart from the law*" is quite a sensible thing for Paul to say. Romans 6:2; 7:1-3; 8:12-13 all refer to the fact that believers once *lived* in sin. As Murray said, Paul was alive in the sense that he lived in sin. He was alive *apart from law* because he had not yet encountered the condemning power of the law.

But we need to say more. Χωρίς is used five times in Romans. In Romans 3:21, χωρίς νομου is used to refer to not merely a redemptive-historical category- so Moo- but that the righteousness of God has been manifested outside of the realm of condemnation, the Mosaic covenant as perverted in Adam. Thus, in Romans 3:28 and 4:6 when it says that we are justified by faith apart (χωρίς) from works, it not merely denotes a redemptive-historical distinction- before the coming of faith we were all held prisoners under the law- but also that works are party to the Adamic aeon, the Mosaic covenant as conceived of negatively. This makes better sense of the correlation between law and works: to say apart from works is tantamount to saying apart from law. The use of χωρίς in Romans 7:8 reflects the same argument as found in 7:9. Whilst in 10:14, we are told of the impossibility of salvation apart from preaching. It is not unreasonable to suggest that χωρίς in this case also denotes a redemptive-historical category. The preaching of the gospel was the preaching of faith, Christ, the new aeon. To be outside of preaching is to belong to the realm of deafness, of Adam- mankind is at enmity with its Creator.

We have argued before that law has positive and negative meanings in Paul. In Romans 3:21 χωρίς νομου denotes the law negatively considered. This continues into Romans 7:9. But instead of a positive complement- righteousness of God, justification by faith- Paul reverses the imagery. The irony Paul conveys is that the seemingly positive language of being "alive" was, in this case, actually indicative of a slumber in sin- sin "revived". Paul, in other words, was in an utterly and thoroughly Adamic estate (cf., 5:13-14). Paul's so called adherence to law was actually a denial of it, as if it did not exist. But the power of a law liberated by Christ came to convict him of covetousness.

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<sup>1660</sup> *ibid.*, p.429.

Moo's position that Paul had spiritually died long before his conversion is true. But Moo misses Paul's thrust. He is not reflecting, at this point, upon the inception of spiritual death in Adam, but upon the *awareness* of being dead in Adam.

There is an autobiographical element to Paul's explanation, maintains Moo. According to him, Paul's guilt is derived only from a corporate perspective. The Old Testament verses cited by Moo reflect corporate guilt, the same doctrine transmitted in Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9. Yet, Moo's own view struggles to explain how Israel's status before and after the giving of the law at Sinai has anything to do with Paul's confession of the struggle of the Jewish-Christian contingent in Rome. Moo's interpretation ignores Romans 7:1-6, and its Christological core. He would transmit us back into the inefficacious era of Sinai *per se*. Paul's guilt is certainly corporately defined, but not as Moo asserts. Paul was/is in Adam. Before a Christian interpretation of law—that it is fulfilled in Christ—came to Paul, he did not comprehend the law's own purity. This event was a recapitulation of the status of mankind as represented in Israel at Sinai. Adam's seed, represented in Israel, was not "aware" of sin until Sinai, but when the law came, sin was "defined", "unveiled". The law at Sinai, however, could not deliver the guilty ones from sin. But coming before God's revelation or fulfilment of *torah* in Christ, sin is not only exposed, but is also dealt with as a ruling power. So Paul is representative of Christian mankind, Jew and Gentile, in their struggle with sin.

A merely rhetorical "I" is not necessarily present in Romans 3:7. According to Murray, Romans 3:7 is rhetorical. The unrighteousness described in verse 5 is mankind's.<sup>1661</sup> Verse 4 cites Psalm 51:4 and David's confession of sin. Dunn therefore says, 'Paul is not able to distance himself from the plight of the unrighteous Gentile and unfaithful Jew...the "my" is not merely rhetorical, as Murray suggests.'<sup>1662</sup> This raises, once more, the issue of the status of the Christian. How can "every man" be a liar, if the Christian is justified by faith? As we found in Justification by Faith, believers are still bound in Adam.

*Verses 14-25.* Moo thinks that in verse 5 "in the flesh" denoted the condition of the unregenerate man. This phrase anticipated "fleshly" in verse 14. So, although "fleshly" can apply to the regenerate man (1 Cor.3-13), here in Romans 7:14, it has reference to the unregenerate man. Moo continues his argument. The phrase "under the power of sin" (v14) clinches the case for

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<sup>1661</sup> Romans 1, pp.96-97.

verses 7-25 indicating Paul's former unregenerate condition, as well as his regenerate condition. Christians are still influenced by sin. Thus, Paul's language points to slavery under sin. Yet, Paul says the Christian has died to the power of sin (v2) and is no longer a slave to it (vv18, 22). The participle πεπραμμενος (v14) is taken from πωπωσκω, "to sell". The verb often depicts the selling of slaves. For these reasons, Moo rejects Murray's interpretation of Romans 7:14-25.<sup>1663</sup>

The interpretation by Moo is very helpful. Murray said that Paul being "sold under the power of sin" (v14) revealed that he was passive when made a prisoner by the power of sin. This does not harmonise, however, with Murray's interpretation of Paul's enmity in the following verses. Murray says that Paul was no mere spectator through whom sin had its way. On the contrary, it was "I", the whole man, who opposed God.

Moo's interpretation has weaknesses, however.<sup>1664</sup> Nygren implies that because Paul speaks in the first person and in the present tense, that it is unreasonable to believe that Paul is talking of his unregenerate state. Nygren also says, if Paul is referring to his unregenerate state, why then the theatrics of verse 24?<sup>1665</sup> Nygren resolves the issue by reminding the reader of the inherent dualism in the Christian's existence. Paul says that he, in his whole being, serves sin in his *flesh* (*sarx*) (v25). *Sarx* indicates the Pauline two aeon divide: Paul is still a member of Adam, and therefore still in the flesh; but he is also in Christ, anticipating the eradication of the flesh.<sup>1666</sup>

This brings us to the use of "law" in verses 21-23, 25. Murray says that on each occasion within these verses, *nomos* denotes law as a demand and/or principle. Fee says that in Romans 7, Paul is seeking to vindicate the torah; he is arguing that it is not evil.<sup>1667</sup> Moo comments of verse 21, 'Consistency would suggest that the "law" (*nomos*) Paul refers to here is the Mosaic law, in accordance with his usual use of the term and its meaning throughout 7:4-20.' However, Moo then concludes with Murray that it means "principle."<sup>1668</sup> Fee is prepared to go as far to say that the "law" that the mind serves (v25) is the torah, but he denies that "law" in verse 21, and "law of

<sup>1662</sup> *Romans 1-8*, p.136. Cf., Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1989), p.51.

<sup>1663</sup> *Romans*, p.454.

<sup>1664</sup> See, Klyne Snodgrass, Review, *Themelios* 18:1 (Oct., 1992), p.29.

<sup>1665</sup> *Romans*, p.286.

<sup>1666</sup> *ibid.*, p.293. Cf., Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, pp.404-406; Don Garlington, "Romans 7", *Reformation Today* 119 (Jan-Feb., 1991), p.5.

<sup>1667</sup> *Empowering Presence*, pp.510-511.

<sup>1668</sup> *Romans*, p.460.

sin" in verses 23 and 25, is the torah. Fee's argument, when boiled down to its essentials, is that there is only one torah, and, therefore, Paul cannot be referring to two "torah-laws".<sup>1669</sup>

We disagree with Fee. Dunn gives a structural analysis. He says that ευρισκω (v21) reiterates Paul's message of verse 10:

ευρεθη μοι η εντολη...εις ζωνην...εις θανατον (v10)

ευρισκω τον νομον...το καλον...το κακον (v21)

The torah or command (v10) brought death; the torah or law brought evil (v21). Verse 21b is a compression of verses 18-19 'with καλον again providing a variation of αγαθον.'<sup>1670</sup>

To say that the "other law" (v21) and "law of sin" (vv23, 25) denote torah is not discordant with Fee's understanding of the aim of Romans 7. He has not assimilated the Pauline theology of the two aeons. From one perspective, the law belongs to the old aeon.<sup>1671</sup> *All men* are condemned by the *torah*- we have argued this already. Yet, the torah *gives* life. Murray said, "The law of God" (v22) is the same as the "law of the mind" (v23). '[The law of the mind] is...the law of God as the law that regulates the mind and which the minds serves.' We agree with this, but would substitute torah for his notion of principle and demand. It is the law of God, *torah*, that gives life. This was our argument in *Justification by Faith*. Jesus Christ has freed us from bondage to sin and death. As Murray said, Christ has been raised from the dead, and we will participate in this victory, in the form of our bodily resurrection. The "good law" is the resurrection conditioned law, the torah that is conditioned by, that is, belonging to and advancing, the new aeon. It is no coincidence, therefore, that in verse 14, the law is described as *Spiritual*. As Fee says, 'Paul places the Spirit on the side of the Law'.<sup>1672</sup>

#### Romans 8:1-14

*Verse 1.* Dunn points out that οὖν is eschatological (3:26; 5:9, 11; 6:19, 21; 8:18, 22; 11:5, 30-31; 13:11; 16:26; cf., νῦν in 3:21; 6:22; 7:16-17). He continues, arguing that κατακριμα recalls the great climax of 5:12-21. 'It is the black and white contrast between both epochs (Adam and Christ) marked out so decisively in 5:12-21 to which Paul here reverts, not the greyer area of

<sup>1669</sup> *Empowering Presence*, pp.511-514.

<sup>1670</sup> *Romans 1-8*, p.392.

<sup>1671</sup> Cf., Nygren, *Romans*, pp.298-299.

<sup>1672</sup> *Empowering Presence*, p.514.



overlap which characterizes so much of the discussion in the latter halves of chaps.6 and 7'. Further, τοις εν χριστω Ιησου also focuses our attention on the division between Adam and Christ.<sup>1673</sup>

The two aeon motif permeates the whole of Romans 6-7. But the rest of what Dunn says is correct. There is no κατακριμα for the believer, for it denotes freedom from the guilt and power of sin, says Murray. For him, κατακριμα in verse 1 cannot merely denote judicial guilt, for Romans 8:1-14 has sanctification as its main concern. The antithesis of κατακριμα in 5:16, 18 is strictly justification by faith. In our exegesis of 6:7, it was concluded that Paul described that life and justification came by the *power* of the Spirit raising the church in union with Christ. This resurrection was the end of bondage to the old era, and an entrance into the new realm. Moreover, Romans 7:14-25 informed us how the law, the torah, was the medium of life to Paul.

*Verse 2.* Dunn rejects Murray's interpretation of "law of the Spirit of life". Dunn points out that the climax of verses 1-4 is that the law, the torah, is fulfilled in those who walk according to the Spirit (v4). Dunn determines that the twofold law of verse 2, 'therefore simply restates the two-sidedness of the law expounded in 7:7-25'. The law of the Spirit, he continues, 'is the eschatological law (cf. Jer.31:31-34; Ezek 36:26-27)'. The law of sin and death (v2) is the "law of sin" mentioned in 7:25. Further, ζωη links us to 5:10, 17, 18, 21.<sup>1674</sup>

*Verse 3.* Murray said that verse 3 is concerned with deliverance from the law as power. Dunn says that commentators assume that *nomos* denotes the torah.<sup>1675</sup> The torah's failure is the occasion for Christ's victory.<sup>1676</sup>

*Verse 4.* The requirements of the torah are fulfilled in the believer. Moo refuses to accept that "fulfilment" refers to Spirit empowering the believer to obey the law and thus fulfil it. First of all, the verb says "might be fulfilled", and points 'to something that is done in and for us. To Paul, πληρωω pertains 'not to a human being "doing" the law in a concrete existence', but to 'the climactic, eschatological completion of the law first made possible in Christ (cf. Also Rom.13:8, 10) [πληρωμα]; Gal.5:14)'. Second, the believer can never perfectly fulfil the law. Christ fulfilled the law, and his righteousness is imparted, through union, to the believer. Thus, the

<sup>1673</sup> Romans 1-8, p.415.

<sup>1674</sup> *ibid.*, pp.416-419.

<sup>1675</sup> *ibid.*, p.419.

<sup>1676</sup> Fee, *Empowering Presence*, pp.528-529.

believer has “done the law”. The new world Spirit comes to him and enables him to serve God in the present. <sup>1677</sup>

Moo’s citation of Romans 13:8, 10 and Galatians 5:14 is, too say the least, perplexing. The plain force of these verses is that the law is fulfilled by obedience. We said of πληρω that the saints of God by their obedience do fulfil the law, for they express Christ’s life, his very own typological fulfilment of the Old Testament. The believer “fulfils” the law by having the life of the incarnate, glorified Christ live in him. This is done through the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit of the new covenant writes the law upon the heart of believers (Jer.31:31). In doing so, he energises them to keep the law (Ezek.36:26f). <sup>1678</sup> Thus, the law and the Spirit become, for the purposes of obedience, functionally one.

It is the functional unity of law and Spirit that gives us grounds for rejecting Calvin’s construction of Romans 8:1-3. Of these verses, he says that the law of God spawns the “law of sin and death”. The “law of sin and death” is the *lusts* of the flesh. Whereas the law of the Spirit is the *work* of the Spirit, the grace of God, effective in our lives. The *written* law of God spawns the law of the Spirit. The law of the Spirit brings freedom from sin’s guilt and power. Calvin concludes:

Someone may object that in this case the pardon, by which our offences are buried, depends on our regeneration. This is easily answered. Paul is not here assigning the reason, but merely specifying the manner, in which we are delivered from guilt. He denies that we obtain deliverance by the outward teaching of the law. In being renewed by the Spirit of God, however, we are at the same time also justified by a free pardon, so that the curse of sin may no longer lie upon us. The sentence, therefore, means the same as if Paul had said that the grace of regeneration is never separated from the imputation of righteousness. <sup>1679</sup>

In the chapter Faith, etc., it was demonstrated that Calvin and Murray made a dichotomy between the word and the Spirit (see Faith, etc.). They do so once again. For Calvin, the written law, the word, gives birth to the law or work of the Spirit. *He sanctifies us*, says Calvin. The Spirit therefore, and not the word, works directly upon the soul. Throughout his discussion on Romans 8:2, Murray does not once mention the relationship between the written law and the law of the Spirit. And so we are left to conclude that it is the Spirit who transforms us, and not the actual word itself.

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<sup>1677</sup> Romans, pp.483-485.

<sup>1678</sup> Bruce, Romans, pp.161-162.

Verses 5-13. Concerning progressive sanctification, Murray helpfully reminds us of the corporateness of sanctification: the church as a body grows in holiness. However, his interpretation of Romans 8:1-13 emphasises only the individual's relationship with God. Paul persistently refers to the third person plural in verse 5, and is therefore describing 'two different groups of people', says Fee.<sup>1680</sup>

In distinction to Murray, to be in the flesh and to be in the Spirit are not descriptions of the inner life or behaviour, but of position or status.<sup>1681</sup> One either belongs to the flesh, to the Adamic realm, or to Christ, the realm of the Spirit.<sup>1682</sup> Therefore, to have the mind of the flesh is to be determined to live in the sphere of flesh, and thus be anti-God. Whereas, to be in the Spirit is to be determined to live in the realm of the Spirit, and thus be in submission to God.<sup>1683</sup>

## GLORIFICATION

### "Not yet"

Murray's doctrine of glorification is a fine summary of Reformed doctrine. Yet, some Reformed theologians do not talk of a specific locus named "Glorification." For example, H. Hoeksema,<sup>1684</sup> L. Berkhof,<sup>1685</sup> G. C. Berkouwer,<sup>1686</sup> and A. Hoekema<sup>1687</sup> stop their *ordo salutis*' at the perseverance of the saints. Why? We can only suggest that they felt that they were following Calvin, who himself does not have a special locus called glorification. Berkhof prefers to put Murray's notion of glorification under "General Eschatology."<sup>1688</sup>

Calvin does assent to a "last day" doctrine of glorification. He writes of Romans 8:30, 'Although glorification has as yet been exhibited only in our head'.<sup>1689</sup> And as Murray reasons, Calvin

<sup>1679</sup> Romans, p.157.

<sup>1680</sup> Fee, *Empowering Presence*, p.540.

<sup>1681</sup> Fee, *Empowering Presence*, p.540; Moo, *Romans*, p.486.

<sup>1682</sup> Nygren, *Romans*, p.325. Cf., Wright, *Messiah and the People of God*, pp.154-158.

<sup>1683</sup> Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, pp.425-427.

<sup>1684</sup> *Reformed Dogmatics*, p.xiv.

<sup>1685</sup> *Systematic Theology*, pp.13-16.

<sup>1686</sup> *Faith and Perseverance*, p.5.

<sup>1687</sup> *Saved by Grace*, p.vii.

<sup>1688</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p.16.

<sup>1689</sup> *Romans*, p.182. See also, pp.105, 392.

thinks this glorification is a reflection of our final adoption, the redemption of our bodies.<sup>1690</sup> We will be glorified with the glory of the Father and the Son.<sup>1691</sup>

### "Already"

It is striking that Murray does not distinguish the metaphor of glorification in 2 Corinthians 3:18 from the metaphor of sanctification. It has been established that the Pauline usage of *hagiasmos* reflects cultic categories, especially the image of the priests of the Old Testament as consecrated to God's service.<sup>1692</sup> The image of glorification is different; it conveys the concept that the church is being transformed into the image of God, just as Moses was transformed into God's image.

The "not yet" aspect of glorification, in Calvin's writings, is balanced with the "already". In the Old Testament, the resident glory of God sanctified or glorified the people.<sup>1693</sup> Calvin says, 'by repentance I mean regeneration, the only aim of which is to form us anew in the image of God'. He then immediately cites 2 Corinthians 3:7, "changed into that same image, from glory to glory".<sup>1694</sup>

C. Hodge writes that the veil over the hearts of the Israelites is only removed once they turn to the Lord (vv14-16).<sup>1695</sup> Only by beholding Christ are we transformed (v18).<sup>1696</sup> There is no transformation without turning. This implies faith. We cannot accept, therefore, Calvin's introduction of the 'secret enlightenment which takes place in our hearts.'<sup>1697</sup> For this is regeneration strictly speaking, which does not, according to him, include faith or the application of the word.

### Sanctification, glorification and the two aeons

Back in Redemption, it was revealed how Calvin considered sanctification to have two elements: mortification and vivification. Murray also says the same. It is our view that mortification is not sanctification. Sanctification belongs to the province of renewal, of life, of the resurrection. In

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<sup>1690</sup> *Galatians*, p74.

<sup>1691</sup> *Romans*, pp.105, 392.

<sup>1692</sup> Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp.261-265. See Dunn, *Romans* 1-8, pp.346-347.

<sup>1693</sup> *Romans*, p.194. See, John I. Durham, *Exodus*, WBC 3, general editor: D. A. Hubbard, (Waco, Word Books, 1987), pp.396-397.

<sup>1694</sup> *Inst.*3:3:9. See, *Second Corinthians*, p.50; Ferguson, *Holy Spirit*, p.250; .

<sup>1695</sup> *1 Corinthians*, p.448.

<sup>1696</sup> *ibid.*, p.454.

<sup>1697</sup> *2 Corinthians*, p.57.

Effectual Calling, we concluded that according to Paul Christ's glorification took place at the moment of his resurrection. From the rest of the New Testament, it was concluded that his call was the moment he was set apart or consecrated to his high priestly office. We have seen that to Paul, sanctification is the consecrating of believers unto the priestly service of God. In union with Christ, the believer is raised unto sanctification; sanctification, like regeneration, effectual calling, faith, justification, and adoption, is a metaphor describing the meaning of Christ's resurrection and its realisation. Once again, Richard Gaffin is so helpful. He argues that Christ was sanctified and glorified in his own resurrection. The realisation of the resurrection in the lives of believers is described by Paul in terms of existential and personal sanctification and glorification.<sup>1698</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Murray's definition of definitive sanctification is probably a later development in his thought. His basic idea of definitive sanctification is biblical; he tries to make it fit into his *ordo salutis*, but does not properly clarify how definitive sanctification relates to regeneration.

Of the agency in definitive sanctification, we determined that faith was integral to it. Against Murray, calling is not merely the province of the Father, regeneration the province of the Spirit and definitive sanctification the province of the Son. For it is the Father, the Spirit and the Son who raise us in definitive sanctification.

The central theological tenet of definitive sanctification is that we have been delivered once-for-all from sin. We agreed with this. But with Calvin, we said that the believer is still under the bondage of sin. To understand this paradox, we must grasp that definitive sanctification pertains to the area of relations and not ontology. The believer "breathes the air of heaven" at this very moment. However, he is still under the lordship of sin, in that he lives within the domain of sin and daily fights it and is overcome by its influence.

Fundamental to definitive sanctification, we found, was corporate deliverance, the deliverance of the church from sin. Terms like "body of sin", "old man" "new man" were instances of the church's status. The underlying theology of these terms was the Adam-Christ contrast. We

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<sup>1698</sup> *Resurrection & Redemption*, pp.124-127.

concluded that there were three levels to Adamic unity: union with Adam in his sin; the church continues to recapitulate Adam's act; the individual continues to recapitulate Adam's act. This theology continues Paul's emphases of Romans 5:12ff.

The corporate nature of definitive sanctification helped us to perceive Paul's meaning in Romans 7:1-6. Murray did not want to press the details of the allegory found in these verses. We concluded that the details were quite appropriate for Paul's theological aims. In union with the condemned Christ, the believer died (Rom.6:3). Christ became sin, a curse; in effect, *he became*, the province of the law, sin, and death. In other words, upon the cross, Christ is considered as failed Adam, albeit a different Adam. He is the husband who dies for his people, and they die in him. For them, this meant the eradication of the binding power of the Mosaic law and dispensation. However, a new man or Adam arose from the dead- the last Adam, Jesus Christ. It is through the realisation of Christ's resurrection in our lives that we have been raised to newness of life and become one with, married to, Christ.

Coming to progressive sanctification, Murray seems to mix up his notion of definitive sanctification with his doctrine of progressive sanctification, when he argues that the Christian must definitively sanctify himself.

In our evaluation of Murray's exegesis of Romans 7:7-25, it was established that his conclusion that Paul was referring to himself was correct. Moreover, we corroborated Murray's contention that Paul is referring to his pre-regenerate state in verses 14-25. However, Murray's exegesis of Romans 7 lacked the fundamental framework of the two-aeon theology. Paul is viewing himself as a representative man, since he is indeed a member of Adam. That is why Paul says that he remains in the flesh (*sarx*).

Of Romans 8:1-13, we said that, in distinction to Murray, to be in the flesh and to be in the Spirit are not descriptions of the inner life or behaviour, but to position or status. To have the mind of the flesh is to be determined to live in the sphere of flesh, and thus be anti-God. Whereas, to be in the Spirit is to be determined to live in the realm of the Spirit, and thus be in submission to God.

Lastly, we resorted to Gaffin's excellent thesis, citing him to show that the Pauline concepts of glorification and sanctification belong to the province of the resurrection.

## Chapter 17: Perseverance

Michael Eaton displays Murray as one who goes against the tradition he belongs to, 'I suggest that Murray is perhaps closer to evangelical Arminianism than he ever realised'. Eaton further states, "The evangelical Arminian says the Christian shall attain salvation as long as he perseveres. Murray also says the Christian shall attain salvation as long as he perseveres. Is there any difference between them? The Arminian says that despite all the appearances of salvation, salvation may be lost. Similarly, John Murray holds to a doctrine of "temporary faith" '.<sup>1699</sup>

This is strong language. Is it verifiable? As with the doctrine of the extent of the atonement, we will come across a number of intricate issues and will have to differentiate between them. It will be concluded whether Eaton is correct or not.

### STATEMENT

The doctrine of perseverance does not mean that everyone one who professes faith in Christ 'is secure for eternity and may entertain the assurance of salvation.' True faith is that which endures to the end (Mat.10:22; Heb.4:14), abides in Christ (John 15:6), and continues in Christ's word (Jh.8:31-32).<sup>1700</sup>

Two things arise from this emphasis of scripture. (1) "falling away" and apostasy are possible because someone could profess faith only to lose all interest, if not become hostile (Mk.4:4-6, 16-17). The people who profess faith may vary: some are enthusiastic; some are not. But the faith of some can become precarious, and in time can fall away. (2) Some '...come into such a close contact with supernatural forces which are operative in God's kingdom of grace that these forces produce effects in us which to human observation are hardly extinguishable from those produced by God's regenerating and sanctifying grace and yet not be partakers of Christ and heirs of eternal life....' (Mk.4:4-6, 16-17; Heb.6:5-6; 2 Pet.2:20-22).<sup>1701</sup>

The phrase "security of the believer" is not quite apposite, because it might convey the impression that the believer is secure irrespective of the style of life lived. Whereas "perseverance of the

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<sup>1699</sup> *Theology of Encouragement*, p.19.  
<sup>1700</sup> *R4*, pp.151-152.  
<sup>1701</sup> *ibid.*, pp.152-153.

saints" accents that saints will persevere in holiness and fidelity, having been freed from the dominion of sin. Of course, saints sin, but they do not abandon themselves to it. Peter says that the saints are kept through faith until the consummation of salvation to be revealed in the last day (1 Pet.1:4-5; cf., Phil.3:13-14).<sup>1702</sup>

Those who persevere are saints; all the saints will persevere. Paul does use the expression "fallen from grace" (Gal.5:4). But this does not mean that saints stop persevering; rather, in context, if a man seeks to be justified by works of the law, he has automatically fallen away from justification by grace (cf., 5:3).<sup>1703</sup>

The saints of the New Testament were those who were called by Jesus (Rom.1:6-7). Sainthood is inseparable from the effectual call that brought us into fellowship with Christ (1 Cor.1:9). The chain of events in Romans 8:28-30 informs us that God's purpose, foreknowledge and predestination are antecedents to calling, and its succedents are justification and glorification. Therefore, a saint cannot be defined in terms lower than one who has been justified by grace. Also, he will be glorified (cf., Phil.3:21; Rom.8:23). Will God's predestinating purpose be defeated? Surely not!<sup>1704</sup>

It is the word of the Son and the will of the Father that entails that the saints will receive eternal life and be raised up on the last day (Jh.6:39-40). The raising up of the saints is deliberately contrasted with the losing of anything given to the Son by the Father; the Son will lose not one because the Father will raise them up. More pointedly, the Son says that whoever comes to him (believes), he will not cast out (6:37). Also, whoever the Father has given to the Son will come to the Son (6:37). Moreover, when someone comes to Christ, it is because the Father has drawn him (6:44), that is, has given him to Christ (6:65). The drawing and the giving are two aspects of the same event, so that where there is drawing there is also donation, and vice versa.<sup>1705</sup>

In John 10:29-30, Jesus says that no one can snatch the believer out of the Father's hand. This truth is confirmation of the preceding statement of Jesus, which says that he gives them eternal life and no one will snatch them from his hand. The saints can neither be snatched from Jesus'

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<sup>1702</sup> *ibid.*, pp.154-155.

<sup>1703</sup> *ibid.*, pp.155-156.

<sup>1704</sup> *ibid.*, pp.156-158.

<sup>1705</sup> *ibid.*, pp.158-159.



hand nor the Father's. It is the Father who gave them (10:29) to Jesus. Those who are given are believers (Jh.6:37, 44-45, 65).<sup>1706</sup>

There is the closest relationship between efficacious grace and the perseverance of the saints:

But it is just here that the harmony of efficacious grace with perseverance of the saints comes to light. The Reformed Faith recognizes that God it is who determines a sinner's salvation, and that what He begins He brings to perfection. Salvation rests upon the unchangeable grace of God. He will not forsake the work of His hands, nor make void His covenant. Thus reads the Confession:

"They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

"This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ; the abiding of the Spirit; and of the seed of God within them: and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof." (*Confession of Faith*, XVII, 1, 2).<sup>1707</sup>

At the core of every salvific blessing, including perseverance, is the love of God in the form of his giving up his Son for us, and our participation in that love, 'The love of God from which we cannot be separated is the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is only in Christ it exists, and only in Christ Jesus our Lord can we know the embrace and bond of this love of God.'

<sup>1708</sup> [emphasis his]

### COMMENT

#### **DOES PERSEVERANCE DEPEND UPON REGENERATE MAN'S FREE WILL?**

##### **Calvinistic perseverance: rationalism?**

A. A. Hoeksema disagrees with I. H. Marshall [*Kept By the Power of God* (Minneapolis, Bethany Fellowship, 1975), p.26], who maintains that the Calvinist's position on perseverance of the saints is merely a logical deduction from the Calvinist's philosophical doctrine of predestination, and is therefore not based at all on exegesis. Hoeksema replies that the doctrine of perseverance

<sup>1706</sup> *ibid.*, p.160.

<sup>1707</sup> "Reformed Faith and Modern Substitutes V," p.29.

<sup>1708</sup> *Romans* 1, p.335.

is not based on philosophy, but on texts that reveal the saint will persevere.<sup>1709</sup> Now, this is a familiar situation. Marshall should be careful, however. Even if the Calvinist's doctrine of perseverance is a philosophy- which we deny- it does not follow that his teaching on perseverance is faulty. That is, one can have an improper methodology, yet still reach proper conclusions.

Arguably, both camps have used a "rational" framework. The Calvinist proceeds from an *a priori* position: only the elect will persevere. The Arminian begins from an *a posteriori* point: those who persevere are the elect.<sup>1710</sup> But this does not *ipso facto* mean that both are incorrect. Murray cites the *WCF*, which says perseverance is rooted in the antecedent of God's sovereignty. In our estimate, Murray's exegesis on perseverance are perfectly correct, and so is the sovereignty framework he posits. It is the conclusion he draws from his sovereignty premise that we do not accept. He says that it is *improper* to state that the perseverance of the saints *does depend* on their own free wills. He probably thought that faith is necessary unto perseverance,<sup>1711</sup> but would not say that perseverance *depends* upon faith.

### The *WCF*

Does this not beg the question? From the perspective of the Calvinist's framework, Murray concentrates wholly on the angle of the decree. It is "invisible man", or the man who has been decreed to salvation, that the Calvinist proceeds from. "Invisible man" will persevere. That is why the *Confession* says that perseverance does not depend on the regenerate man's free will but on God's antecedent sovereign grace.<sup>1712</sup> It is true that within the whole scope of God's work of salvation perseverance does not *depend* on "invisible man's" free will, if by "depend" we mean that the one or *the* fundamental thing to perseverance is regenerate man's free will. We would contend, however, that the same could be said of any of the graces cited by the *Confession*. For example, perseverance does not *depend* on the decree of election. Why? Because it is only a *part* of the process involved in perseverance, other parts being, at the very least, the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ,

<sup>1709</sup> *Saved by Grace*, p.236.

<sup>1710</sup> Cf., Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1958), p.63.

<sup>1711</sup> It elsewhere says in the *Confession* that 'When God converts a sinner and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good' (9:4).

<sup>1712</sup> The *Confession* does not deny the free will of regenerate man. By "free will," on this occasion, is not designated man's natural ability to will, his "freedom" to will, rather, designates regenerate man's capacity to do that which is pleasing to God. [A. A. Hodge, *Confession of Faith*, pp.232-237. See, Murray, *CW* 2, pp.60-63; *CW* 4, p.257.]

the abiding of the Spirit, the seed of God within the saints, and the nature of the covenant of grace.

Can perseverance be executed without faith? No, Murray would say. Then why is it improper to comment that perseverance is, in some measure, *dependent* on the free will of man? What is lost by stating that perseverance is dependent upon the believer willing to persevere? We are propagating no new thing. Is it not Murray who writes that the saint, *the man*, perseveres? At the root of Murray's problem is his habit of dichotomising between the sovereignty of God and the action of man. All said and done, Arminian theology is incorrect. Yet, it is correct when it argues that what is vital unto perseverance is that the individual exercises his or her *regenerate* free will, and that perseverance is therefore dependent upon the will of the one who believes.

It is striking, however, that the *WCF* does give a precise enumeration; yet, to be pedantic, there is no mention of the love of God, union with Christ or justification by faith. Presumably, these doctrines would have been incorporated into the *WCF*'s enumeration. Yet, this discrepancy highlights the problem with the Reformed doctrine of perseverance: it makes perseverance dependent on only selected truths. Murray himself, to our mind, comes to the real meaning of perseverance, when he says that the love of God is the real reason for perseverance; a love given in predestination and the death of Christ, and which is shed abroad in our hearts. This is just to say that which binds perseverance is every blessing associated with salvation.

From what we have seen of Murray's exegesis of Romans 6, the death and resurrection motif is very important to soteriology. Throughout this thesis, we have developed Gaffin's and Murray's resurrection motif. Neither follows through its value for perseverance. Within the context of perseverance *per se*, however, Jonathan Edwards says that foundational to perseverance is the doctrine that we have been raised with Christ in his resurrection.<sup>1713</sup> If we have died and risen with Christ, our salvation is steadfast: there is no more chance of a true believer losing his salvation, than there is of Christ having to die and rise again.

### Calvin

The solution to the perseverance debate is to consider, once more, the human and divine perspectives of salvation. We will allow Calvin to do the arguing.

He writes of Pighius:

Perseverance [he says] is likewise the gift of God, but depends no less on man; and each is in fact paid as a reward for earlier merits. In this way, with a couple of words, he extricates himself from all difficulty. But if he hopes that his readers' eyes can be blinded by such obvious, stupid nonsense, then he is fooling himself overmuch.<sup>1714</sup>

This quotation would seem to destroy our argument thus far. Yet, in reality, it does not. Calvin is "rubbishing" Pighius for arguing that conversion and ultimate salvation are earned by the free choice of man, 'Namely by saying that conversion is the gift of God, but only those who are converted by their free choice. Perseverance [he says] is likewise the gift of God, but depends no less on man; and each is in fact paid as a reward for earlier merits.' It is the doctrine that says that there is an ability within man to freely choose a way of salvation that Calvin repudiates. He also comments, 'So let us not, like the Sorbonnists, imagine some neutral moving which makes men free either to follow or to reject; but let us know that our hearts are so ruled by God's Spirit that they can constantly cleave to righteousness.'<sup>1715</sup> The key to Calvin's words is understanding the last clause, 'that they can constantly cleave to righteousness.' The force of this clause he puts in another fashion:

Nor does man in himself co-operate with God so that some contribution of his own is added in, but [man co-operates] only in accordance with the measure which he has received, so that he acts only to the extent he is acted upon... Again: We affirm that perseverance to the end is the gift of God. "For when he says, I will put fear of me in their hearts, what else does this mean but that fear which I will put will be of such a magnitude and of such a kind that they will persevere and cling to me?"<sup>1716</sup>

Calvin does not say that perseverance is not dependent on regenerate man's free will. On the contrary, he says that perseverance is God's gift, which manifests *itself* in the lives of the elect in the form of the fear of the Lord. More pointedly, they "co-operate" unto perseverance, inasmuch as God works within them to do his good pleasure. It is there for all to see: Calvin believes that regenerate man's co-operation is fundamental *unto* perseverance.

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<sup>1713</sup> Works 2, p.600.

<sup>1714</sup> *Liberation of the Will*, p.240.

<sup>1715</sup> John 11-21, p.273.

<sup>1716</sup> *Liberation of the Will*, p.178.

Even although Calvin's values of predestination and perseverance are considered as an 'intellectual-speculative movement' by some-<sup>1717</sup> a criticism, today, reserved for those from the Puritan tradition- nevertheless, as Berkouwer has conclusively shown,<sup>1718</sup> and as neo-Calvin scholars would assent to,<sup>1719</sup> Calvin is more interested in the believer persevering by looking to the mirror of his election: Christ. Thus, Calvin blends the divine decree with faith: faith in Christ is the evidence of the fact that God is causing us to persevere and that he has decreed that we will persevere.

## CALVIN AND THE FALLING AWAY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED<sup>1720</sup>

### Controversial texts

There is more to Calvin's doctrine of perseverance than meets the eye, however. Clifford cites Calvin:

'And surely there is nothing that ought to be more effective in spurring on pastors to devote themselves more eagerly to their duty than if they reflect that it is to themselves that the price of the blood of Christ has been entrusted. For it follows from this, that unless they are faithful in putting out their labour on the Church, not only are they made accountable for lost souls, but they are guilty of sacrilege, because they have profaned the sacred blood of the Son of God, and have made useless the redemption acquired by Him, as far as they are concerned. But it is a hideous and monstrous crime if, by our idleness, not only the death of Christ becomes worthless, but also the fruit of it is destroyed and perishes...'

COMMENT

ON ACTS 20:28....

'For we ought to have a zeal to have the Church of God enlarged, and increase rather than diminish. We ought to have a care also of our brethren, and to be sorry to see them perish: for it is no small matter to have the souls perish which were bought by the blood of Christ.'

SERMONS ON TIMOTHY

AND TITUS, 817....

'...the price of the blood of Christ is wasted when a weak conscience is wounded, for the most contemptible brother has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. It is intolerable, therefore, that he should destroy for the gratification of the belly.'

<sup>1717</sup> M. A. Goszen, *De Heidelb. Catechismus* (1890), pp.152f. Cited by G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, p.18.

<sup>1718</sup> *ibid.*, pp.75-80.

<sup>1719</sup> E.g., A. C. Clifford, *Atonement and Justification*, p.242.

<sup>1720</sup> For more comments on Calvin's doctrine of double redemption, see Union with Christ, pp.134-135, and Limited Atonement, pp.264-265.

## ROMANS 14:15....

'For one can imagine nothing more despicable than this, that while Christ did not hesitate to die so that the weak might not perish, we, on the other hand, do not care a straw for the salvation of the men and women who have been redeemed at such a price. This is a memorable saying, from which we learn how precious the salvation of our brothers ought to be to us, and not only that of all, but of each individual, in view of the fact that the blood of Christ was poured out for each one...If the soul of every weak person costs the price of the blood of Christ, anyone, who, for the sake of a little bit of meat, is responsible for the rapid return to death of a brother redeemed by Christ, shows just how little the blood of Christ means to him...'

COMMENT ON 1

## CORINTHIANS 8:11....

'Christ redeemed us to have us as a people separated from all the iniquities of the world, devoted to holiness and purity. Those who throw over the traces and plunge themselves into every kind of licence are not unjustly said to deny Christ, by whom they were redeemed.'

COMMENT

## ON 2 PETER 2:1....

'Certainly, in 2 Pet.2:1, there is reference only to Christ, and He is called Master there. Denying...Christ, he says, of those who have been redeemed by His blood, and now enslave themselves again to the devil, frustrating (as best they may) that incomparable boon.'

COMMENT

ON JUDE 4....<sup>1721</sup>

Do these texts prove a neo-Calvinistic interpretation of Calvin? The first thing to say is that in our reading of various materials, we have come across only two Calvinistic scholars who have commented on the above texts. This is not to say that there are not others; yet, the paucity of Calvinistic commentary is probably indicative of the difficulties Calvinists face when trying to negotiate the texts in question.

The neo-Calvin R. T. Kendall quotes Calvin, 'it is no small matter to have the soules perish which were bought by the blood of Christ'.<sup>1722</sup> Kendall thinks that Christ's death on earth was for every man, whilst his heavenly intercession secures salvation only for the elect. The Calvinist Helm replies that the context of this quotation is the death and intercession of Christ for the elect.<sup>1723</sup> Helm is right in what he says. However, to prove that Christ's death and resurrection were for the

<sup>1721</sup> *Calvinus*, pp.51-61.

<sup>1722</sup> *Calvin and English Calvinism*, p.16.

<sup>1723</sup> *Calvin and the Calvinists*, p.40.

elect does not in itself disprove that his death was, in some measure, also for the non-elect. Thus, Helm misses part of Kendall's argument.

The Calvinist scholar Roger Nicole makes some comments on the texts in mind. Concerning the warnings of Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:29; 2 Peter 2:1, he says that they cannot refer to universal atonement, since to Calvin the context is concerned merely with apostates.<sup>1724</sup> In short, Nicole notices how the number denoted is limited. We would say that none of the texts cited by Clifford refer to the redemption of every single man; the context of each is concerned with those within the church who have professed faith. The only way they could be construed as referring to every single man is by positing that the universal terms "all," "world," etc., in Calvin's teaching, denote every single man- a charge which we have already refuted in Limited Atonement. In the quest to prove that Calvin taught that Christ died for every single man, the verses cited by Clifford are therefore inadmissible evidence.

This still leaves the difficulty of explicit statements by Calvin stressing that there are those who were redeemed and yet who perish. Of Romans 14:15, Murray says it is the stronger brother who is exhorted not to destroy the weaker brother. "Destroy" does not imply eternal perdition. However, if the weaker brother were not to repent of his sin, this 'would lead to perdition.'<sup>1725</sup> All of this Calvin could have meant. In explanation of Calvin's exegesis of Romans 14:15, Nicole says that the context of Romans 14:4 [sic] is concerned with Paul affirming that the weaker brothers will not perish but God will make them stand. Apart from the possibility of Nicole dealing with the wrong text, Calvin, in both Romans 14:4, 15, never once mentions the fact that the weaker brother will not perish.<sup>1726</sup> It is possible- though improbable- that Calvin never meant to suggest in his exegesis of Romans 14:15 that a redeemed brother can perish. But one fact remains: in his comments on Jude 4 and 2 Peter 2:1, Calvin categorically states that there are some who have been redeemed and yet who have fallen away.

The church context is conspicuously brought out in Calvin's comments on 2 Peter 1:1-2:

[Peter] goes on to say that *swift destruction* comes upon them so that others do not involve themselves with them.

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<sup>1724</sup> "John Calvin's View", p.214.

<sup>1725</sup> Romans 2, p.192.

<sup>1726</sup> See Romans, pp.290-291, 298.

2. *And many shall follow.* It is no small stumbling-block to those who are weak to see false teachings received by the common approbation of the world, and a huge number of men led astray, so that only a few remain in pure obedience to Christ. There is nothing that disturbs godly minds so violently today as such defection. Scarcely one in ten of those who enlist under Christ keep the purity of their faith to the very end.<sup>1727</sup>

Notice the reference to the “weak,” a theme running throughout the controversial quotations cited by Clifford. Further, Calvin distinguishes between pure obedience and faith and that which is presumably impure or false. He also states that 2 Peter 2:1-2 and Jude 4 teach the same truth.<sup>1728</sup>

Boersma concludes:

It seems that Calvin did not mean to make a statement about the actual extent of the atonement when speaking of perishing souls who were brought by Christ’s blood. More likely Calvin meant to impress the responsibility of those who might become instrumental in the destruction of souls for who Christ’s death was meant to be. Calvin thus makes somewhat of an overstatement when he uses commercial terminology to express intent.<sup>1729</sup>

Most of this statement is acceptable. However, it mixes matters up. Calvin, in the verses that Boersma has in mind, is concerned with a soul that *has been* redeemed. Moreover, Boersma superimposes an Arminian interpretation of the text when he says that Christ’s death was ‘meant to be’ for those whose souls might be destroyed.

Nicole tries to get out of the difficulty of what 2 Peter 2:1 says according to Calvin, by concluding:

If the apostates are thought to have been regenerate at any time, however, it would appear that the scope of the atonement exceeds the scope of ultimate salvation. This would also raise a difficulty with the doctrine of perseverance. The solution may be found in viewing the description of Hebrews and 2 Peter as expressing what the apostates at one time professed to have rather than what they had in fact.<sup>1730</sup>

We will deal with the Hebrews texts later. In his comments on 2 Peter 2:1, Calvin does not declare what the apostates think to be true or no. On the contrary, he writes of what God declares to be the case: there are those who had been redeemed and yet who have fallen away. What is

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<sup>1727</sup> *Hebrews*, p.346.

<sup>1728</sup> *idem.* On 1 Corinthians 8:4-9, see *Inst.* 4:10:22-23.

<sup>1729</sup> “Extent of the Atonement”, p.352.

<sup>1730</sup> “John Calvin’s View”, p.215.



Nicole's difficulty? His difficulty is that he is thinking in terms of the invisible church. He is thinking in terms of redemption being a perfected state only. To Calvin, to be "redeemed" may or may not be a perfect state, it all depends on whether one is referring to the visible or invisible church. Even so, Calvin never argues that the apostate has been regenerated, because this is a blessing reserved only for the elect.

Thus, Calvin's doctrine of redemption in the verses under examination is built on his view of the visible church. We think he is more faithful to a text like 2 Peter 2:1, because it does say that there have been some who were redeemed (ἀγοράζω) and who have fallen away (cf., 1 Cor.6:20; 7:23). God's act of the "deliverance" of the visible church is never considered by the *Confession* to be "redemption". The Calvinist W. Grudem says that this text refers to prophets who were Jews. All the Jews who were redeemed at the exodus had fallen away-<sup>1731</sup> except those who had believed in Christ, presumably. What Grudem has to prove is that the prophets of 2 Peter 2:1 were Jews. Yet, he offers no evidence whatever. Guthrie concludes that the church Peter is writing to comprises Jews and Gentiles.<sup>1732</sup> The prophets Peter refers to in 2:1 are still the centre of attention in 2:20. He says of them, "If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome". The first thing to notice is that these prophets had known Christ. Secondly, they had escaped the corruption of the world. In its essence, soteric redemption is deliverance from evil by the power of God; there is a distinct theological consensus between the ideas of redemption and escaping the corruption of the world.

If Calvinists refuse to see the import of 2 Peter 2:1, neo-Calvin scholars claim too much of Hebrews 6:4ff. The interpretation of Hebrews 6:4ff by Calvin is rejected by I. H. Marshall. He believes that Calvin is wrong to say that the writer is speaking to the elect, and wrong to declare that those who fall away are reprobate. This contrast does not exist in the text *expressis verbis*, says Marshall. Also, Calvin's reference to Mark 4:17 as proof of spurious faith proves nothing, for the text has nothing to say on spurious faith. Nor is there mention within the text of the reprobate being non-regenerate and the elect being regenerate.<sup>1733</sup>

In response, the first thing to say is that Calvin is speaking of the visible church, something completely overlooked by Marshall. Thus, Calvin can address the Hebrew church *as if* it were

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<sup>1731</sup> *Systematic Theology*, p.600.

<sup>1732</sup> *New Testament Introduction* (Leicester, IVP, 1970), pp.848-850.

the group of the true elect, but warn them by saying that if they did fall away, they would betray that they were reprobate from the start. For example, when Paul writes to the churches he writes to the elect, yet he knew that the church was comprised of those who had real faith and those who did not. Yes, Mark 4:17 is not mentioned in Hebrews 6:4ff, but, there is a false faith referred to. There is no mention of regeneration, as Marshall rightly says. But to Calvin, "regeneration", in his comments on Hebrews 6:4ff, is doing service for true salvation.

Hebrews 6:4-5; 10:26, 29; and 2 Peter 2:20-22, are instances, according to Murray, of how close a person can get to salvation. Men can believe and repent, and yet not be saved.<sup>1734</sup> Murray never states that Christ *in any way* saved or "redeemed" these men. And this is one more point that we need to magnify. There is not one Calvinist *we know* who is prepared to say that God redeems the non-elect. Yet, each Calvinist would insist that Calvin believes the same truths. This is not to say that Calvin was an Arminian, but merely to state that Calvinists have to face the full force of Calvin's terminology.

### CONCLUSION

It is plain that Eaton has not properly understood Murray. Yes, Murray says that the saint perseveres. Yet, if he says that perseverance is not dependent upon the will of the regenerate man, he is even less likely to say that it is dependent upon the will of the believer or professor.

It is true, nevertheless, that Murray cannot, as with any Calvinist, even Calvin, escape the conclusion that *professing* believers can fall away from the faith, according to scripture. Neither can Murray avoid the conclusion that saints persevere by trusting the promises of God. Yet, ironically, from the perspective of the decree, Murray does deny this very thing. Calvin's doctrine of perseverance, however, copes better with texts in scripture that emphasise the "visible" aspect of the church and of *all* who would profess faith; to the extent that he can say that there are those whom Christ had redeemed and who have fallen away. Also, Calvin declares that faith is integral to perseverance; he does not contradict this by saying that the sovereign work of God obviates faith as central to perseverance.

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<sup>1733</sup> *Kept by the Power of God* (Minneapolis, Bethany House Publishers, 1969), p.142-143.  
<sup>1734</sup> *CW* 2, pp.110-111.

Holding in tension the invisible and the visible approaches avoids the polarisation that Calvinist and neo-Calvinist scholars <sup>1735</sup> have incurred, and also avoids the necessity to develop a new system altogether- as proposed by Berkouwer. <sup>1736</sup> Both the *a priori* and *a posteriori* methodologies or “philosophies” are quite correct. What has been unhelpful is the way these methodologies have been developed and pitted against one another. Their abuse is evidence of the way that both neo-Calvin scholars and Calvinists handle Calvin’s writings. As we saw in Limited Atonement, the scripture’s method is to float from the decretive angle to the human angle in one breath, as it were, with the emphasis normally being upon the human perspective. <sup>1737</sup> It is not so much a dialectic we need, but a more sensitive perception of the “visible” and “invisible” emphases of scripture, and to recognise that they can be held in tension.

At last, we come to the conclusion.

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<sup>1735</sup> And, therefore, it is not necessary to resolve the sovereignty and faith-decision tension by resorting to the Arminian position which states that election is pending our action of belief. [G. Osborne, “Soteriology in John,” p.257.] Nor is it necessary to resort to R. T. Kendall’s incredible thesis that some believers might not inherit the kingdom of God, that is, a reward, but they will receive eternal life. [*Once Saved*, pp.119-134.]

<sup>1736</sup> *Faith and Perseverance*, pp.39-75.

<sup>1737</sup> Cf., Grant R. Osborne, “Soteriology in the Gospel of John,” *Grace of God*, pp.256-257.

## CONCLUSION

In the introduction we said that we would evaluate Murray's soteriology. This evaluation followed three paths: was Murray's soteriology an improvement upon or a detraction from Calvin's soteriology? secondly, was Murray right to put certain doctrines under Redemption Accomplished, and then to assign different doctrines to Redemption Applied? Central to both discussions is the *ordo salutis*. Thirdly, we were to develop Murray's own doctrine of definitive sanctification, in order to provide an example of a more accurate alternative for soteriology than the traditional *ordo*.

Murray's theology at points detracts from Calvin's soteriology, and at others improves upon it. Throughout this thesis, it has been shown that Calvin's and Murray's soteriologies are fundamentally the same (though there are some distinct difference. Neo-Calvinism has failed to appreciate that although Calvin's theological system begins with redemption history, the divine sovereignty is the control of his theology, since he operates within the *quid-qualis* distinction.

Methodologically, Calvin is a little more precise than Murray. Calvin promotes particularism but as interpreted through the person of Christ. Whereas for Murray, particularism is more linear and tends to locate Christ as link in a cause and effect motion.

This does not mean that Murray was lagging behind Calvin in Biblical Theology. Murray was the only Reformed theologian of his time to have developed an elaborate conception of the relation between Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology. His monograph *The Covenant of Grace* and his chapter on definitive sanctification were the proverbial light years ahead of their times. Also, it was to a great extent due to Murray's biblico-exegetical method that the doctrine of adoption was accorded a higher place in Reformed soteriology. In fact, in respect of Biblical Theology, it was demonstrated that both Calvin and Murray were federalists, that is, particularists. Each man taught an Adamic dispensation of grace, and subsequent covenants of grace.

Concerning the doctrine of the atonement, both Calvin and Murray believed in the perfection of the atonement, its finality and sufficiency. Murray believed in the consequent absolute necessity of the atonement, and it is possible that Calvin did also. Both men emphasised the substitutionary death of Christ. However, Calvin's understanding of substitution was slightly more pointed than

Murray's, for Calvin identified Christ's union with sinners, in his death, in terms of Christ as a sinner.

Also, both scholars demarcated the extent of the work of Christ as the moment of his incarnation to the point of his death. Concerning his view of the obedience of Christ, Murray developed "righteousness" in two senses, revealing his desire to accommodate the theory that justification consists of Christ's righteousness and forgiveness of sins, as two distinct blessings, in order to refute Arminianism. In reality, Calvinism and neo-Calvinism have tried to squeeze Calvin's doctrine of the obedience of Christ into their respective positions. Calvin probably believed in one righteousness, Christ's life and death, which was imputed to us as the forgiveness of sins, otherwise known as righteousness. Calvin did not settle for the thought that justification consists of remission and imputation. Certainly, these were two elements, but there were various others, meaning that Calvin viewed justification as multi-perspectival. However, having said these things, Calvin's doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness does not undermine any fundamental doctrine in the Calvinistic set-up.

Murray's doctrine of substitution limits the loci of the atonement to the death of Christ and to the action of God merely; and so Murray does not perceive the existential nature of the loci of the atonement. Calvin's doctrine of imputation enabled him to argue that propitiation, expiation, redemption and reconciliation are events that are executed in our experience, *both definitively and progressively*. Further, Calvin was more refreshing in the fact that his understanding of Christ as *asham* meant that Calvin thought that the expiatory and propitiatory death of Christ was the *basis* for reconciliation and redemption.

There are issues for the atonement arising out of Calvin's *quid-qualis* distinction. Calvin believed that it is possible to be redeemed and adopted by Christ's death, yet not eventually be saved. Behind this doctrine was Calvin's *quid-qualis* method. To Calvin, the new covenant church is the mature state of the old covenant one. Murray also believed so. However, Calvin demonstrates that union with Christ in the new covenant church is to be understood in terms of the traditional visible-invisible distinction. That is why Calvin argues that certain "believers" do not persevere. To our mind, Calvin's doctrine of the visible church was a strength. Murray's understanding of union with Christ made no effort to understand conditionality within covenant union. In fact, Murray goes to the extent in his doctrine of perseverance of denying the saints faith is *integral* to perseverance.

Concerning the doctrine of the extent of the atonement, Calvin is inconsistent. He argues that Christ died only for the elect- the *quiddity* of the cross- but the logical conclusion of Calvin's comments concerning man's perception of the cross- the *qualis* of the cross- is that all men are redeemed. Murray's own system did not have this inherent contradiction: Christ died for the elect only; only the elect can appropriate the cross.

It has to be said that Murray by-passes many comments that expose Calvin's *quid-qualis* method. First of all, Murray made no attempt to reconcile Calvin's position that God had no wrath, and yet he did have wrath. Secondly, Murray's failed to negotiate Calvin's comments that implied, in logic terms, that Christ did expiate the sins of every single man. Thirdly, Calvin's doctrine of Christ dying for the visible church presented reason for saying that his death had an element of inefficacy or contingency to it. That is, his death brought in elect and non-elect into the covenant community, but it did not, ultimately, save the non-elect.

We established that Calvin also had an *ordo salutis*. However, the difference between Calvin and Murray can be partly expressed in that Calvin did not have a linear *ordo*, but a perspectival one. The linear *ordo* of Murray exaggerates more the sequence of divine grace, but tends to obviate the centrality of Christ.

Calvin equated regeneration with effectual calling. Murray was more accurate in not doing so. Calvin, through his *quid-qualis* distinction, sought to differentiate between incipient regeneration and "actual" regeneration. We saw that these doctrines equated to Murray's view of regeneration and sanctification, respectively. But, Murray, we said, was more precise in not referring to a "double regeneration".

In *fides specialis* and *fides generalis*, Calvin maintained that there were two stages to the Spirit's testimony: one in the mind and one in the heart. Murray's system was more credible; for he believed that there was only one stage executed in the heart and mind at the same logic moment. Calvin was correct to argue that assurance was of the essence of faith. Murray said it was not. Even so, Murray allowed for a kind of assurance within faith itself. Calvin believed that the seal of knowledge was the seal of justification by faith. Murray held that assurance was the certainty that we have been justified. Both believed in strong and weak assurance, corresponding to strong and weak faith. Neither thought that salvation could be lost. Calvin said that the believer always

has assurance. Murray cogently argued that the believer has not. Murray rightly stated that sanctification is a valid means of assurance. Calvin reasons that sanctification *confirms* the assurance that is inherent to faith. And of the doctrine of repentance, Calvin and Murray adhered to essentially the same views.

Murray's and Calvin's doctrines of justification by faith are identical. However, Calvin's seeks to integrate the perspectives of the application of salvation in a fashion that Murray's strict loci system does not allow. Calvin probably equates justification by faith to reconciliation and adoption. However, Calvin goes too far in such a synthesis; whilst Murray's more rigorous divisions means he avoids it.

The doctrine of sanctification was the same in both men. However, Calvin perceptively maintains that the Christian is still under the dominion of sin. Further, Calvin pays more attention to the existential application of glorification. Though, Murray does, to some extent, allow for this doctrine, albeit in the form of sanctification.

We have concluded on one main question, two others remain, and we will deal with them together. Murray was not right in putting certain doctrines under redemption accomplished and different ones under redemption applied. Of course, this is not a denial of the brilliant description given by Murray of the nature, perfection and limited extent of the atonement, but merely to say that these doctrines have an existential application, something *effectively* denied by Murray.

It is an over emphasis upon the divine sovereignty that leads Murray to construct the categories of redemption accomplished and applied. We will start with his doctrine of substitution. The logical terminus of his doctrine of substitution is that the believer contributes nothing to salvation; for Murray says that it was merely Christ (God) who saved us by dying for us, and that we receive this salvation in our experience. He is said to have died only for the elect, procuring full salvation for them. We argued that if the elect were not with him upon the cross, then salvation is contingent upon their acts of faith. In a certain respect, Calvin's doctrine of the atonement was more consistent than Murray's. Calvin's doctrine of the atonement was the exact parallel of his doctrine of Adam's headship: Adam's sin is passed on to his progeny in the form of original sin; Christ's righteousness is passed on to his disciples in the form of faith. However, according to Calvin, both Adam and Christ acted alone. To Murray, when Adam sinned, we sinned. The parallel of this is found in Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification. When Christ died and

rose, we died and rose with him. However, Murray does not follow through his own teaching. For in his doctrine of substitution, he argues that only God in Christ acted upon the cross.

It was decided that Calvin's and Murray's doctrines of the atonement needed to be merged. Calvin's method enabled him to say that just as we are sinners, Christ was also a "sinner". However, we reached that same conclusion using Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification. When Christ as our covenant representative died and rose, we died and rose with him. Thus, our "presence" in him in these events is the ground for God's wrath, at the moment of this event, being removed against *us*, providing reconciliation and redemption. Moreover, if we guilty ones were present in Christ upon the cross, then he as our representative must also have been seen as guilty and a sinner; from the perspective of his own theology, Calvin also stated that Christ was a sinner. (Both we and Calvin denied that Christ actually sinned or that he could sin.) We stated that this doctrine removed the objection to the Reformed view of substitution, which asked, how can God punish an *innocent* one for the guilt of someone else?

There were two corollaries to our evaluation of Murray's and Calvin's doctrines of substitution. First, if Christ's death was our death, then the *realisation* of his death (and therefore our death) must also be categorised in the same manner as its redemptive-historical accomplishment. We agreed with Calvin, but also said that his doctrine of federal headship needed to be supplemented with Murray's doctrine of federal headship.

The second corollary is that the blessings present in the realisation of Christ's death and resurrection were also present in Christ's death and resurrection. The logic is straightforward: because our death and resurrection in Christ's death and resurrection are realised in our experience, then what we receive in our experience *is* what happened to us in Christ's death and resurrection. So we argued that Christ was called, regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified and glorified in his death and resurrection. And because of our union with our federal head, we were called, regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified and glorified in his death and resurrection.

Murray's Biblical Theology method was developed to reveal how Paul assigned some doctrines to the realm of the cross and others to the realm of the resurrection. Via R. Gaffin, we developed Murray's own doctrine of definitive sanctification. We determined that propitiation and expiation are "crucifixion" doctrines, belonging to the realm of the law, as do reconciliation and redemption. Reconciliation, we saw, meant the removal of enmity only. Peace belongs to the



resurrection realm, because it is the fruit of justification by faith, a resurrection blessing. Redemption was deliverance from the curse of the law, sin, evil, death and Satan. In other words, it is deliverance from negativity, the realm of the cross. Central to deliverance from negativity is the believer's act of mortifying his own flesh.

We argued that, *according to Pauline theology*, effectual calling, vivification, definitive sanctification, faith, justification by faith, adoption, and glorification, belong to the resurrection realm.

The Pauline two aeon distinction is important because it gives some exegetical justification for Murray restricting propitiation, expiation, redemption and reconciliation to Christ's death, and for him restricting effectual calling, vivification, definitive sanctification, faith, justification by faith, adoption, and glorification to the application of salvation.

Faith is integral to the different blessings that constitute the realisation of the death and resurrection of Christ in our lives. To say, as Murray does, that effectual calling, regeneration and definitive calling precede faith is to incur an error of logic. For it entails that we are united to Christ prior to faith, yet are not actually saved until we exercise faith. We concluded that faith must therefore be central to each blessing applied to our existence. We criticised Murray for not allowing that faith was integral to the definition of perseverance. Also, the centrality of faith to the call, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification allowed us the freedom to say that each one of these blessings is definitive and progressive.

The over reliance upon the divine sovereignty and the concomitant depreciation of humanness, in Murray's system, came out in other ways. Calvin made the *loci* belonging to the accomplishment of redemption dependent on one another. Murray did not; possibly because he did not want to erase the doctrine of propitiation by merging it into the doctrine of expiation- he being afraid of giving ground to those who attack the sovereign God's right to punish sin. At this point, Calvin's system was demonstrated to be more wholesome than Murray's. Concerning his view of the obedience of Christ, Murray developed "righteousness" in two senses, and never reconciled them. His desire was to accommodate the theory that justification consists of Christ's righteousness and forgiveness of sins as two distinct blessings, in order to refute Arminianism.

Both Calvin and Murray sought to preserve the primacy of the divine monergism in the moment of faith. But this led to them making a dichotomy between the Spirit and the word. Further, Calvin went to the extreme, in his doctrine of assurance, of denying any power in works to be a basis of assurance, since works are, to him, from the human realm.

As we said before, Murray depreciated the element of contingency in salvation. However, neither Calvin nor Murray would allow for the view that Christ died for all men. Warfield developed God's general love for mankind, and concluded that Christ's death was a proclamation to all men, in that he was there *for the sake of* every single man.

Murray's over emphasis upon the divine sovereignty comes out most clearly in his view of justification by faith. We disagreed with Murray's view that a man could not be justified by obeying the old covenant laws. Justification by works is a truly valid means of justification, because they are works which have the essential element of faith or dependence. That is, they are works that proceed from a heart that is totally reliant upon God's sacrifice in Christ. Many old covenant Israelites obeyed the law not out of dependence, but in order to manipulate the law to gain life; they reinterpreted the law, not realising that in doing this it became their prison within which they had to "live". Paul takes up this theology and puts it within a typological framework. "Faith" is described as the new aeon, the aeon of Christ, the present age which has been penetrated by the apocalyptic Christ. All the saints of God, past and present, belong to this age. The age before Christ, the old covenant, is then reinterpreted by Paul as equating to the Christless era, the aeon of the flesh, the dominion of law as a prison, where those are condemned who sought to manipulate the law for their own selfish ends; all men by nature belong to this realm.

The central theological tenet of Murray's doctrine of definitive sanctification is that we have been delivered once-for-all from sin. We agreed with this. But with Calvin, we said that the believer is still under the bondage of sin. To understand this paradox, we must grasp that definitive sanctification pertains to the area of relations and not ontology. The believer "breathes the air of heaven" at this very moment. However, he is still under the lordship of sin, in that he lives within the domain of sin and daily fights it and is overcome by its influence.



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