

WRITINGS OF JOHN MURRAY

by John Murray

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by John Murray, compiled for study and devotional reading.

26 Chapters

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S. Adoption

Adoption

John Murray

ADOPTION is concerned with the Fatherhood of God in relation to the redeemed. But it is necessary to preface our discussion by distinguishing the several kinds of divine Fatherhood found in Scripture.

1. Intertrinitarianism This is the exclusive property of the Father in relation to the Son in the mystery of the Trinity. It is immanent, eternal, and exclusive. No other person of the Trinity shares it and in reference to the Sonship involved no man or angel participates in it. This uniqueness is expressed in the monogenes title as applied to Christ and in such expressions as the Father's own Son (Romans 8:3, Romans 8:32). This is the only Fatherhood that obtains in the opera ad intra and to think of it as belonging to the opera ad extra would deny its immanent and eternal character.

2. Creative This is very seldom stated in terms of God's Fatherhood. But since it appears in such passages as Acts 17:28, Acts 17:29; Hebrews 12:9; James 1:17, James 1:18, we shall have to reckon with the fact that it is not improper to speak of God's creative relationship in terms of Fatherhood. 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.

Other texts, besides those cited, might appear to express this same truth. But some of these are clearly irrelevant and others cannot be shown to have the creative relation in mind. In Matthew 5:45-48 God is not called the Father of all. He is called the Father of the disciples and it is true that he as their heavenly Father bestows his kindness upon just and unjust. But the text carefully refrains from stating or implying that it is because God is the Father of all that he sends rain and makes his sun to rise upon evil and good. In 1 Corinthians 8:6 — 'but to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him' — there is no mention of a fatherly relation to all men. It is simply an identification of the first person of the Godhead by his distinguishing trinitarian name, and there is in the text indeed no necessary reflection upon his fatherly relation to men. 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.

Ephesians 3:1 — 'the Father, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named' — indicates that this cannot contemplate all mankind because it is restricted to the family of God.

Ephesians 4:6 — 'One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all', must refer to the saints for of those specified as enjoying this relationship Paul proceeds to say, 'But to each one of us has been given grace according to the measure of the free gift of Christ'. Besides, in verse 4 the delimitation is clearly indicated — 'One body and one Spirit even as ye were called in

one hope of your calling’.

Malachi 2:10 — ‘Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?’ — might seem to refer to creation and therefore to universal fatherhood. But 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, Isaiah 43:7, Isaiah 43:9 where *bara* and *yatsar* are used plainly in a restrictive and redemptive sense (cf. Isaiah 64:8, Isaiah 64:9). Besides, the latter part of Malachi 2:10 refers to the covenant of the fathers and indicates that the theocratic relationship to Israelis in view in the earlier part of the verse.

It is noteworthy, therefore, how infrequently the creative relation is expressed in terms of fatherhood. Nowhere is God expressly called the Father of all men. Hence the concept of universal fatherhood, if used at all, must be employed with great caution and it is particularly necessary not to confuse this rare use of the term Father with the frequent use of the same term as it is applied to the redeemed. In Luke 3:38 the word *huios* does not actually occur but it may be understood as carried over from Luke 3:24 where the genealogy begins with *on huios, hos enomizeto, Ioseph, tou Elei tou Matthat*. This does not prove however that God may be regarded as the Father of all men in the sense in which he was the Father of Adam, for two reasons.

(i) The emphasis seems to be upon the fact that Adam owed his origin to God as no other man did. Adam was not generated by a human father.

(ii) Adam might have been a son of God by creation, but not in his fallen state. We might concede that Adam as created was a son of God without conceding that all men since the fall are sons of God. We must distinguish between Adam’s sonship and the sonship of adoption. The latter entails a security that Adam did not possess.

3. Theocratic Fatherhood This refers to God’s adoption of Israel as his chosen people. It is the prototype of redemptive adoption as the Old Testament counterpart. Exodus 4:22, Exodus 4:23; Deuteronomy 14:1 Deuteronomy 14:2; cf. 1:31; Deuteronomy 32:5, Deuteronomy 32:6, Deuteronomy 32:20; Isaiah 43:6; cf. Isaiah 1:2; Isaiah 63:16; Hosea 11:1; Malachi 1:6; Malachi 2:10; Romans 9:4. This is not the exclusive property of the first person.

4. Adoptive Fatherhood This must be distinguished from the fatherhood of the preceding caption, not because it is principally different but because it is the full-fledged sonship in distinction from the nonage sonship in the Old Testament period. The distinction is clearly drawn by Paul in Galatians 3:23-29, Galatians 4:1-6. The difference is in line with the difference in general between the Old Testament and the New; the Old is preparatory, the New is consummatory. The Old is *prepaedeutic*, 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.

BIBLICAL TERMINOLOGY The Greek term for adoption is *huiothesia* — Romans 8:15; Romans 8:23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5 (cf. Romans 9:4). The most important passages in the New Testament bearing upon adoption are John 1:12, John 1:13; Romans 8:14 - Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:4 - Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 1:5; 1 John 3:1 1 John 3:2, 1 John 3:10. The words used in the New Testament to express the thought of sonship in relation to God are *huios*, *teknon*, *teknion* and *paidion*; *pais*, though used on several occasions with reference to Christ and on two occasions with reference to David (Luke 1:69; Acts 4:25) is not used to express the relation with which we are now concerned.

Paidion is the regular word for child and is used of this relation in Hebrews 2:13, Hebrews 2:14 — cf. Isaiah 8:18 — *teknion* — cf. John 13:33; 1 John 2:1, 1 John 2:12, 1 John 2:28; 1 John 3:7 (some mss. *paidia*), 1 John 3:18; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:21. The standard terms are however *huios* and *teknon*. John uses *teknon* almost exclusively. Only in Revelation 21:7 does he use *huios*, 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 the one term to the other. *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; Luke 16:25; Acts 7:5). **THE NATURE OF ADOPTION**

Since *teknon* is derived from *tiktein* we might readily suppose that the word *tekna* would reflect upon divine parentage by generation. Much plausible support might appear to be derived from the fact that *tekna* is the common word for children in the New Testament and in reference to parents the birth from these parents is generally presupposed as that which constitutes the relation implied in the use of the term. Furthermore, in Johannine usage so much emphasis falls upon the fact that those who are begotten of God bear the 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.

We must not, however, take for granted that the word *teknon*, because of its derivation or because of other assumptions which attach to its ordinary use, implies that we become children of God by regeneration or that it expressly reflects upon sonship as constituted 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 coordinated with adoption as the way by which we become sons of God. We must appreciate the fact that the deed of adoption is clearly set forth in the New Testament, and it is apparent that adoption is quite distinct from regeneration. We may never think of sonship as being constituted apart from the act of adoption. If we should think of sonship as constituted by regeneration simply and solely then we should be doing serious prejudice to the necessity and the fact and the distinctive grace of adoption. And not only so. It is questionable if the generative act of God in regeneration is to be construed as an aspect of God's grace by which we are constituted sons of God. One other consideration may be mentioned in this connection. As will be noted later, it is to God the Father specifically and *par excellence* that the children of God sustain this relationship. It is God the Father who is our Father in heaven. We should expect then that it is by an action which is pre-eminently that of the Father that this relation is constituted. But regeneration is pre-eminently the act of the Holy Spirit. In any case, even if we allow that regeneration is to be coordinated with adoption as an ingredient in the total action by which we become sons of God,

yet it is adoption that must be regarded as the distinctive and definitive act by which this relation is constituted. This is to say, that the privilege and status of sonship is not acquired simply by a subjectively operative action but by what must be called, by way of distinction, a judicial act that has its affinities with justification rather than with regeneration or sanctification. 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. The case might be stated thus. Redemption contemplates and secures adoption as the apex of privilege. Calling ushers into the fellowship of God's Son. Regeneration effects that principal conformity to the image of God in righteousness and holiness. Justification accords acceptance with God as righteous and gives the title to the eternal life which the righteousness imputed demands. Sanctification prepares the people of God for the full and con-summate enjoyment of the inheritance to which adoption entitles, the heirship of God. But it is in the act of adoption that God becomes to the redeemed a Father in the highest sense that divine Fatherhood can belong to creatures, or, rather, can be predicated of creatures.

We may not, however, rule out the significance of regeneration in connection with the sonship constituted by adoption. Regeneration it is that generates them anew after the image of God so that the adopted may be imbued with the disposition which is consonant with the responsibilities and privileges and prerogatives belonging to the status of adoption.

Now it is significant in this connection that not only do we have the explicit teaching of Paul to the effect that there is the adoptive act (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5), derived from the notion of a legal act whereby a person who is not a natural son is received into the rights and privileges of a son, but even in the teaching of John there is reflection upon the distinctive action by which we become sons of God. In John 1:12 he speaks of giving authority to become sons of God. Sonship, he indicates, is instituted by the bestowment of a right and this is to be distinguished from the regeneration spoken of in John 1:13. When we apply John's own teaching elsewhere to this passage we are compelled to discover the following progression of logical and causal relationship — regeneration (John 1:13), the reception of Christ, the bestowment of authority, and becoming thereby children of God (John 1:12). It is very likely that this same thought is alluded to in 1 John 3:1-3, 'Behold what manner of love the Father hath given to us that we should be called children of God, and we are'. Several things are to be noted. (1) It is the Father who is in view as the agent. (2) The Father bestows this privilege (dedoken — the same verb as in John 1:12). (3) The calling, whether it reflects on our being named children of God or contains a more efficient idea, that of being effectually called into being as sons of God, stresses the dignity of the status. (4) The emphasis upon the marvel of the Father's love points to the status contemplated as that which in the realm of possession is the apex and epitome of grace. (5) It is a present possession and not simply a future attainment. (6) The status insures that in the future we shall be conformed to his image and will enjoy the beatific vision. In a word, the representation of Scripture is to the effect that by regeneration we become members of God's kingdom, by adoption we become members of God's family. And it may not be forgotten that on the only occasion in which this concept of the family of God is expressly mentioned in the New Testament, it is God the Father who is in view.

'For this cause', says Paul, 'I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and upon earth is named' (Ephesians 3:14, Ephesians 3:15)² THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION The grace of adoption embraces not only the bestowment of the status and privilege of sons but also the witness of the Spirit to the fact (Romans 8:15, Romans 8:16; Galatians 4:6). This includes, as we found already, two elements:

(1) the creation and fostering within us of the filial affection and confidence which is the reflex in our consciousness of the status; (2) the conjoint witness of the Spirit to our spirits. The act of adoption is necessary to the possession of the prerogative of sons; the Spirit of adoption to the cultivation of these prerogatives and the fulfillment of the correlative obligations. It is the Spirit of adoption who produces the highest confidence that it is given to men to exercise in relation to God. The people of God thereby recognize not only Christ as their Redeemer and Saviour, high priest and advocate at God's right hand, not only the Holy Spirit as their sanctifier and advocate, not only the Father as the one who has called them into the fellowship of his Son but also as the one who has instated them in his family, and they enter into the holiest in the assurance that he, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, will own them and bless them as his own children. No approach to God par-takes of comparable intimacy, confidence, and love with that of the simple, yet unspeakably eloquent, 'Abba, Father'. And they accept all the dispensations of his providence as those of the all-wise, all-holy, and all-loving Father in heaven. It is not without significance that the acme of privilege and the highest outreach of confidence toward God that flows from it should be directly attached to that which is pre-eminently and distinctively the action of the Father in the counsel of redemption, namely, election and predestination. 'In love having predestinated us unto adoption' (Ephesians 1:5). Here we have the ultimate source and the highest privilege brought together. And in the consciousness of the sons of God it is inevitable that the assurance of the one should go hand in hand with the recognition of the other. The confidence implicit in the address 'Abba, Father' is one that draws to itself the assurance of predestinating love and these mutually support and encourage each other.

Finally, we may not overlook the example furnished in this matter of inter-trinitarian cooperation. It is the Father who sends the Spirit of adoption into the hearts of his children. It is to the end of ensuring the recognition and cultivation of the relation established by the Father and to the Father. And the activity of the Spirit is directed to the inducing of faith and love which have God the Father as their object in the particularity of his fatherly identity. It is the Father whom the Holy Spirit brings into the focus of the believer's faith, confidence, and love. THE TITLE 'FATHER'

It has been assumed that it is God the Father who stands in this par-ticular relationship to the sons of God. What is the evidence supporting this conclusion?

1. The title 'Father' is the distinguishing title of the first person of the Godhead; it points to his incommunicable property. There is a certain presumption arising from this fact that the title as it applies to a divine relation to men would have in view that person who is distinctively the Father. In other words it would seem appropriate that the person who is Father should sustain to men the fatherly relation that is constituted through the mediation of the Son.

2. In John 20:17 Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, to tell the disciples 'I ascend unto my Father and your Father'. When he says 'my Father' he must mean the first person of the Trinity. In the usage of our Lord 'Father', 'the Father', 'my Father' always refers to the first person. And the same

person must likewise be in view when he says 'your Father'. The coordination would require this inference. Besides, it is to 'the Father' he ascended and this is also said to be an ascension to the person who is identified as the disciples' Father. Here, therefore, without question 'the Father' is in view in the fatherly relation which God sustains to the disciples.

3. Jesus very frequently calls the first person 'my Father who is in heaven' in slightly variant forms: ho pater mou ho ouranios ho pater mou ho en tois ouranois ho pater mou ho en ouranois ho pater mou ho epouranios

He likewise speaks to the disciples of 'your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:16, Matthew 5:45, Matthew 5:48; Matthew 6:1; Matthew 7:11; Mark 11:25, Mark 11:26). The similarity of expression would naturally lead us to think that the same person is in view in both cases, even though Jesus never includes the disciples with him-self and speaks of 'our Father who is in heaven'.

4. In the New Testament epistles the title 'the Father' is the personal name of the first person, as also quite frequently ho theos. The expression or its close parallel 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' (Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Ephesians 1:3; Colossians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3) is unquestionably the first person. Likewise, 'God the Father' (Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 6:23; Php 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; I Tim. I :2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; James 1:27(?); 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1; Revelation 1:6). In nearly all these instances the Father is distinguished from the Son and in 1 Peter 1:2 from the Holy Spirit. When we examine similar instances in the epistles where God is called the Father of believers we have close similarity of expression.

Romans 1:7 : 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ' and the same in 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Php 1:2; Philemon 1:3.

Galatians 1:4 : 'According to the will of God and our Father'. Php 4:20: 'But to God and our Father be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.' Colossians 1:2: 'Grace to you and peace from God our Father.' 1 Thessalonians 1:3: 'before God and our Father'. 1 Thessalonians 3:11 : 'But God himself and our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ'. 1 Thessalonians 3:13 : 'before God and our Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'. 2 Thessalonians 1:1 : 'to the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.' 2 Thessalonians 2:16 : 'But our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father . . . comfort your hearts'. But there is not only the similarity of expression between these in-stances and the others where God is called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ but, even more significantly, when God is denominated 'our Father' the person contemplated is clearly distinguished from the Lord Jesus Christ in most of the instances quoted. And this conclusively shows that the person in view is God the Father as distinguished from the Son. On these grounds we must infer that when God is contemplated in terms of adoption as 'our heavenly Father' it is the first person of the Trinity, the person who is specifically the Father, who is in view. This fact enhances the marvel of adoption. The Father is not only the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ but he is also the God and Father of those who believe in Jesus' name. The relation of God as Father to the Son must not be equated with the relation of God as Father to the adopted. Eternal generation must not be equated with adoption. Our Lord guarded this distinction most jealously in respect of relationship, address, and implication. He never included the disciples with himself or himself with the disciples in a common relationship designated 'our Father'. He never approached the Father in prayer with the disciples and said 'our

Father'. This is expressly marked in the word to Mary Magdalene. And the implications of the distinction are apparent in his word 'No one knoweth who the Father is but the Son' (Luke 10:22; cf. Matthew 11:27). But while the distinction must be recognized and guarded we must not fail to appreciate that which is common, namely, that it is the same God and Father who sustains this relation to the only-begotten in the uniqueness of the sonship that is his and to the redeemed in the uniqueness of the sonship that belongs to them. This fact binds together the only-begotten and the sons by adoption in a bond of brotherhood. We could not dare to think of the relationship established in these terms unless we had the authority of Scripture. In Hebrews 2:11 (cf. Matthew 12:50; John 20:17; especially the latter when Jesus says 'Go to my brethren'.) we read, 'For both he that sanctifieth and they who are being sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren', and then the writer appeals to Psalms 22:22; Isaiah 8:17, Isaiah 8:18. The passage speaks of the sons to be brought to glory (v. 10 — *pollous huious eis doxan agagonta*), of the children whom God had given (v. 13 *paidia*), and of the children (*paidia*) as partakers of blood and flesh (v. 14). We shall have to infer that the 'all of one' (*ex henos pantes*) refers to the fact that the Son (cf. 1:5), here designated the captain of salvation, and the sons to be brought to glory are of the Father and therefore together constituted a brotherhood by virtue of which the Son is not ashamed to call them brethren.

CONCLUSION This doctrine of adoption is not only important in a positive way as setting forth the apex of redemptive grace and privilege, but it is also important negatively in that it corrects the widespread notion of the universal fatherhood of God and provides against its devastating implications. Though there is a sense in which the universal fatherhood may be maintained, yet to confuse this with adoptive fatherhood is to distort and even eviscerate one of the most precious and distinctive elements of the redemptive provision. For if we do not distinguish at this point it means one of two things; the denial of all that is specifically redemptive in our concept of the divine fatherhood, or the importation into the relation that all men sustain to God by creation all the privileges and prerogatives that adoption entails. On the former alternative God's fatherhood is emptied of all the rich content Scripture attaches to it. On the latter alternative we shall have to espouse universalism and the final restoration of all mankind.

It needs to be repeated that Scripture all but uniformly reserves the title Father as it respects men and the title son as it respects our relation to God for that relationship that is effected by the special act of God's grace that finds its place within the *ordo salutis*, namely, adoption. 'Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God' (Shorter Catechism, Question 34).

Notes

1. 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, 1 John 2:12, 1 John 2:28; 1 John 3:7, 1 John 3:18; 1 John 4:4; 1 John 5:21.) In this respect it is like *paidion* in John 21:5; 1 John 2:13, 1 John 2:18 and possibly 1 John 3:7 though the revised text reads *teknia*.

2. cf. James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*, pp. 262f. John Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 147f.

S. Arminianism in the Pilgrimage of the Soul

Arminianism in the Pilgrimage of the Soul

John Murray To some it might seem unnecessary and even wickedly controversial to thrust upon readers any discussion of Arminianism. This might appear to be the case for two reasons. First of all, why should we revive ancient controversies and thereby provoke animosities that have long since died the death of old age? Arminianism takes its name from James Arminius who died in 1609. Who in this age, with its multitudinous problems of a very practical kind, has time or use for the fine points of a theological debate that is now three centuries old? Secondly, why should we even run the risk of making division among brethren over such issues? Arminians believe the Bible. They accept fundamental verities like the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son, the Virgin Birth, the Bodily Resurrection of Christ, Justification by Faith, the Resurrection of the Body, Heaven and Hell. Why should we, when confronted with common enemies like Modernism, Christian Science, and Mormonism, not to mention a host of other pagan philosophies and religions, engage in bickering controversy with those who are agreed on the great fundamentals? These two plausible reasons for the avoidance of such discussion are obviously self-contradictory. The second presupposes the falsity of the first. Nevertheless, they are arguments that sometimes lie side by side.

Although it is true that Arminianism derives its name from a man who died in 1609, we are not to think that that which it represents is a dead issue. A very cursory survey of present-day conditions in the church will disclose that fact, for there are multitudes in the Protestant church who hold and avow the tenets given vogue by James Arminius. This is true whether they are aware of it or not, or whether they have ever heard of Arminius or not. So, while our interest in Arminius himself maybe largely an historical one, we have to be interested in that which Arminianism represents. We have to be because we are either living it or we are living next door to it. We cannot but be interested in the view we ourselves hold or the view held by our next-seat neighbour in the church. We cannot get away from it if we are to think and live in a way worthy of even mediocre Christian intelligence. The second argument appears much more weighty. For, after all, however much it may appear to seem that we like fighting, very few of us indeed like to dispute with those whom we are constrained to acknowledge as brethren for whom Christ died. Most of us, I think, recoil from it. And it is natural that that recoil should sometimes lead us to construct a rather plausible argument whereby we seek to justify our avoidance of it.

There is, however, just one thing that prevents our escape, and that is conviction. When we say conviction we mean something more precious than life. In this matter it is not bare conviction. That may be terribly right or terribly wrong. But it is conviction of truth and truth is always God's truth. It is not ours. Truly it is ours by conviction; but it is God's by source and authorship.

Well, what is this conviction of truth that concerns Arminianism? No doubt many readers have had some trouble with the doctrine of election. Perhaps you have endured the sorest travail of soul in connection with it. Perhaps, when you were aroused to some intelligent interest in this matter,

there was one doctrine you found in Scripture that appeared to present an insuperable enigma, indeed an insuperable barrier to saving hope. Oh, you have said, if only I could tear out of the Bible that horrible doctrine of election, together with its companion doctrine of reprobation? Foreordination? That is what cuts athwart the path of my hope. For it cuts away every inducement to any effort on my part. If I am elected, you have said, I shall be saved in any case. If I am not elected, I am foredoomed to perdition, whatever I may try to do in the matter. I have no way of knowing in what class I am. And so bewildering perplexity, if not despair, was the result. But some evangelist came along and appeared to be the ambassador of peace to you in this slough of despond. He told you that God did not in the exercise of His sovereign good pleasure from all eternity elect some to salvation and foreordain others to death. No, not at all. Truly, he said, election is in the Bible, but you have misunderstood it. The election you find in the Bible is just the election of those who will believe. God foresaw from eternity who would believe in Christ and who would not. And so He elected those whom He foresaw would believe and, of course, did not elect those whom He foresaw would reject. There is no such thing, said he, as unconditional election. After all, it is entirely left to you whether you will accept or reject the gospel. A wave of new hope invaded your soul. You began to take courage. God has left me, you said, with my responsibility. The exercise of that responsibility is my part, it is my contribution. If I do my part, God will do His. God gives to all men a chance of salvation, and it is simply up to me to take advantage of that chance. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."

It must not be said that the breeze of hope that crossed the brow of your despondent soul had no justification at all. There was some truth in this experience of yours. But it was truth distorted by the most dangerous error. And God was merciful to your soul. He did not allow that momentary peace to continue. The breeze of refreshment passed and the fever of despondency again settled upon your soul. For you began to read your Bible and you read in Ephesians 1:4-6, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." You read this, you read through the chapter, you read the second chapter too, and you read other portions of Scripture to the same effect. You said to yourself, This sounds very like the doctrine I was taught in the Shorter Catechism, "God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer" (Q. 20). So again you found yourself in the grip of the old enigma, and you could not accept the solution of your good-intentioned evangelist. It did not accord with your understanding of the truth of Scripture. God was merciful to your soul. He had led you to put truth above even the relief you so much sought and needed. But another evangelist came along. He appeared severe, even harsh. He preached total depravity. He preached unconditional election. His emphasis upon the absolute sovereignty of God was irresistible. He appeared to have little sympathy with the deep wound that was cutting into the vitals of your spirit. He drove the sword even more penetratively. But his message rang true to Scripture. It bore the hallmark of truth. It commended itself to your conscience in the sight of God. It met with profound response in your soul. That same evangelist, however, preached the gospel of sovereign grace, of full and free salvation. The overtures of the gospel, he said, were given in the full, free and unfettered call of the gospel to sinners. He represented Christ in all the glory of His Person and in

all the perfection of His finished work. In Christ's name he invited you to Christ. He said that this free offer of salvation to you as a sinner dead in trespasses and sins came to you upon the very crest of the wave of the divine sovereignty, that it was the waves of the divine sovereignty that brought these sweet overtures of grace and love, and caused them to break upon the very threshold of your need and responsibility. He told you that it was not as one informed or convinced of your election by God that you were invited, exhorted, commanded and called to put your trust in Jesus' name, but as a sinner lost and condemned. He told you that your election was not the warrant upon which you were to believe in Jesus, but rather that the warrant upon which you were to trust in Him was His all-sufficiency, all-suitability and perfection as Saviour, together with the invitations, demands and promises of the gospel. He quoted "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Your heart was drawn. The glory and love of Christ captivated your heart. The simplicity and beauty of the gospel placed an irresistible mysterious constraint upon your spirit. It was all so simple, it was all so harmonious. You entrusted yourself to the Saviour of sinners. You had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The peace of God that passeth all understanding possessed your heart and mind. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel" (Shorter Catechism Q.31). God was merciful to your soul.

Well, do you know that yours was the pilgrimage of a soul through what is the very essence of the Arminian controversy? It was just the great issues that were at stake in centuries of theological debate that were being fought in the little world of your soul. For this is not, after all, a mere academic affair. It is not the playground of idle theological scholastics. It is a matter that concerns the integrity of truth and the purity of the gospel. It is a matter of life and death.

Now you have no dispute with sovereign and unconditional election. You see clearly that, if it were not for the sovereign electing grace of God, there would be salvation for none. You now rejoice with a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory in the electing love of God the Father, the redeeming love of God the Son and the regenerating love of God the Holy Ghost. Thanksgiving and rejoicing break into adoration and you say in the words of an ancient liturgy, "One is holy, the Father; one is holy, the Son; one is holy, the Holy Ghost." You yield the total assent and consent of your spirit to the sovereignty expressed in the words of our Lord, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou has hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Matthew 11:25-26). This article first appeared in The Presbyterian Guardian, March 25, 1940.

S. Calvin on the Sovereignty of God

Calvin on the Sovereignty of God by John Murray No treatment of the subject of God's sovereignty has surpassed in depth of thought, in reverence of approach, and in eloquence of expression that which we find in the last three chapters of Book I of the Institutes. It is sufficient to be reminded of one or two of the classic statements which we find in these chapters to appreciate anew the intensity of Calvin's faith in the all-pervasive and over-ruling providence of God. "So it must be concluded," he says, "that while the turbulent state of the world deprives us of judgment, God, by the pure light of his own righteousness and wisdom, regulates these very commotions in the most exact order and directs them to their proper end."¹ Or, again, it is Calvin who has given us the formula which has become in many Reformed circles a household word for thankfulness, resignation, and hope. The necessary consequences of the knowledge that God governs all creatures, including the devil himself, for the benefit and safety of his people, are "gratitude in prosperity, patience in adversity, and a wonderful security respecting the future."²

What then for Calvin does the sovereignty of God mean? I suppose that no Christian in the catholic tradition, not to speak of the evangelical and Reformed traditions, will formally deny the sovereignty of God. For to say that God is sovereign is but to affirm that God is one and that God is God. But we may not be misled by the formal use of vocables. It is possible for us to profess the sovereignty of God and deny it in the particulars in which this sovereignty is expressed, to assert a universal but evade the particularities. It is precisely in this respect that Calvin's doctrine of the sovereignty of God is to be assessed and appreciated. The Sovereignty of God in Decree That Calvin regards everything that occurs as embraced in the eternal decree of God lies on the face of his teaching at every point where he finds occasion to reflect on this subject. While repudiating the Stoic doctrine of necessity, arising from a perpetual intertwining and confused series of causes contained in nature, he is insistent that God is the arbiter and governor of all things "who, of his own wisdom, from the remotest eternity, decreed what he would do, and now by his own power executes what he has decreed. Whence we assert, that, not only the heaven and the earth and inanimate creatures, but also the deliberations and volitions of men are so governed by his providence that they are directed exactly to their destined end"³ and thus nothing happens fortuitously or contingently. "The will of God is the supreme and first cause of all things, because nothing happens but by his command or permission."⁴ And in his extensive tract on The Eternal Predestination of God, dedicated on January 1, 1552, he says to the same effect that "the hand of God no less rules the internal affections than it precedes the external acts, and that God does not perform by the hand of men those things which he has decreed without first working in their hearts the very will which precedes their acts."⁵

It is of greater relevance to us in the theological situation in which we are placed today to understand and assess the position which Calvin espoused and defended on the question 358; cf. E.T. by Henry Cole: Calvin's Calvinism, London, 1927, p. 243. It is regrettable that Cole unnecessarily embellishes his translation. I have often given my own renderings which brings to focal and acute expression his doctrine of the eternal decree. It is that concerned with the question

of election and reprobation. It is of interest that in his earliest commentary, that on the Epistle to the Romans, dedicated at Strassburg on October 18, 1539, he provides us with his thought on this question at a comparatively early age. It is well for us to take heed to Calvin's own advice that "the predestination of God is indeed a labyrinth from which the mind of man can by no means extricate itself." But we are not for that reason to avoid every thought of it. For "the Holy Spirit," he says, "has taught us nothing but what it behooves us to know . . . Let this then be our sacred rule, to seek to know nothing concerning it, except what Scripture teaches us; when the Lord closes his holy mouth, let us also stop the way, that we may go no further."⁶

While Calvin thus properly cautions us to be silent when God closes his own sacred mouth and to seek to know nothing but what God teaches us in Scripture, he at the same time upbraids that false modesty that suppresses the doctrine of Scripture and pleads caution as an excuse to refrain from subscribing to its witness. This kind of caution he brands as preposterous; the honor of God is not to be protected by the pretended modesty which refuses to listen to what God has revealed. When God has spoken we cannot remain ignorant without loss and harm.⁷ What Calvin is maintaining in these contexts is the free and absolute sovereignty of God in the discrimination that exists among men in respect of election, on the one hand, and reprobation, on the other. In the matter of election he insists that "the salvation of believers depends on the eternal election of God, for which no cause or reason can be rendered but his own gratuitous good pleasure."⁸ "Inasmuch as God elects some and reprobates others, the cause is not to be found in anything else but in his own purpose."⁹ It would be unnecessary and unduly burdensome at this time to show how Calvin rejects the subterfuge of appeal to foreknowledge in order to evade the force of the emphasis which Scripture places upon the pure sovereignty of God's election of some and rejection of others. Suffice it to quote one word of his in this connection. "The foreknowledge of God, which Paul mentions, is not a bare prescience, as some unwise persons absurdly imagine, but the adoption by which he had always distinguished his children from the reprobate."¹⁰ In connection with election Calvin fully recognizes that this election was in Christ. Nothing, however, could be more remote from Calvin's thought than to suppose that this fact in the least interferes with the pure sovereignty and particularism of the election itself. On the contrary, he says expressly that this is the confirmation that "the election is free; for if we were chosen in Christ, it is not of ourselves."¹¹ And the practical import for us of this truth is that no one should seek confidence in his own election anywhere else than in Christ. "Christ, therefore, is both the clear glass in which we are called upon to behold the eternal and hidden election of God, and also the earnest and pledge."¹² Referring to John 17:6, he says, "We see here that God begins with himself (a se ipso), when he condescends to elect us: but he will have us to begin with Christ in order that we may know that we are reckoned among that peculiar people."¹³ "Election, indeed, is prior to faith, but it is learned by faith."¹⁴ As respects reprobation we are required to ask, in the main, two questions. The first question concerns what has been called its ultimacy. In the esteem of Calvin, is the passing over or rejection of the non-elect as eternal and as sovereign, in that sense as ultimate, as the choosing of the elect to eternal salvation? It appears to me that the frequency and the clarity with which Calvin deals with this question leave no doubt that the answer must be affirmative. It needs to be appreciated that his long dissertation on The Eternal Predestination of God was directed chiefly against the thesis of Pighius that the origin of reprobation was God's foreknowledge that some would remain to the last in contempt of divine grace and so the wicked deprive themselves of the benefit of universal election. Pighius denied that certain persons were

absolutely appointed to destruction.¹⁵ It is on this background that we must understand Calvin's repeated assertions to the contrary. He appeals to Augustine who, "tracing the beginning of election to the gratuitous will of God, places reprobation in his mere will likewise."¹⁶ "There is," he continues, "most certainly an inseparable connection between the elect and the reprobate, so that the election, of which the apostle speaks, cannot consist unless we confess that God separated from others certain persons whom it pleased him thus to separate."¹⁷ "It is indeed true that the reprobate bring upon themselves the wrath of God by their own depravity, and that they daily hasten on to the falling of its weight upon their own heads. But it must be confessed that the apostle is here treating of that difference which proceeds from the secret judgment of God."¹⁸ In his commentary on Romans 9:1-33 Calvin likewise says: "That our mind may be satisfied with the difference which exists between the elect and the reprobate, and may not inquire for any cause higher than the divine will, his [Paul's] purpose was to convince us of this — that it seems good to God to illuminate some that they may be saved, and to blind others that they may perish: for we ought particularly to notice these words, to whom he wills, and, whom he wills: beyond this he allows us not to proceed."¹⁹ "It is indeed evident that no cause is adduced higher than the will of God. Since there was a ready answer, that the difference depends on just reasons, why did not Paul adopt such a brief reply? But he placed the will of God in the highest rank for this reason, — that it alone may suffice us for all other causes. No doubt, if the objection had been false . . . a refutation would not have been rejected by Paul. The ungodly object and say, that men are exempted from blame, if the will of God holds the first place in their salvation, or in their perdition. Does Paul deny this? Nay, by his answer he confirms it, that God determines concerning men, as it seems good to him . . . for he assigns, by his own right, whatever lot he pleases to what he forms."²⁰

These quotations are sufficient to show that no doubt can be entertained respecting Calvin's position that the differentiation that exists among men finds its explanation in the sovereign discrimination which God in his eternal counsel was pleased to make and that the passing by and rejection of the reprobate, in respect of differentiation and the diverse destiny entailed, are correlative with the election of those appointed to salvation. The sovereign will of God as the highest and ultimate cause is just as rigorously posited in reprobation as it is in election. And if the formula, "the equal ultimacy of election and reprobation" is intended to denote this precise consideration, then there can be no room for hesitation in asserting that Calvin would have subscribed to that formula. On the other hand, in respect of ultimacy, if the question is that of consequent destiny, there likewise needs to be no doubt but that for Calvin ultimate and irreversible perdition is coextensive with the decree of reprobation. It is scarcely necessary to adduce evidence in support of this conclusion. The way in which Calvin discusses the whole question of reprobation would be nullified as to its relevance and necessity if reprobation did not have as its implication eternal destruction, or election eternal salvation. But one or two quotations may be offered to confirm this conclusion. "As the blessing of the covenant separates the Israelitic nation from all other people, so the election of God makes a distinction between men in that nation, while he predestinates some to salvation, and others to eternal condemnation."²¹ "Paul teaches us, that the ruin of the wicked is not only foreseen by the Lord, but also ordained by his counsel and his will; and Solomon teaches us the same thing, — that not only the destruction of the wicked is foreknown, but that the wicked themselves have been created for this very end — that they may perish (Proverbs 16:4)."²² The second question that arises in connection with

reprobation is one that must never be overlooked. If we do not take account of this consideration we fail to appreciate the radical distinction that obtains between the predestination to life, which belongs to election, and the foreordination to death, which inheres in reprobation. Calvin insisted, as we have found, and insisted rightly, that in the differentiation between election and reprobation we must seek for no higher or more ultimate cause than the sovereign will of God and that the pure sovereignty of God's good pleasure is the origin and explanation of reprobation no less than of election. But there is a factor in reprobation that does not enter into the salvation which is the fruit of election. This factor is that reprobation cannot be conceived of apart from the everlasting condemnation which it involves and condemnation always presupposes guilt and ill-desert. Guilt and ill-desert attach themselves to us. And, therefore, reprobation must never be conceived of apart from the ground or basis which resides in us for the condemnation that reprobation entails. In a word, the ground of condemnation is sin and sin alone. And sin is ours and ours alone. So reprobation always finds in men themselves a basis which never can be applied to the salvation which is the issue of election. To reiterate, the ground of the discrimination that exists among men is, as Calvin has maintained, the sovereign will of God and that alone. But the ground of the damnation to which the reprobate are consigned is sin and sin alone.

Calvin has not failed to recognize this distinction. We have an intimation of this in his statement: "In the salvation of the godly nothing higher must be sought than the goodness of God, and nothing higher in the perdition of the reprobate than his just severity."²³ It is that term "just severity" (*justa severitas*) that points to the exercise of judicial infliction in the matter of reprobation, that is, the execution of just judgment. It indicates that the judicial enters into the concept of reprobation. And he does not permit us to be in any doubt as to what he means by "just severity." He has his own way of enunciating this truth, and the import is clear. "It is indeed true," he says, "that here is the proximate cause of reprobation, because we are all cursed in Adam."²⁴ And when he inveighs against the clamor of the ungodly he says: "being not content with defending themselves, they make God guilty instead of themselves; and then, after having devolved upon him the blame of their own condemnation, they become indignant against his great power."²⁵ Again he says that although the secret predestination of God is the first cause and "superior to all other causes, so the corruption and wickedness of the ungodly afford a reason and an occasion for the judgments of God" (*locum materiamque praebet Dei judicii*).²⁶ "The ungodly are indeed, on account of their evil deeds, visited by God's judgment with blindness; but if we seek for the source (*fontem*) of their ruin, we must come to this, that being accursed by God, they cannot by all their deeds, sayings, and purposes, get and obtain anything but a curse."²⁷ So it is quite apparent that Calvin does not think of reprobation as taking effect apart from the curse that rests upon sin. Sin is the proximate cause of damnation, and no man can justly plead that punishment executed is the consequence of aught but that for which he is to be blamed. It is therefore "just severity." So Calvin is fully cognizant of the judicial aspect of reprobation. We should not be doing justice to Calvin, however, were we to overlook the contexts in which these references to sin as "the proximate cause of reprobation" occur. The term "proximate cause," of itself, advises us that there is a more ultimate cause and this is stated in the same sentence to be "the bare and simple good pleasure of God" in electing and reprobating by his own will. When he speaks of "the blame of their own damnation," which men seek to load upon God, it is in a context in which the accent falls upon the fact that "those who perish have been destined by the will of God to destruction" and that the will of God holds the first place in salvation and perdition. And when he

admits that the pravity and wickedness of the ungodly provide the material for God's judgments, yet he protests that it is to invert all order to set up causes "above the secret predestination of God."²⁸ What may we infer as to the reason for this jealousy with respect to the sovereign will and good pleasure of God? There can be but one answer. When Calvin establishes the judicial factor in reprobation, he is bound to reckon with the fact that the reason why some are consigned to the curse, which we all inherit from Adam, and others are predestined to salvation is simply and solely the sovereign will of God. After all, ill-desert is not the reason for the discrimination, though it is the ground for the condemnation executed. And it is the note of secret predestination that is uppermost in Calvin's thought at these points, because this is the only explanation why the reprobate are left to reap the curse which their evil deeds deserve and for which they have no answer before God. This is why we are compelled to take account of the ultimacy, even in the matter of the judicial or penal aspect of reprobation, of the sovereignty of God's will, a sovereignty which is not one whit less sovereignly differentiating at the point of reprobation than it is at the point of election to life. The formula, "the equal ultimacy of election and reprobation" is not one that, in my judgment, is most felicitous because it is liable, by reason of its brevity, to obscure the penal, judicial, and hell-deserving ingredient which must enter into the concept of reprobation. But we must not affirm less than the equal ultimacy of the pure sovereignty of God's good pleasure in election and reprobation and that the sovereign discrimination that is exemplified in election is brought to bear upon reprobation at the point of its judicial execution as well as at the point of preterition. This I believe is the precipitate of Calvin's thinking on this topic, and I am not able to regard it as other than the precipitate of biblical teaching.

We should not, however, be giving a fair transcript of Calvin's teaching on this subject if we omitted to make mention of his warning. "Proud men clamour, because Paul, admitting that men are rejected or chosen by the secret counsel of God, alleges no cause; as though the Spirit of God were silent for want of reason, and not rather, that by his silence he reminds us, that a mystery which our minds cannot comprehend ought to be reverently adored, and that he thus checks the wantonness of human curiosity. Let us then know, that God does for no other reason refrain from speaking, but that he sees that we cannot contain his immense wisdom in our small measure; and thus regarding our weakness, he leads us to moderation and sobriety."²⁹ "And far be it from any one of the faithful to be ashamed to confess his ignorance of that which the Lord God has enveloped in the blaze of his own inaccessible light."³⁰ *The Sovereignty of God in His Providence* The providence of God embraces all events, past, present, and future, and applies to the evil as much as to the good, to sinful acts as much as to the holy acts of men and angels. Unsanctified sense is liable to conceive of providence as consisting simply in the unfolding of potencies and virtues implanted in the world at its creation and so the utmost of its adoration is to perceive the wisdom, power, and goodness of God in the work of creation. It conceives of God as a mere spectator. For the believer the presence of God appears no less in the perpetual government of the world than in its origin. Perhaps the most distinctive emphasis in this connection is Calvin's insistence that providence does not consist in a general motion or superintendence but that all events whatsoever are governed by the secret counsel and directed by the present hand of God (*occulto Dei consilio gubernari ... praesenti Dei manu diriguntur*). Calvin does not deny but rather asserts that created things are endowed with properties and laws which operate according to their nature. Yet they are only instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he wills and according to his own will turns to this or that action. The sun, for example, "the godly man does not

regard as the principal or necessary cause of those things which existed before the creation of the sun but only an instrument which God uses, because he so wills, since he could dispense with it and act directly without any more difficulty.”³¹ God made the sun to stand still (Joshua 10:13) to testify that “the sun does not daily rise and set by a secret instinct of nature but that he himself governs its course to renew the memory of his fatherly favour towards us.”³² God’s omnipotence is not a vain, idle, and, as it were, slumbering potency but a vigilant, efficacious, and operative agency constantly exerted on every distinct and particular movement (*ad singulas et particulares motus*). Not a drop of rain falls and no wind ever blows but at the special command of God (*speciali Dei jussu*).³³ Every year, month, and day is governed by a new and special providence of God (*nova et speciali Dei providentia temperari*).³⁴ Chance and fortune do not belong to a Christian man’s vocabulary. Events are often fortuitous to us because their order, reason, end, and necessity are hid in the counsel of God and are not apprehended by the mind of man. But they are not fortuitous for God — they proceed from his will. This insistence upon the ever-present and ever-active will of God in each particular movement obviously rules out the notion of bare permission. But Calvin takes pains to reflect on this subterfuge. It is particularly in connection with the sinful acts of Satan and of wicked men that the postulate of bare permission appears to offer escape from the allegation that the presence of the will and agency of God would be inconsistent with the responsibility and guilt which devolve upon the perpetrators of iniquity. In Calvin’s esteem, this resort to the idea of permission is only to evade the difficulty. For “that men can effect nothing but by the secret will of God nor can they be exercised in deliberating anything but what he has previously with himself decreed and determines by his secret direction is proved by innumerable and express testimonies.”³⁵ “Whatever is attempted by men, or by Satan himself, God still holds the helm in order to turn all their attempts to the execution of his judgments.”³⁵ So it is nugatory and insipid to substitute for the providence of God a bare permission. The very “conceptions we form in our minds are directed by the secret inspiration of God to the end which he has designed” (*arcana Dei inspiratione ad suum finem dirigi*).³⁶

It is obvious what questions arise in connection with this doctrine. And Calvin was well aware of the objections and faced up squarely to their apparent validity. There is, first of all, the question of authorship. Is not God, therefore, the author of the crimes which the instruments of iniquity conceive and perpetrate? At certain points Calvin does speak of God as author and cause. According to Scripture God “himself is said to give men over to a reprobate mind and cast them into vile lusts, because he is the principal author (*praecipuus autor*) of his own righteous vengeance, and Satan is only the minister of it.”³⁷ Again he says: “And I have already sufficiently shown that God is called the author (*autor*) of all these things which these censors wish to happen merely by his idle permission.”³⁸

There are, however, certain qualifications which must be appreciated if we are to assess these statements correctly. Calvin is equally emphatic to the effect that God is not the author of sin. With respect to Adam’s fall he says expressly, that although God ordained the fall of Adam, “I so assert it as by no means to concede that God was the author.”³⁹ “But how it was that God, by his foreknowledge and decree, ordained what should take place respecting man, and yet so ordained it without his being himself in the least a participator of the fault, or being at all the author (*autor*) or the approver of the transgression; how this was, I repeat, is a secret manifestly far too deep to be penetrated by the human mind, nor am I ashamed to confess our ignorance. And far be it from any

of the faithful to be ashamed to confess his ignorance of that which the Lord envelops in the blaze of his own inaccessible light.”⁴⁰

Furthermore, Calvin will allow for no equivocation on the principle that in those operations which are common to God and men God is free from all fault and contracts no defilement from men’s vices. No one has expended more care than Calvin in developing the distinction in respect of the motive, reason, and end by which men are actuated in the commission of sin and the motive, reason, and end by which God makes the vices of men to fulfil his holy purposes. “So great is the difference,” he says in quoting from Augustine, “between what belongs to the human will, and what to the divine, and between the ends to which the will of every one is to be referred, for approbation or censure. For God fulfils his righteous will by the wicked wills of wicked men.”⁴¹ There is a complete disparity between the wills of wicked men and the will of God which is operative in the same event. When men sin they do not perform evil actions with the motive or design of promoting the will of God but because they are inflamed with the violence of their own passions and deliberately strive to oppose him. “God only requires of us conformity to his precepts. If we do anything contrary to them, it is not obedience, but contumacy and transgression... they [men] can lay no blame upon God, for they find in themselves nothing but evil, and in him only a legitimate use of their wickedness.”⁴² There is thus a coincidence of the wicked wills of wicked men and the holy will of God. Both are operative in and converge upon the same event, and yet God contracts no defilement from the perversity which is the instrument of his holy designs. The difficulty this may pose for our understanding arises from the fact that “because of the weakness of our mind we do not comprehend how in different respects (*diverso modo*) he does not will and wills the same thing” (*nolit fieri et velit*).⁴³

It is not only, however, the disparity that exists between the wicked wills of men and the holy will of God, as both converge upon the same event, but also the disparity that exists within the will of God. There is a twofold aspect to the will of God. And there is the disparity between the decretive will and the preceptive will, between the determinations of his secret counsel that certain events will come to pass and the prescriptions of his revealed will to us that we do not bring these events to pass. It cannot be gainsaid that God decretively wills what he preceptively forbids and decretively forbids what he preceptively commands. It is precisely in this consideration that the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is focused most acutely with its demands for our faith and reverence. If I am not mistaken it is at this point that the sovereignty of God makes the human mind reel as it does nowhere else in connection with this topic. It should be so. It is the sanctified understanding that reels. And it is not the mark of intelligence to allege or claim a ready resolution of the apparent contradiction with which it confronts us. How can God say: this comes to pass by my infallible foreordination and providence, and also say to us: this thou shalt not bring to pass?

Calvin was well aware of this question and he did not tone down the mystery with which it confronts us. He is constantly refuting, by appeal to Scripture, the objections which unbelief registers against this doctrine. Much of the argumentation in the last three chapters of Book I of the Institutes is concerned with it. It is of interest that the last work in which Calvin was engaged before his work was arrested by the hand of death was his exposition of the prophecy of Ezekiel. His work ended with Ezekiel 20:44. He did not even complete his exposition of the chapter. At Ezekiel 18:23, in dealing with the discrepancy between God’s will to the salvation of all and the election of God by which he predestinates only a fixed number to salvation, he says: “If any one

again objects — this is making God act with duplicity, the answer is ready, that God always wishes the same thing, though by different ways, and in a manner inscrutable to us. Although, therefore, God's will is simple, yet great variety is involved in it, as far as our senses are concerned. Besides, it is not surprising that our eyes should be blinded by intense light, so that we cannot certainly judge how God wishes all to be saved, and yet has devoted all the reprobate to eternal destruction, and wishes them to perish. While we look now through a glass darkly, we should be content with the measure of our own intelligence.”⁴⁴

I said previously that in this discrepancy the doctrine of God's sovereignty comes to its most pointed expression. It is so, I submit, because the sovereignty of God bears upon us at no point more relevantly and with more irresistible sanction than in his command. Nothing underlines God's sovereignty over us and his propriety in us, as creatures made in his image, as does his sovereign command. In his command his sovereignty is addressed to our responsibility and our responsibility defines our creaturehood as made in his image. And the command of God registers his supremacy and our complete subjection to him. The providence of God, as also his decretive will, is at no point exemplified and vindicated as to its all-inclusiveness more effectively than at the point where our responsible agency is exercised in violation of his command. There is, after all, the contradiction that we by sin offer to God's sovereignty. It is the contradiction of the claim which his sovereignty demands of us and the contradiction of what is God's good pleasure. But if the providence of God did not embrace that very contradiction, then there would be a sphere outside the realm of God's providence and, therefore, outside the sphere of his sovereign control and direction. The simple upshot of that alternative would be that God would not be sovereign, and man in his sin would be able to command a realm impervious to God's providence.

What a dismal perspective and prospect that alternative would offer to us! We must boldly maintain and profess the only alternative which Calvin so insistently asserted. In the realm of sin we do have the contradiction of God's revealed and prescriptive good pleasure. But that very contradiction is embraced in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. And it is just because this is the case, it is just because the contradiction which sin offers to his sovereignty in command is embraced in the sovereignty of both decree and providence and does not create a realm impervious to his efficient foreordination and operation that the sovereign provisions of his grace invade that same realm and emancipate men from the contradiction itself and therefore from the curse, condemnation, thralldom, and misery which the contradiction entails. It is this doctrine of God's sovereignty in the realm of sin that is the precondition of sovereignty in redemptive grace.

Notes 1. Inst., I, xvii, 1.

2. Inst., I, xvii, 7.

3. Ibid., I, xvi, 8.

4. Idem., John Allen's translation.

5. De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione, in Opera (Brunswick, 1870), VIII, col.

6. Comm. ad Romans 9:14; cf. E.T. by John Owen.

7. Cf. De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione, as cited, coll. 263f.; E.T., pp. 34f.

8. Ibid., col. 270; E.T., p. 44.
9. Comm. ad Romans 9:14.
10. Comm. ad Romans 8:29; E.T. by John Owen.
11. Comm. ad Ephesians 1:4.
12. De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione, as cited, col. 318; cf. E.T., p. 132.
13. Ibid., col. 319; cf. E.T., p. 133.
14. Ibid., col. 318; cf. E.T., p. 183.
15. Cf. Ibid., coll. 259f.; E.T., pp. 27f.
16. Ibid, col. 267; cf. E.T., p. 41.
17. Ibid., col. 270; cf. E.T., p. 45.
18. Ibid., col. 288; cf. E.T., pp. 76f.
19. Comm. ad Romans 9:18; E.T. by John Owen.
20. Comm. ad Romans 9:20; E.T. by John Owen.
21. Comm. ad Romans 9:11; E.T. by John Owen.
22. Comm. ad Romans 9:18; E.T. by John Owen.
23. Comm. ad Romans 9:11; E.T. by John Owen.
24. Idem.
25. Comm. ad Romans 9:19; E.T. by John Owen.
26. Comm. ad Rom. 9:80.
27. Comm. ad Romans 11:7 28. Comm. ad Romans 9:30.
29. Comm. ad Romans 9:20; E.T. by John Owen.
30. De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione, as cited, col. 316; E.T., p. 128.
31. Inst., I, xvi, 2.
32. Idem.
33. Ibid., I, xvi, 7.
34. Idem.
35. Ibid., 1, xviii, 1.
36. Ibid., I, xviii, 2.
37. Idem.

38. *Ibid.*, I, xviii, 3.

39. *De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione*, as cited, col. 315; cf. E.T., p. 126.

. *Ibid.*, col. 816; cf. E.T., p. 128.

41. *Inst.*, I, xviii, 3.

42. *Ibid.*, I, xvii, 5; E.T. by John Allen.

43. *Ibid.*, I, xviii, 3.

44. *Comm. ad Ezekiel 18:23*; E.T. by Thomas Myers. It is more probable that the Latin verb *velle*, translated on three occasions above by the English term “wishes,” should rather be rendered “wills.” The present writer is not persuaded that we may speak of God’s will as “simple,” after the pattern of Calvin’s statement. There is the undeniable fact that, in regard to sin, God decretively wills what he preceptively does not will. There is the contradiction. We must maintain that it is perfectly consistent with God’s perfection that this contradiction should obtain. But it does not appear to be any resolution to say that God’s will is “simple,” even in the sense of the Latin term *simplex*.

S. Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture

Calvin's Doctrine of Scripture by John Murray The contention that Calvin's view of the inspiration of Scripture was not the high doctrine of plenary, verbal inspiration, espoused by the Reformed dogmaticians of the seventeenth century, has emanated from many quarters. It is noteworthy that within the last few years this question has received from students of Calvin thorough and exacting treatment. It is gratifying that the two studies which this present decade has produced and which have brought the most pains-taking research to bear on the question have reached the same conclusion that in Calvin's esteem the original Scriptures were inerrant. In the words of E. A. Dowey: "There is no hint anywhere in Calvin's writings that the original text contained any flaws at all."¹ "The important thing to realize is that according to Calvin the Scriptures were so given that — whether by 'literal' or 'figurative' dictation — the result was a series of documents errorless in their original form."² And Kenneth S. Kantzer, even more recently, has written that the evidence in support of the view that Calvin held to the "rigidly orthodox verbal type of inspiration. . . . is so transparent that any endeavor to clarify his position seems almost to be a work of supererogation."³ "The merest glance at Calvin's commentaries," he adds, "will demonstrate how seriously the Reformer applied his rigid doctrine of verbal inerrancy to his exegesis of Scripture" and Kantzer claims that "attempts to discover a looser view of inspiration in Calvin's teaching fall flat upon examination."⁴

Kantzer is to be complimented on his decision not to regard the task of providing the evidence in support of the foregoing conclusions a work of supererogation. He has furnished us with what is perhaps the most complete induction of the evidence drawn from the wide range of Calvin's works. And, since it was not a superfluous undertaking for Dr. Kantzer, it is perhaps not without necessity that we should devote some attention to the same question on this memorial occasion. The present writer is not disposed to regard the question, as it pertains to Calvin's position, with any such attitude as might be described as cavalier. There are passages in Calvin that cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand. It is significant that the passages which, in my judgment, occasion the most acute difficulty are precisely those which so able a controversialist as Charles A. Briggs has been wise enough to appeal to in support of his own contention that Calvin did not maintain biblical inerrancy.⁵ It is well to place these in the forefront for two reasons. First, it is in the interest of fairness in polemics not to suppress what constitutes the strongest argument in support of an opposing position. Second, it is a principle of hermeneutics to interpret more difficult passages in the light of the more perspicuous, a principle that applies to the interpretation of theologians as well as of Scripture. The passages in mind are Calvin's comments on Matthew 27:9; Acts 7:14-16; Hebrews 11:21. The first is concerned with the reference to Zechariah 11:13, attributed to Jeremiah, and Calvin comments: "How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess that I do not know, nor do I anxiously concern myself with it. The passage itself clearly shows that the name of Jeremiah was put down by mistake for that of Zechariah (Zechariah 11:13), for in Jeremiah we find nothing of this sort, nor any thing that even approaches to it."⁶ The second passage deals with the question of the number of souls reported by Stephen to have gone down

into Egypt with Jacob and with the statement that Abraham bought a sepulchre of the sons of Hemor rather than of Ephron the Hittite, as Genesis 23:8-18 informs us. Calvin's remarks are: "Whereas he saith that Jacob came into Egypt with seventy-five souls, it agreeth not with the words of Moses; for Moses maketh mention of seventy only. Jerome thinketh that Luke setteth not down, word for word, those things which Stephen had spoken, or that he took this number out of the Greek translation of Moses (Genesis 46:27), either because he himself, being a proselyte, had not the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, or because he would grant the Gentiles this, who used to read it thus. Furthermore, it is uncertain whether the Greek interpreters set down this number of set purpose, or whether it crop (crept) in afterward through negligence, (mistake;) which (I mean the latter) might well be, forasmuch as the Grecians used to set down their numbers in letters. Augustine, in his 26th book of City of God, [De Civitate Dei,] thinketh that Joseph's nephews and kinsmen are comprehended in this number; and so he thinketh that the words went down doth signify all that time which Jacob lived. But that conjecture can by no means be received. For, in the mean space, the other patriarchs also had many children born to them. This seemeth to me a thing like to be true, that the Seventy Interpreters did translate that truly which was in Moses. And we cannot say that they were deceived; forasmuch as (in) Deuteronomy 10:1-22, where this number is repeated, they agree with Moses, at least as that place was read without all doubt in the time of Jerome; for those copies which are printed at this day have it otherwise. Therefore, I think that this difference came through the error of the writers which wrote out the books (librariorum, copyist). And it was a matter of no such weight, for which Luke ought to have troubled the Gentiles which were accustomed with the Greek reading. And it may be that he himself did put down the true number; and that some man did correct the same amiss out of that place of Moses. For we know that those which had the New Testament in hand were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue, yet skilful in the Greek.

"Therefore, to the end (that) the words of Stephen might agree with the place of Moses, it is to be thought that that false number which was found in the Greek translation of Genesis was by them put in also in this place; concerning which, if any man contend more stubbornly, let us suffer him to be wise without measure. Let us remember that it is not without cause that Paul doth forbid us to be too curious about genealogies. . . ."7 In regard to verse 16 Calvin writes: "And whereas he saith afterward, they were laid in the sepulchre which Abraham had bought of the sons of Hemor, it is manifest that there is a fault (mistake) in the word Abraham. For Abraham had bought a double cave of Ephron the Hittite (Genesis 23:9), to bury his wife Sarah in; but Joseph was buried in another place, to wit, in the field which his father Jacob had bought of the sons of Hemor for an hundred lambs. Wherefore this place must be amended."8 The third passage (Hebrews 11:21) is concerned with the discrepancy between the two statements that Jacob worshipped on the top of his bed and that he worshipped on the top of his staff. The difficulty in itself is by no means acute.9 But Calvin's statement at this point is the one with which we are concerned. "And we know," he says, "that the Apostles were not so scrupulous in this respect, as not to accommodate themselves to the unlearned, who had as yet need of milk; and in this there is no danger, provided readers are ever brought back to the pure and original text of Scripture. But, in reality, the difference is but little; for the main thing was, that Jacob worshipped, which was an evidence of his gratitude. He was therefore led by faith to submit himself to his son."10 The disturbing remark in this quotation is that "the Apostles were not so scrupulous in this respect, as not to accommodate themselves to the unlearned, who had as yet need of milk." For in this instance Calvin is not

reflecting upon some error that might have crept in in the course of copying the text of Hebrews 11:21 but upon the practice of the inspired writers themselves to the effect that they were not concerned with precise accuracy in a detail of this kind. If this is Calvin's thought, then we might say that, in his esteem, an error of historical detail is compatible with the canons which governed the inspired writers and therefore compatible with the inspiration under which they wrote. As far as I am aware, this remark constitutes the most formidable difficulty in the way of the thesis that Calvin believed in biblical inerrancy. We are not, however, in a position properly to interpret and evaluate this statement and the others quoted above until we have made a broader survey of Calvin's teaching.

Calvin's greatest work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* is interspersed with pronouncements respecting the character of Scripture and we should be overlooking some of the most relevant evidence if we did not take account of them.

"Whether God revealed himself to the fathers by oracles and visions, or, by the instrumentality and ministry of men, suggested what they were to hand down to posterity, there cannot be a doubt that the certainty of what he taught them was firmly engraven on their hearts, so that they felt assured and knew that the things which they learnt came forth from God, who invariably accompanied his word with a sure testimony, infinitely superior to mere opinion."¹¹ This quotation is of interest because it is concerned with the certification accorded to men who were the recipients of revelation by other modes of revelation than that of Scripture, a certification by which certitude of the truth was engraven on their hearts. This quotation also prepares us for what Calvin regarded as providing the necessity for inscripturation. So we read in the next paragraph, "For if we reflect how prone the human mind is to lapse into forgetfulness of God, how readily inclined to every kind of error, how bent every now and then on devising new and fictitious religions, it will be easy to understand how necessary it was to make such a depository of doctrine as would secure it from either perishing by the neglect, vanishing away amid the errors, or being corrupted by the presumptuous audacity of men" (I, vi, 3). It is the liability to error, associated with tradition, that makes inscripturation necessary, and the documentation of the "heavenly doctrine" (*coelestis doctrina*) guards it against the neglect, error, and audacity of men.

We shall have occasion to give examples later on from Calvin's other works of his characteristic dictum that the Scripture speaks to us with a veracity and authority equal to that of God speaking to us directly from heaven. We do not read far into the *Institutes* before we come across the most explicit affirmation to this effect. "When that which professes to be the Word of God is acknowledged to be so, no person, unless devoid of common sense and the feelings of a man, will have the desperate hardihood to refuse credit to the speaker. But since no daily oracles are given from heaven, and the Scriptures alone exist as the means by which God has been pleased to consign his truth to perpetual remembrance, the full authority which they obtain with the faithful proceeds from no other consideration than that they are persuaded that they proceeded from heaven, as if God had been heard giving utterance to them" (I, vii, 1).

It is in this same context that Calvin speaks of the Scriptures as the "eternal and inviolable truth of God." It is in this same brief chapter that the following propositions are plainly asserted. God is the author of the Scriptures. The Scriptures themselves manifest the plainest signs that God is the speaker (*manifesta signa loquentis Dei*). This is the proof that its doctrine is heavenly. We are

never established in the faith of this doctrine until we are indubitably persuaded that God is its author (I, vii, 4 passim). And so he adds: "Being illuminated therefore by him [i.e., the Spirit], we no longer believe, either on our own judgment or that of others, that Scripture is from God, but, in a way that surpasses human judgment, we are perfectly assured . . . that it has come to us by the ministry of men from the very mouth of God" (I, vii, 5 — ab ipsissimo Dei ore ad nos fluxisse). "We feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth" (idem). "Between the apostles and their successors, however, there is, as I have stated, this difference that the apostles were the certain and authentic amanuenses of the Holy Spirit and therefore their writings are to be received as the oracles of God, but others have no other office than to teach what is revealed and deposited in the holy Scriptures" (IV, viii, 9). At this stage it is not necessary to quote further from the Institutes, for in these few quotations there is virtually all that can be derived from that source. It is when we turn to other sources that the implications of these statements are brought into clearer focus. With reference to Calvin's concept of inspiration and of its effects we should expect that no passages would offer him the opportunity to express his thought more pointedly than 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20. In this expectation we are not disappointed. In reference to the former he says: "First, he (Paul) commends the Scripture on account of its authority; and, secondly, on account of the utility that springs from it. In order to uphold the authority of the Scripture, he declares that it is divinely inspired (Divinitus inspiratam); for, if it be so, it is beyond all controversy that men ought to receive it with reverence. This is a principle which distinguishes our religion from all others, that we know that God hath spoken to us, and are fully convinced that the prophets did not speak at their own suggestion (non ex suo sensu loquutos esse) but that they were organs of the Holy Spirit to utter only those things which had been commanded from heaven. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him, first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the law and the prophecies are not a doctrine delivered by the will of men, but dictated (dictatam) by the Holy Spirit. . . . Moses and the Prophets did not utter at random what we have from their hand, but, since they spoke by divine impulse, they confidently and fearlessly testified, as was actually the case, that it was the mouth of the Lord that spoke (os Domini loquutum esse). . . . This is the first clause, that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing of man mixed with it" (nee quicquam humani habet admixtum). In his comments on 2 Peter 1:20 he again reminds us that the prophecies are the indubitable oracles of God and did not flow from the private suggestion of men and therefore we must be convinced that God speaks to us in the Scripture. And so he continues: "the beginning of right knowledge is to give that credit to the holy prophets which is due to God. . . . He says that they were moved, not that they were bereaved of mind . . . but because they dared not to announce anything of themselves (a se ipsis) and only obediently followed the Spirit as their leader, who ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary."

Before making remarks respecting the import of these assessments of the origin, authority, and character of Scripture, it may not be amiss to cull from other places a few quotations to elucidate and confirm these statements of his. With reference to Mark as the author of the Second Gospel he says: "Mark is generally supposed to have been the private friend and disciple of Peter. It is even believed that he wrote the Gospel as it was dictated to him by Peter, so that he merely performed the office of amanuensis or scribe. But on this subject we need not give ourselves much trouble, for it is of little importance to us, provided we hold that he is a properly qualified and divinely ordained witness who put down nothing except by the direction and dictation of the Holy

Spirit.”¹² Respecting the four Evangelists he says that God “therefore dictated to the four Evangelists what they should write, so that, while each had his own part assigned to him, the whole might be collected into one body.”¹³ On Romans 15:4 Calvin paraphrases Paul’s thought by saying: “there is nothing in Scripture which is not useful for your instruction, and for the direction of your life” and then adds: “This is an interesting passage, by which we understand there is nothing vain and unprofitable contained in the oracles of God. . . . Whatever then is delivered in Scripture we ought to strive to learn; for it would be a reproach offered to the Holy Spirit to think that he has taught us anything which it does not concern us to know; let us then know that whatever is taught us conduces to the advancement of piety.”¹⁴ A great deal has been written in support of the thesis that the Bible is infallible in matters that pertain to faith and life, to the doctrine of salvation and the kingdom of God, but not in other matters concerned with history or science. And the teaching of Calvin has been appealed to in support of this distinction. Perhaps you will permit a quotation from one of the ablest and most eloquent of the protagonists of this contention, Charles Augustus Briggs. He writes: “It is well known that Calvin and Luther and other reformers recognized errors in the Scriptures.... But what do these errors amount to, after all? They are only in minor matters, in things which lie entirely beyond the range of faith and practice. They have nothing to do with your religion, your faith in God and His Christ, your salvation, your life and conduct. . . . The Scriptures are pure, holy, errorless, so far as their own purpose of grace is concerned, as the only infallible rule of the holy religion, the holy doctrine, and the holy life. They are altogether perfect in those divine things that come from heaven to constitute the divine kingdom on earth, which, with patient, quiet, peaceful, but irresistible might, goes forth from the holy centre through all the radii of the circle of human affairs and persists until it transforms the earth and man.”¹⁵ It is this distinction which Briggs alleges to be implicit in Calvin’s position, and his contention is to the effect that the infallibility predicated of Scripture is, therefore, for Calvin, consistent with the errors, which, he alleges, Calvin admits. But it is not only Dr. Briggs who makes this kind of allegation. No one has been a more painstaking student of Calvin than Emile Doumergue. On the question of inspiration he has performed the service of exposing the fallacy of R. Seeberg’s contention that Calvin taught mechanical dictation. But Doumergue also maintains that Calvin did not teach literal, verbal inspiration and that for Calvin the important thing was not the words but “the doctrine, the spiritual doctrine, the substance.”¹⁶

Here we are brought to the crux of the question. Does Calvin’s position on inspiration fall into line with that espoused and defended by Dr. Briggs? Is it true that Calvin did not consider the words important but only the spiritual doctrine? It is this thesis that I am compelled on the basis of the evidence to controvert. In dealing with the question we shall have to take account of several considerations.

1. It is true that Calvin lays great stress, as we found in the quotations from his works, upon the heavenly doctrine of which Scripture is the depository. It is the liability to corruption on the part of men that made necessary the inscripturation of the heavenly doctrine. Thereby it is guarded against the neglect, error, and audacity of men. But that there is in Calvin the kind of alleged distinction between the heavenly doctrine and the Scripture in which that heavenly doctrine is deposited is a thesis which his own statements do not bear out. He affirms most explicitly that the Scripture is from God, that it has come to us from the very mouth of God, and that in believing the Scripture we feel the firmest conviction that we hold an invincible truth. To insinuate that this

conviction has respect simply to the heavenly doctrine, as distinct from Scripture as the depository, is to interject a distinction of which there is no suggestion in the relevant passages. In other words, Calvin identifies the doctrine of which he speaks with the Scripture itself. "The Law and the Prophecies are not a doctrine delivered by the will of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit,"¹⁷ and this is the settled point, he insists, that must be laid down if we are to profit in the Scriptures. And the emphasis is pervasive that we owe to the Scripture the same reverence we owe to God.

2. To say the least, it would be mystifyingly strange that Calvin would have affirmed so expressly that the writers of Scripture "did not utter at random what we have from their hand," that Scripture "has nothing of man mixed with it," that the writers "fearlessly testified that it was the mouth of the Lord that spoke" and that the Holy Spirit "ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary,"¹⁸ if his conception of inspiration did not apply to the details of words and to what we might call random statements. For Calvin, there are no random statements in Scripture because the writers did not speak at random but always by divine impulse. And, furthermore, we must remember that he has warned us against the impiety of thinking that there is anything unprofitable or vain in the Scripture; the Holy Spirit has taught us everything in the Scripture it concerns us to know, and all that is taught conduces to the advancement of piety.

3. When we examine the evidence which Doumergue adduces in support of his allegations that Calvin has not taught verbal inspiration, it is nothing short of exasperating to find how destitute of relevance this supposed evidence is. Under one caption Doumergue says, "Words have been added or suppressed"¹⁹ and then proceeds to cite instances. He appeals to Calvin's comments on Ephesians 2:5; Hebrews 9:1; 1 Timothy 1:3; James 4:7. Let us see then what Calvin says at these points. At Ephesians 2:5 Calvin comments, with reference to the words "by grace ye are saved," as follows: "I know not whether some one else inserted this, but, as there is nothing alien to the context, I freely accept it as written by Paul."²⁰ It is quite apparent that Calvin is here reflecting simply on the question as to the possibility of addition in the course of transcription. His own judgment is that these words are Pauline and proceeds to expound their import on this assumption. In short, his judgment is that they were not added. This is clearly a question of the proper text and nothing more. It has absolutely nothing to do with the question at issue. At Hebrews 9:1 Calvin says: "Some copies read 'first tabernacle': but I think there is a mistake in the word 'tabernacle,' nor do I doubt but that some unlearned reader, not finding a noun for the adjective, and in his ignorance applying to the tabernacle what had been said of the covenant, unwisely added the word 'tabernacle.'"²¹ Again, this is purely a matter of what Calvin regards as textual corruption by an unlearned reader and to him alone belongs the error, not at all to the writer of Hebrews. In fact, why does Calvin esteem this to be the work of an unlearned reader? Precisely because he is jealous for the accuracy of the original author. If Calvin were, as Doumergue alleges, not concerned about words but about the spiritual doctrine, he would not have bothered to reflect on the folly of the unlearned reader but would have been ready to attribute what he regarded as an error to the writer of Scripture itself. On 1 Timothy 1:3 Calvin says: "Either the syntax is elliptical, or the particle *hina* is redundant; and in either case the meaning will be clear."²² This is concerned solely with the question of style. An ellipsis is simply an abbreviated manner of speech in which something plainly understood is not expressed and redundancy is simply a manner of speech by which something is expressed which is not indispensable to the

meaning. On James 4:7 we read: "Many copies have introduced here the following sentence: 'Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' But in others it is not found. Erasmus suspects that it was first a note in the margin, and afterwards crept into the text. It may have been so, though it is not unsuitable to the passage."²³ Surely no comment is necessary to show the irrelevance to Doumergue's allegation.

Another caption under which Doumergue derives support for his thesis is that "there are differences,"²⁴ meaning, of course, that there are differences between the biblical writers when dealing with the same subjects, and cites Calvin's comments on Matthew 8:27; Matthew 9:18. That Calvin recognises the differences in the accounts given by the various evangelists we should fully expect. Who with even a modicum of understanding does not observe these differences? But that these differences constitute any evidence of the lack of verbal inspiration or any such judgment on Calvin's part is precisely what Calvin is most jealous to deny. On Matthew 9:18 he says: "Those who imagine that the narrative, which is here given by Mark and Luke, is different from that of Matthew, are so clearly refuted by the passage itself, that there is no necessity for a lengthened debate. All the three agree in saying that Christ was requested by a ruler of the Synagogue to enter his house for the purpose of curing his daughter. The only difference is, that the name of Jairus, which is withheld by Matthew, is mentioned by Mark and Luke; and that he represents the father as saying, 'My daughter is dead,' while the other two say that she was in her last moments, and that, while he was bringing Christ, her death was announced to him on the road. But there is no absurdity in saying that Matthew, studying brevity, merely glances at those particulars which the other two give in minute detail. But since all the other points agree with such exactness, since so many circumstances conspire as to give it the appearance of three fingers stretched out at the same time to point out a single object, there is no argument that would justify us in dividing this history into various dates. The Evangelists agree in relating, that while Christ, at the request of a ruler of the synagogue, was coming to his house, a woman on the road was secretly cured of a bloody flux by touching his cloak; and that afterwards Christ came into the ruler's house, and raised a dead young woman to life. There is no necessity, I think, for circuitous language to prove that all the three relate the same event. Let us now come to details."²⁵ Calvin's own statement on this very subject we may quote again. "He (God) therefore dictated to the four evangelists what they should write, in such a manner that, while each had his own part assigned him, the whole might be collected into one body; and it is our duty now to blend the four by a mutual relation, so that we may permit ourselves to be taught by all of them, as by one mouth."²⁶

Again Doumergue appeals to the fact that "the order of time is not always observed"²⁷ and instances Calvin's comments on Luke 4:5 and Matthew 27:51. We all know that the Evangelists do not always follow a chronological arrangement of their narratives and, of course, Calvin does also. But this is a question of literary form and not of verbal inspiration.

Finally, in connection with Doumergue's contention that for Calvin the words were not important but the "spiritual doctrine," it is Calvin's treatment of quotations from the Old Testament in the New that Doumergue relies on chiefly in this connection.²⁸ He appeals to Calvin's comments on the use made by New Testament writers, particularly Paul, of Old Testament passages. In this connection a distinction must be appreciated. Calvin recognizes, of course, as every one must perceive, that the New Testament writers, in referring to the Old Testament, did not always quote the Old Testament passages verbatim. And Calvin is fully aware of the difficulty that sometimes

confronts us in the use made of Old Testament passages. For example, he says with respect to Romans 10:6: "This passage is such as may not a little disturb the reader, and for two reasons. It seems to be improperly twisted by Paul and the words themselves turned to a different meaning."²⁸ He appeals to Calvin's comments on the use made by New Testament writers, particularly Paul, of Old Testament passages. In this connection a distinction must be appreciated. Calvin recognizes, of course, as every one must perceive, that the New Testament writers, in referring to the Old Testament, did not always quote the Old Testament passages verbatim. And Calvin is fully aware of the difficulty that sometimes confronts us in the use made of Old Testament passages. For example, he says with respect to Romans 10:6: "This passage is such as may not a little disturb the reader, and for two reasons. It seems to be improperly twisted by Paul and the words themselves turned to a different meaning."²⁹ And on Romans 11:8 he thinks that the words quoted from Isaiah are "somewhat altered" and that Paul does not here "record what we find in the prophet, but only collects from him this sentiment that they were imbued by God with the spirit of maliciousness so that they continued dull in seeing and hearing."³⁰ And again on Ephesians 4:8 he says: "To serve the purpose of his argument, Paul has departed not a little from the true sense of this quotation" (testimonium).³¹ On the same text with reference to the clause "and gave gifts to men," he adds: "There is rather more difficulty in this clause; for the words of the psalm are, 'thou hast received gifts for men,' while the apostle changes this expression into 'gave gifts' and thus appears to exhibit an opposite meaning." But the all-important point to be observed is that Calvin in each case goes on to justify the apostle and to show that what appears to be an unwarranted change is one perfectly compatible with the designed use of the passage in each case, a use furthermore in perfect consonance with the inspiration under which the apostle wrote. With reference to the apparently improper use of Deuteronomy 30:12 in Romans 10:6, Calvin continues: "This knot may be thus untied" and then proceeds to give what he considers to be the necessary resolution of the difficulty. In like manner on Romans 11:8 he maintains that there is no discrepancy between what Paul elicits from the word of the prophet and what the prophet himself said but that rather "Paul penetrates to the very fountain." And although on Ephesians 4:8 he admits that Paul "deviated not a little from the true meaning" of the Old Testament passage, yet he launches immediately into a defense of the apostle against the charge of having made "an unfair use of Scripture" and protests that "careful examination of the Psalm will convince any reader that the words, 'he ascended up on high,' are applied strictly to God alone." Finally, with reference to the change from "received" to "gave" in the same text, he says: "Still there is no absurdity here; for Paul does not always quote the exact words of Scripture, but, after referring to the passage, satisfies himself with conveying the substance of it in his own language." In this case, however, Calvin thinks that when Paul says "gave gifts to men" he is not intending to quote Scripture at all but uses his own expression adapted to the occasion.

We are compelled, therefore, to draw the following conclusions. (1) When Calvin recognizes that Paul, for example, does not always quote the Old Testament verbatim, he is as far as possible from insinuating that the actual words of the Old Testament were not important. And he is likewise not insinuating to the least extent that the precise and original meaning of the Old Testament passages, as indicated by their exact terms, was not important. He is not even remotely suggesting an antithesis between the "substance" which the apostle elicits from the Old Testament text and the text of the Old Testament itself, as if the former were important and the latter not. (2) There is not the remotest suggestion that the precise terms used by the apostle in the use of the

Old Testament (terms which may deviate from the precise terms of the Old Testament) are unimportant. Indeed, the opposite is the case. It is exactly because Calvin was concerned with the precise terms and words used by the apostle that he entered upon the discussion and resolution of the difference between the terms in the Old Testament and in Paul's use of the same. In reality the only inference to be drawn from these discussions on the part of Calvin, and particularly from the resolution which he offers in each case, is that in his esteem words and terms were of the greatest importance. (3) What Calvin says is that Paul, in quoting from the Old Testament in these instances, elicited from the passage what was appropriate to his purpose at the time. He does not say or imply that for Paul the exact terms and import of the Old Testament passage were unimportant, but simply that it was sufficient for the apostle to derive from the Scripture concerned the particular truth or application relevant to the subject in hand. And, for Calvin, both are important as providing us with the whole truth, the truth expressed in the Old Testament and that enunciated in Paul's interpretation and application. The whole belongs to the spiritual doctrine which the Scripture conveys to us. In these passages, therefore, there is no warrant for Doumergue's allegation that for Calvin the words were not important but only the spiritual doctrine or substance. This sets up a contrast which Calvin does not entertain and it is a contrast which Calvin's own express declarations do not tolerate.

4. A great deal of scorn has been heaped for the last seven decades upon what has been called the modern "dogma of the inerrancy of the original autographs" and upon the "modern scholastics who have generated this dogma."³² This question of the autographs and of the mistakes that have crept in in the course of transmission introduces us to a most important phase of the evidence bearing upon Calvin's view of Scripture. We have had occasion to quote several passages from Calvin in which he reflected upon these mistakes of copyists and, in one case, upon the blunder of an unlearned reader. It is not necessary to review these passages. It is sufficient to be reminded that Calvin discusses this matter of the proper text of a particular passage and registers his judgment for the very purpose of ascertaining what was the text penned by the original writer, whether it be Luke or Paul or the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews. Calvin was greatly concerned to ascertain what this text was whenever there was occasion to raise any question respecting it. Of this there is copious evidence. Now why this concern? Obviously because he was jealous to be sure of the autographic text. And is it not this jealousy that lies behind the whole science of textual criticism? Scholars differ in their judgments on particular problems. But they all have interest in getting back to the autographic text. Hence the premise of centuries of labor on this question is the importance of the autographic text. But in the case of Calvin there was much more at stake than the abstract question of the text of the original author. We have found that his interest is also concerned with the question of veracity. He rejects a certain reading in Hebrews 9:1, for example, because that reading would not comport with the facts of the case as he construed them. He attributes the reading to an ignorant reader. Why such reflections? Surely because he is jealous not to attribute this reading to the writer of Hebrews. And that means that the assumption on which he proceeds is that the original writer could not be regarded as susceptible to such an error. In reference to this interest on Calvin's part in the autographic text of Scripture our final observation must be that his jealousy for the original text cannot be dissociated from his estimate of Scripture as the oracles of God, that Scripture has nothing human mixed with it, and that in all its parts it is as if we heard the mouth of God speaking from heaven. Errors in scribal transmission Calvin fully recognizes. In some instances he pronounces decisive judgment

as to the reason and source of these errors. It is apparent that this jealousy is dictated by his conviction that the penmen of the Scriptures were the amanuenses of the Holy Spirit and could not have perpetrated such mistakes. This is tantamount to nothing less than his interest in an inerrant autograph.

We may with this in view return to the passages quoted at the beginning of this lecture and which were passed over until we should survey Calvin's teaching as a whole. These are Calvin's remarks on Matthew 27:9; Acts 7:14-16; Hebrews 11:21. On Matthew 27:9 he says that "the name of Jeremiah was put down by mistake or that of Zechanah. In view of what we have found, we cannot now suppose that, in Calvin's esteem, this mistake was the work of Matthew. And the term he uses earlier when he says "How the name of Jeremiah crept in, I confess that I do not know" is precisely the term Calvin uses with reference to errors that have crept into the text. There is, therefore, not the least warrant to suppose that Calvin is thinking of an error in the work of Matthew, and there is every warrant to judge the opposite. He is thinking of scribal error. In reference to Acts 7:16 when he says that there is a fault, that is, erratum., in the name Abraham and concludes by saying, "Wherefore this place must be amended," analogy would not allow for any other interpretation than that he is thinking of an error in the course of transcription. In Acts 7:14 the difficulty connected with the number 75 he likewise thinks may have arisen, in the first instance, "through the error of the copyists" of the Greek Old Testament. Here he also entertains the possibility that Luke put down the true number and that some man corrected the same out of the Greek Old Testament where the number 75 appears. Yet he thinks it also possible that Luke may have used the number 75 since it appeared in the Greek version with which readers would be familiar and that "it was a matter of no such weight for which Luke ought to have troubled the Gentiles who were accustomed to the Greek reading." This latter statement may be considered along with his comments on Hebrews 11:21. They both fall into the same category. With respect, then, to these two statements that the number of the souls who went down to Egypt was not a matter for which Luke should have troubled the Gentiles who were accustomed to the Greek reading and that the writer of Hebrews was not so scrupulous but that he could accommodate himself to the unlearned who had as yet need of milk, what are we to say? Some remarks may help to place the question in proper perspective.

1. Calvin does recognize that the writers of Scripture were not always meticulously precise on certain details such as those of number and incident. And this means that the Holy Spirit, by whom, in Calvin's esteem, they wrote, was not always meticulously precise on such matters. It must be emphatically stated that the doctrine of biblical inerrancy for which the church has contended throughout history and, for which a great many of us still contend, is not based on the assumption that the criterion of meticulous precision in every detail of record or history is the indispensable canon of biblical infallibility. To erect such a canon is utterly artificial and arbitrary and is not one by which the inerrancy of Scripture is to be judged. It is easy for the opponents of inerrancy to set up such artificial criteria and then expose the Bible as full of errors. We shall have none of that, and neither will Calvin. The Bible is literature and the Holy Spirit was pleased to employ the literary forms of the original human writers in the milieu in which they wrote. If Solomon's temple took seven and a half years to build, as we can readily calculate (cf. 1 Kings 6:37, 1 Kings 6:38), are we to suppose that it is an error to say in the same context that Solomon was seven years in building it (1 Kings 6:38)? Or if a certain king is said to have reigned

twenty-two years (cf. 1 Kings 14:20), we must not impose upon such a statement the necessity of his having reigned precisely twenty-two years in terms of twenty-two times three hundred and sixty-five days.³³ He may have reigned only twenty-one years in terms of actual computation and yet twenty-two years in terms of the method of reckoning in use. The Scripture abounds in illustrations of the absence of the type of meticulous and pedantic precision which we might arbitrarily seek to impose as the criterion of infallibility. Every one should recognize that in accord with accepted forms of speech and custom a statement can be perfectly authentic and yet not pedantically precise. Scripture does not make itself absurd by furnishing us with pedantry.

2. We need not doubt that it was this distinction between the demands of pedantic precision, on the one hand, and adequate statement, that is, statement adequate to the situation and intent, on the other, that Calvin had in mind when he said that “the apostles were not so punctilious as not to accommodate themselves to the unlearned.” We are not necessarily granting that Calvin’s remarks are the best suited to the solution of the questions that arise in connection with Acts 7:14 and Hebrews 11:21. We may even grant that the language used by Calvin in these connections is ill-advised and not in accord with Calvin’s usual caution when reflecting on the divine origin and character of Scripture. But, if so, we should not be surprised if such a prolific writer as Calvin should on occasion drop remarks or even express positions inconsistent with the pervasive and governing tenor of his thinking and teaching. In Calvin we have a mass of perspicuous statement and of lengthened argument to the effect that Scripture is impregnable and inviolable, and it would be the resort of desperation to take a few random comments, wrench them from the total effect of Calvin’s teaching, and build upon them a thesis which would run counter to his own repeated assertions respecting the inviolable character of Scripture as the oracles of God and as having nothing human mixed with it.

Notes 1. Edward A. Dowey, Jr.: *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology*, New York, 1952, p. 100.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 101f.

3. Ed. John F. Walvoord: *Inspiration and Interpretation*, Grand Rapids, 1957, p. 137.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 142f.

5. Charles Augustus Briggs: *The Bible the Church and the Reason*, New York, 1892, pp. 219ff.; cf. pp. 110ff.

6. *Commentarius in Harmoniam Evangelicam, ad Matthew 27:9*. Able expositors have found in Matthew 27:9 an allusion to Jeremiah, Jeremiah 18:1-23 and Jeremiah 19:1-15 : cf. E. W. Hengstenberg: *Christology of the Old Testament, E.T.*, Vol. IV, Edinburgh, 1865, pp. ff. Hence it need not be maintained, as Calvin alleges, that the name Jeremiah is” here a textual error. As will be shown later, the mistake to which Calvin here refers is, in his esteem, one of textual corruption and not one on Matthew’s part.

7. *Commentarius in Acta Apostolorum ad Acts 7:14*; E.T. by Henry Beveridge, Grand Rapids, 1949, Vol. I, pp. 263f.

8. *Ibid.*, ad Acts 7:16.

9. The question turns on the difference of vowels attached to the same Hebrew consonants. If certain vowels are supplied, the term means “bed,” if others, “staff.” There is good ground for the latter alternative, following certain versions and Hebrews 11:21.

10. Commentarius in Epistolam ad Hebraeos, ad 11:21; E.T. by John Owen, Grand Rapids, 1948, p. 291.

11. In quoting from the Institutes and Commentaries in the remaining part of this lecture, I have made use of the various translations. But I have often given my own rendering when I deemed it necessary to depart from the renderings of other translators. I believe these translations of mine are more pointed and accurate in reference to the subjects being discussed.

12. “Argumentum in Evangelium Jesu Christi secundum Matthaem, Marcum, et Lucam.”

13. “Argumentum in Evangelium Ioannis.”

14. Comm. ad Romans 15:4.

15. Op. cit., pp. 112, 115, 116.

16. E. Doumergue: Jean Calvin: Les hommes et les choses de son temps, Tom. IV, Lausanne, 1910, p. 78. Doumergue’s discussion, referred to in these pages, is found in the tome cited above in pp. 70-82.

17. Comm. ad 2 Timothy 3:16.

18. Cf. citations given above.

19. Op. cit., p. 76.

20. Comm. ad Ephesians 2:5.

21. Comm. ad Hebrews 9:1.

22. Comm. ad 1 Timothy 1:3.

23. Comm. ad James 4:7.

24. Op. tit., p. 77.

25. Comm. in Harmoniam Evangelicam, ad Matthew 9:18; E.T. by William Pringle, Grand Rapids, 1949, Vol. I, pp. 409f.

26. “Argumentum in Evangelium Ioannis.”

27. Op. cit., p. 77.

28. Op. cit., pp. 78f.

29. Comm. ad Romans 10:6.

30. Comm. ad Romans 11:8.

31. Comm. ad Ephesians 4:8.

32. C. A. Briggs: op. cit., p. 97; cf. pp. 98, 114.

33. For a discussion of such questions cf. Edwin R. Thiele: *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, Chicago, 1951.

S. Definitive Sanctification

Definitive Sanctification by John Murray When we speak of sanctification we generally think of it as that process by which the believer is gradually transformed in heart, mind, will, and conduct and conformed more and more to the will of God and to the image of Christ until at death the disembodied spirit is made perfect in holiness and at the resurrection his body likewise will be conformed to the likeness of the body of Christ's glory. It is biblical to apply the term "sanctification" to this process of transformation and conformation. But it is a fact too frequently overlooked that in the New Testament the most characteristic terms used with reference to sanctification are used not of a process but of a once-for-all definitive act. THE FACT OF DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

We properly think of calling, regeneration, justification, and adoption as acts of God effected once for all and not requiring or admitting of repetition. It is of their nature to be definitive. But a considerable part of New Testament teaching places sanctification in this category. When Paul, for example, addresses the believers at Corinth as the church of God "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2) and later in the same epistle reminds them that they were washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11), it is apparent that he coordinated their sanctification with effectual calling, with their identity as saints, with regeneration, and with justification. Again, when in 2 Timothy 2:21 we read, "If a man purge himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work," there need be no question but the term "sanctified" is used in the same sense. And when he says that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25 f.), it is most likely that the sanctification referred to is explicated in terms of "the washing of water by the word." Although in Acts 20:32 and Acts 26:18 "the sanctified" could have reference to the complete sanctification of the age to come, the usage in Paul's epistles would favor the signification whereby believers are viewed as the sanctified. The substantive "sanctification" has a similar connotation. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness but in sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:7). "God hath chosen you a first fruits unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, unto which he also called you through our gospel" (2 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:14).¹ The terms for purification are used with the same import (Acts 15:9; Ephesians 5:26; Titus 2:14).

We are thus compelled to take account of the fact that the language of sanctification is used with reference to some decisive action that occurs at the inception of the Christian life and one that characterizes the people of God in their identity as called effectually by God's grace. It would be, therefore, a deflection from biblical patterns of language and conception to think of sanctification exclusively in terms of a progressive work. THE CHARACTER OF DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

What is this sanctification? No passage in the New Testament is more instructive than Romans 6:1-23, Romans 7:1-6. The teaching here is oriented against the question with which Paul begins: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" a question provoked by the exordium accorded

to grace in the preceding context. "Where sin abounded, grace superabounded, that as sin hath reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 5:20, Romans 5:21). If the grace of God and therefore his glory are magnified the more according as grace overcomes sin, the inference would seem to be: let us continue to sin in order that God's grace may be the more extolled. It is this inference the apostle rejects with the most emphatic negative at his disposal, properly rendered in the corresponding Hebrew idiom, "God forbid." The perversity of the inference he lays bare by asking another question: "How shall we who are such as have died to sin live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). The pivot of the refutation is: "we died to sin." What does Paul mean?

He is using the language of that phenomenon with which all are familiar, the event of death. When a person dies he is no longer active in the sphere or realm or relation in reference to which he has died. His connection with that realm has been dissolved; he has no further communications with those who still live in that realm nor do they have with him. He is no longer en rapport with life here; it is no longer the sphere of life and activity for him. The Scripture brings this fact of experience to our attention. "I saw the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found" (Psalms 37:35, Psalms 37:36). "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psalms 103:15, Psalms 103:16). In accord with this analogy the person who lives in sin or to sin lives and acts in the realm of sin — it is the sphere of his life and activity. And the person who died to sin no longer lives in that sphere. His tie with it has been broken, and he has been translated into another realm. In the most significant sense those who still live in the realm of sin can say: "I sought him, but he could not be found." This is the decisive cleavage that the apostle has in view; it is the foundation upon which rests his whole conception of a believer's life, and it is a cleavage, a breach, a translation as really and decisively true in the sphere of moral and religious relationship as in the ordinary experience of death. There is a once-for-all definitive and irreversible breach with the realm in which sin reigns in and unto death. The antitheses which the apostle institutes in this passage serve to point up the decisive breach which this change involves. Death in sin means the service of sin as bondservants (Romans 6:6, Romans 6:16-17, Romans 6:20); sin reigns in our mortal bodies (Romans 6:12); obedience is rendered to the lusts of sin (Romans 6:12); we present our members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin and as the bondservants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity (Romans 6:13, Romans 6:19); we are free (footloose) in respect of righteousness (Romans 6:20); sin has dominion over us and we are under law (Romans 6:14). Death to sin means that the old man has been crucified and the body of sin destroyed — we no longer serve sin (Romans 6:6); we are justified from sin (Romans 6:7); we are alive to God and live to him (Romans 6:10-11); sin no longer reigns in our mortal body and does not lord it over us (Romans 6:12, Romans 6:14); we present ourselves to God and our members as instruments of righteousness to God so that we are servants of righteousness unto holiness (Romans 6:13, Romans 6:19); we are under the reign of grace (Romans 6:14); we render obedience from the heart to the pattern of Christian teaching (Romans 6:17); the fruit is unto holiness and the end everlasting life (Romans 6:22). This sustained contrast witnesses to the decisive change. There is no possibility of toning down the antithesis; it appears all along the line of the varying aspects from which life and action are to be viewed. In respect of every criterion by which moral and spiritual life is to be assessed there is absolute differentiation and this means that

there is a decisive and definitive breach with the power and service of sin in the case of every one who has come under the control of the provisions of grace.

Although Paul is the chief exponent of this doctrine it is not to be forgotten that the same strand of thought appears also in one of Peter's epistles. Of Christ he writes: "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" (1 Peter 2:24).² And again Peter writes: "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 sins, to the end that no longer should he live the rest of the time in the flesh to the lusts of men but to the will of God" (1 Peter 4:1, 1 Peter 4:2). I take it that in the first passage quoted the thought is after the same pattern that we find in Paul, that those for whom Christ died vicariously are reckoned also as having died in and with Christ and, as Christ's death was death to sin once for all (cf. Romans 6:10), so those dying with him die also to sin. And in the second passage the identification with Christ is indicated by the two clauses in identical terms, namely, "suffered in the flesh," in the first instance applied to Christ and in the second to those being exhorted, with the implication that this suffering in the flesh has as its consequence cessation from sins. The interweaving of the indicative and the imperative is likewise reminiscent of what is so patent in Paul's epistle to the Romans.

We may now turn to the apostle John. The incisiveness and decisiveness of John's first epistle appear at no point more striking than where he, in terms peculiar to John himself, deals with the subject of our present interest. We think particularly of 1 John 3:6-9 in which the antithesis is most pronounced and might readily be interpreted as teaching sinless perfection. There are, however, several considerations which show that sinless perfection is not John's meaning.

1. If John's intent was to inculcate sinless perfection, then this passage would prove too much. In that event every regenerate person would be sinlessly perfect and only sinlessly perfect persons would be regenerate. The terms are that "every one who is begotten of God does not do sin . . . and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God" (1 John 3:9). On John's own teaching sinless perfection is not the indispensable accompaniment of regeneration. In 1 John 2:1, John makes allowance for the incidence of sin in those whom he addresses as "little children" and directs us to the provision for this eventuality: "If any one sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous." Again, it is difficult, to say the least, to interpret the words, "The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), as not reflecting on the continuously cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ. If there is provision for sin in the believer, then regeneration does not insure sinless perfection.

2. John says expressly: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). If John in this case were thinking of past sin only, we should wonder why he uses the present tense. For on the assumption of sinless perfection there would be no present sin, and the use of the present tense would be misleading and constitute for his readers something of a contradiction to what on the premises would be one of the leading theses of the epistle.

3. John insists that "it hath not yet been manifested what we shall be" (1 John 3:2). This is defined for us in the same verse as likeness to the Father, a conformity such as will be achieved when the children of God will see him as he is. Anything short of that conformity is not sinless perfection. But this is precisely the shortcoming John affirms — "It hath not yet been manifested." This confirmity

is the hope entertained and, because it is that hoped for, the outcome for the believer is self-purification after the pattern of the Father's purity. "Every one who has this hope in him [i.e., the Father] purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3). Self-purification implies impurity that needs to be cleansed.

4. John implies that sin may be committed by a believing brother: "If any one see his brother sin a sin not unto death, he will ask, and he will give him life for those who sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16). This is incontestably a reference to sin committed by a believer.

Sinless perfection cannot, for these reasons, be the import of John 3:6-9; John 5:18. What then does the decisive language of John mean? The usage of our Lord as reported by John in his Gospel provides us with an index to John's intent in the first epistle. In answer to the disciple's question concerning the man born blind: "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Jesus said: "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him" (John 9:2, John 9:3). Jesus could not mean that the son and his parents were sinlessly perfect and had never sinned. The thought is simply that the blindness was not due to some specific sin for which the blindness had been inflicted as a punishment, the assumption underlying the disciples' question. In the sequel to the foregoing incident Jesus said to certain of the Pharisees: "If ye were blind, ye should not have sin; but now ye say we see; your sin remaineth" (John 9:41). Again, sinless perfection cannot be in view in Jesus' statement, "Ye should have no sin." Jesus is thinking of the particular sin characteristic of the Pharisees, that of self-complacency and self-infatuation. From that sin they would be free if they were humble enough to acknowledge their blindness.

Finally in John's Gospel, Jesus is reported to have said: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak for their sin" (John 15:22). Obviously, Jesus is speaking of the great sin of rejecting him and his Father (cf. John 3:19).

Thus, in each instance, though the terms are absolute, some specific sin is in view, and the same principle must apply to the language of John with which we are concerned. Furthermore, in this epistle John himself gives us examples of the differentiation in terms of which we are to interpret his teaching. Whatever may be the sin unto death as distinguished from the sin not unto death (1 John 5:16, 1 John 5:17), there is undoubtedly radical differentiation in respect of character and consequence. It is the latter a believer is contemplated as committing but not the former. Since, according to 1 John 3:6-9; 1 John 5:18, the regenerate do not commit sin, it is surely justifiable to conclude that the sin he does not commit is the sin unto death. In 1 John 4:2, 1 John 4:3 the apostle propounds the test of Christian faith. It is the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. John's antithetic incisiveness appears here again. "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God." The force of 1 John 4:3 is that every one that does not confess Jesus, in the identity defined in 1 John 4:2, does not confess Jesus at all. We must infer that the sin a regenerate person does not commit is the denial of Jesus as come in the flesh or indeed the failure to confess Jesus Christ as come in the flesh. Speaking positively, everyone begotten of God believes and confesses that Jesus as come in the flesh is the Christ (cf. 1 John 5:1). This is the faith that overcomes the world, and this victory is the mark of every regenerate person (cf. 1 John 5:4). The upshot of these propositions is simply that the believer confesses Jesus as come in the flesh, believes that this Jesus is the Christ and

that he is the Son of God, and cannot apostatize from this faith. The believer is the one who has secured the victory over the world, is immune to the dominion of the evil one, and is no longer characterized by that which is of the world, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 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.³

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 as 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 John 2:3-6, 1 John 2:29; 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:20, 1 John 4:21; 1 John 5:2, 1 John 5:3). THE AGENCY IN DEFINITIVE SANCTIFICATION

What are the forces that explain this definitive breach with sin and commitment to holiness and righteousness? The answer is that the saving action of each person of the Godhead at the inception of the process of salvation insures the decisive character of the change thereby effected. The specific action of the Father is to call men effectually into the fellowship of his Son. In Jesus' own terms it is to donate men to his own Son in the efficacious operations of grace (cf. John 6:37, John 6:44, John 6:65). The action bespeaks the radical character of the change. The specific action of the Holy Spirit is the washing of regeneration whereby men are instated in the kingdom of God as the kingdom of righteousness, power, life, and peace.⁴ Again, the action and that to which it is directed indicate the momentous nature of the transformation. It is proper, however, to focus attention upon the action of Christ. This is so for two reasons. First, it is by virtue of what Christ has done that the action of both the Father and the Spirit take effect. Second, this aspect of biblical teaching has been more neglected. The bearing of Jesus' death and resurrection upon our justification has been in the forefront of Protestant teaching. But their bearing upon sanctification has not been sufficiently appreciated. It is here we find the basic consideration relevant to our present question. In the teaching of Paul, the pivots of the change in view are death to sin and newness of life. The starting point of Paul's argument in answer to the false inference that we may continue in sin that grace may abound is, as already observed, that the partakers of grace died to sin. His protestation, "How shall we any longer live in it?" is immediately supported by appeal to the significance of baptism (cf. Romans 6:3). It is baptism into Jesus' death that makes valid the pivotal proposition, "we died to sin." Then Paul proceeds to identify believers with Christ in his burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-5). This means, therefore, that not only did Christ die, not only was he buried, not only did he rise from the dead but also all who sustain the relation to him that baptism signifies likewise died, were buried, and rose again to a new life patterned after his resurrection life. No fact is of more basic importance in connection with the death to sin and commitment to holiness than that of identification with Christ in his death and resurrection. And this relation of Jesus' death and resurrection to the believer is introduced at this point in the development of Paul's gospel, be it noted, not with reference to justification but in connection with deliverance from the power and defilement of sin. So it is the relation to sanctification that is in the focus of thought. What then is this relation?

It might be said that the relation is that which justification sustains to sanctification, that the death and resurrection of Christ are directly the ground of our justification, that justification is the foundation of sanctification in that it establishes the only proper relation on which a life of holiness can rest, and that the relation of the death and resurrection of Christ to sanctification is this indirect one through the medium of justification. Or it might be said that by his death and resurrection Christ has procured every saving gift — the death and resurrection are therefore the meritorious and procuring cause of sanctification as well as of justification and in this respect are as directly related to sanctification as to justification. All of this is doctrinally true and does not violate the analogy of biblical teaching. But this analysis of the relation of the death and resurrection of Christ to sanctification does not do justice to Paul's teaching. He brings the death and resurrection of Christ into a much more direct relation to sanctification by way of efficiency and virtue than these foregoing proposals involve. The truth is that our death to sin and newness of life are effected in our identification with Christ in his death and resurrection, and no virtue accruing from the death and resurrection of Christ affects any phase of salvation more directly than the breach with sin and newness of life. And if we do not take account of this direct relationship we miss one of the cardinal features of New Testament teaching. It is not only in Romans 6:1-23 that this comes to expression. It is no less patent, for example, in Ephesians 2:1-6. It is the quickening from death in trespasses and sins that is in the forefront when the apostle says: "But God being rich in mercy . . . hath made us alive together with Christ . . . and hath raised us up together." And again in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15 this thought is clearly in view — the death and resurrection of Christ insure that those who are the beneficiaries live not to themselves but to him who died for them and rose again. In Colossians 2:20-23, Colossians 3:1-4 the same doctrine is the basis of both rebuke and entreaty.

There are two questions therefore which require some discussion. First, what is this efficiency, in reference to sanctification, residing in the death and resurrection of Christ? and, second, when did believers die with Christ and rise again to newness of life? In dealing with the first question it is well to turn to one of the most striking statements of Paul. It is Romans 6:7 : "For he who died is justified from sin." It can be effectively argued that the uniform or, at least, all but uniform usage of Paul in reference to the term "justify" must obtain in this instance and that the proposition must refer to justification and not to sanctification. It must be admitted that to suppose a meaning alien to the forensic import of "justify" would be without warrant. But we have to recognize that it is characteristic of Paul to use the same term with different shades of meaning in the same context and it is possible for him to use this term in its forensic signification without reference to what is specifically justification. The particular context must determine the precise application of a term, and in this case it must be observed that Paul is not treating of justification but dealing with what is properly in the sphere of sanctification, namely, deliverance from the enslaving power of sin. The proposition is adduced in support of the consideration that "we no longer serve sin" (Romans 6:6). "Justified from sin" must be understood in a way that is appropriate to deliverance from the servitude of sin. If we paraphrase the thought it might be rendered, "He who died is quit of sin." And when we keep in view the forensic character of the term "justify," we readily detect what is forensic and at the same time consonant with the apostle's thesis, namely, the judgment executed upon sin in order that we may enjoy emancipation from its thralldom.

Admittedly, it is difficult for us to grasp this juridical aspect of deliverance from the power of sin and it is also difficult to make clear what is involved. But the difficulty arises perhaps from our failure to think through and appreciate this strand of New Testament teaching. In any case, we must look more carefully at the immediate context and the broader aspects of New Testament doctrine on this subject.

It should be noted that Paul in the context refers to the lordship of sin, of the law, and of death — of sin when he enjoins: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body" (Romans 6:12) and when he asserts: "Sin shall not lord it over you, for ye are not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:14); of the law when he says: "But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we might serve in newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6: cf. Romans 7:1, Romans 7:4); of death when he reflects on the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection: "Christ being raised from the dead dies no more: death no longer lords it over him" (Romans 6:9). It is this notion of reigning power as applied to sin, the law, and death that helps us to recognize not only the relevance but the necessity of the judgment executed if we are to be freed from their thralldom, judgment executed in Christ's death. The lordship wielded by sin cannot be conceived of apart from the power of Satan and of the principalities of iniquity. When our Lord deals with the destruction of Satan's power it is the language of judgment he uses to express the victory. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). This verse furnishes us with what is perhaps the clearest parallel to Romans 6:7 and indicates that, in overcoming the realm and reign of this world, there is judgment executed. And our Lord's word is corroborative of the doctrine more fully unfolded in Paul that the death of Christ is that by which this judgment is fulfilled, for Jesus proceeds: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32), a reference to the kind of death he should die (cf. John 12:33 and John 3:14; John 8:28).⁵

We are compelled to reach the conclusion that it is by virtue of our having died with Christ and our being raised with him in his resurrection from the dead that the decisive breach with sin in its power, control, and defilement had been wrought, and that the reason for this is that Christ in his death and resurrection broke the power of sin, triumphed over the god of this world, the prince of darkness, executed judgment upon the world and its ruler, and by that victory delivered all those who were united to him from the power of darkness and translated them into his own kingdom. So intimate is the union between Christ and his people that they were partakers with him in all these triumphal achievements and therefore died to sin, rose with Christ in the power of his resurrection, and have the fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. As the death and resurrection are central in the whole process of redemptive accomplishment, so is it central in that by which sanctification itself is wrought in the hearts and lives of God's people. The second question with which we are concerned in this connection is: when did believers die with Christ to sin and rise with him to newness of life? It might appear unnecessary to ask this question because, if they died with Christ and rose with him in his resurrection, the time can only be when Christ himself died and rose again. And since Christ himself died once for all and having risen from the dead dies no more, it would appear necessary to restrict our death to sin and entrance upon newness of life (after the likeness of Jesus' resurrection) to the historic past when Jesus died and rose from the dead. There is the tendency to posit such a severe restriction because it appears to guard and support the interests of objectivity which on all accounts must be maintained in connection with the

death and resurrection of Christ. But there are other considerations which must not be discarded. It is to be noted that Paul in one of the passages where this making alive with Christ is so prominent speaks of the same persons as being dead in trespasses and sins, as having at one time walked according to the course of this world, as having conducted their life aforetime in the lusts of the flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the mind, and says that they were children of wrath even as others (Ephesians 2:1-4). And not only so — he says that it was when they were dead in trespasses that they were made alive together with Christ (Ephesians 2:5). Furthermore, it is too apparent to need demonstration that the historic events of Calvary and the resurrection from Joseph's tomb do not register the changes which are continuously being wrought when the people of God are translated from the power of darkness into Christ's kingdom of life, liberty, and peace.

We are thus faced with the tension arising from the demands of the past historical, on the one hand, and the demands of the ethico-religious, on the other. And we cannot tone down the considerations which weigh in both directions.

If we think of the starting point of Paul's argument in Romans 6:1-23, namely, "we died to sin," it is obvious that he is dealing with the believer's actual death to sin. This follows for several reasons. (1) He is giving this as the reason why we no longer live in sin and why it is both absurd and impossible to plead the argument of license, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound." The radical cleavage with the power and defilement of sin is conceived of as having taken place and is instituted by the contrast between death to sin and living in sin. (2) The apostle appeals to the significance of baptism to support his thesis that the persons in view no longer live in sin. "Or do ye not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised unto his death?" (Romans 6:3). He is, therefore, dealing with that new life which is represented, signified, and sealed by baptism. Hence, it is vital and spiritual union with Christ that must be in view, a union that results in walking in newness of life after the pattern and in the power of Jesus' own resurrection (Romans 6:4-5). (3) Death to sin is correlative with, if not interpreted in terms of, the crucifixion of the old man, the destruction of the body of sin, and deliverance from the reigning power of sin (Romans 6:6-7). It is, therefore, the new man in Christ Jesus who is contemplated as having died to sin. (4) Those in view are not under law but under grace (Romans 6:14), and the exhortations directed to them are those appropriate to such as have been emancipated from the dominion of sin — sin shall not have the dominion, therefore they are to reckon themselves to be dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:11).

These reasons place beyond question the conclusion that the persons are regarded as the actual partakers of the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection. Examination of the other passages in which this same teaching appears (2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 2:1-6; Colossians 3:1-3; 1 Peter 4:1-4) will show the same result. So we must conclude that death to sin and newness of life refer to events which occur in the life history of the believer. Are we, therefore, to suppose that the death of the believer with Christ and the rising again with him have exclusive reference to what takes place within the sphere of the effectual operations of grace in the heart and life of the believer? There are reasons for refusing to grant this inference. (1) We found already that it is impossible to dissociate the death and resurrection of Christ from his identification with those on whose behalf he died and rose again. To make a disjunction here is to rob the death and resurrection of Christ of meaning or purpose; it would make an abstraction impossible in divine conception as well as human. (2) Those on whose behalf Christ died and rose again were

chosen in him before the foundation of the world. They were, therefore, in him when he died and rose again, and it is impossible to dissociate them from the death and resurrection of him in whom they were. (3) The apostle constantly interweaves the most explicit references to the death and resurrection of Christ as once-for-all historic events with the teaching respecting actual, experiential death to sin on the part of the believer. His argument for the decisive and irrevocable breach with sin and translation to new life is bound up with the once-for-allness of Jesus' death. "For in that he died, he died to sin once for all" (Romans 6:10). This sustained introduction of the once-for-all past historical in a context that clearly deals with what occurs actually and practically in the life history of individuals makes inevitable the interpretation that the past historical conditions the continuously existential, not simply as laying the basis for it and as providing the analogy in the realm of the past historical for what continues to occur in the realm of our experience, but conditions the latter for the reason that something occurred in the past historical which makes necessary what is realized and exemplified in the actual life history of these same persons.

It is necessary to stress both aspects, the past historical and the experiential in their distinctness, on the one hand, and in their inter-dependence, on the other. The experiential must not be allowed to obscure the once-for-all historical, nor the once-for-all historical so to overshadow our thinking that we fail to give proper emphasis to the way in which its meaning and efficacy come to realization in the practical life of the believer. In other words, due emphasis must fall upon the objective and subjective in our dying and rising again with Christ in his death to sin and living again to God. It is only in this way that we can avoid the tendency to deny the vicarious significance of that which Christ wrought once for all in the realm of history as concrete and real as any other historical event. The principle, or *modus operandi*, illustrated in this instance as it bears upon the question of sanctification, is not essentially different from that which we find elsewhere in connection with the categories which define for us the atonement itself. Christ expiated the sins of his people in the offering of himself once for all — he purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high (cf. Hebrews 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 until we are savingly united to 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 the 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 actual application. Any added difficulty there 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.

Christ was identified with sin when he died, and for that reason alone did he die upon the accursed tree. But, because it was he who died, he died to sin — he destroyed its power, executed judgment upon it, and rose triumphant as the Lord of righteousness and life. He established thus for men the realm of life. And since his people were in him when he wrought victory and executed judgment, they also must be conceived of, in some mysterious manner that betokens the marvel of divine conception, wisdom, reckoning, and grace yet really in terms of a divine constitution, as

having died to sin also and as having been raised up to newness of life. It is this fact that is basic and central. The mysteriousness of it must not be allowed to impair or tone down the reality of it in God's reckoning and in the actual constitution established by him in the union of his people with Christ. It is basic and central because only by virtue of what did happen in the past and finished historical does it come to pass in the sphere of the practical and existential that we actually come into possession of our identification with Christ when he died to sin and lived unto God.

We see, therefore, that the decisive and definitive breach with sin that occurs at the inception of Christian life is one necessitated by the fact that the death of Christ was decisive and definitive. It is just because we cannot allow for any reversal or repetition of Christ's death on the tree that we cannot allow for any compromise on the doctrine that every believer has died to sin and no longer lives under its dominion. Sin no longer lords it over him. To equivocate here is to assail the definitiveness of Christ's death. Likewise, the decisive and definitive entrance upon newness of life in the case of every believer is required by the fact that the resurrection of Christ was decisive and definitive. As we cannot allow for any reversal or repetition of the resurrection, so we cannot allow for any compromise on the doctrine that every believer is a new man, that the old man has been crucified, that the body of sin has been destroyed, and that as a new man in Christ Jesus he serves God in the newness which is none other than that of the Holy Spirit of whom he has become the habitation and his body the temple.

Notes 1. Cf. 1 Peter 1:2.

2. akogomenoi though not used by Paul in this connection and is legomenon in the New Testament, must be given the force of "having died."

3. The interpretation that the regenerate person does not habitually sin labours under two liabilities. (1) The term "habitually" is not a sufficiently well-defined term. (2) This characterization leaves too much of a loophole for the incisiveness of John's teaching; it allows that the believer might commit certain sins though not habitually. This would contradict the decisiveness of such a statement that the one begotten of God does not sin and cannot sin.

4. 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. We impoverish our conception of definitive grace when we fail to appreciate the distinctiveness of each aspect or indulge in over-simplification.

5. For further treatment of this subject, cf. the present writer, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1959), 1, 277-284.

S. Irresistible Grace

Irresistible Grace

John Murray In reference to all the aspects from which God's saving grace may be viewed we must always reckon with the reality and gravity of sin. The salvation God has provided is more than salvation from sin and its consequences. Its design embraces the exceeding riches of God's grace and contemplates the highest conceivable destiny that could be bestowed upon creatures, conformity to the image of God's own Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (cf. Romans 8:29). But no such destiny could be envisioned or achieved without salvation from sin in all its ramifications and liabilities. In order to be salvation to it must first of all be salvation from.

We cannot assess the gravity of sin unless we probe to that which is central in its definition. If we say that sin is selfishness we do state something that belongs to the character of sin, especially if we think of self-centeredness and construe this as involving the worship of self rather than of the Creator (cf. Romans 1:25). The iniquity of sin is thereby disclosed. Again, if we say that sin is the assertion of human autonomy versus the sovereignty of God we are saying something relevant. Sin is precisely that, and it became apparent in Eden when the sin of our race began. But we must ask: are these analyses sufficient? To put it otherwise: does not Scripture warrant and compel a more penetrating description? When Paul says that "the carnal mind is enmity against God" (Romans 8:7), he has surely provided us with what is ultimate in the definition of sin. Sin is the contradiction of God, contradiction all along the line of God's unique and essential glory. Nothing is more germane to God's glory than his truth; he is truth. The tempter was well aware of this and so his strategy was framed accordingly. To the woman he said: "ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). This was blatant contradiction of God's veracity. When the woman acceded to this contradiction her integrity collapsed and to sin she became captive. Our Lord's indictment of the tempter is to the effect that his own fall from integrity was of the same character as that by which he seduced Eve. "He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Yes, the essence of sin is to be against God (cf. Psalms 51:4); it is the contradiction of God in the whole range of its connotation and application. When Paul wrote, "the carnal mind is enmity against God," he added, "for it is not subject to the law of God" (Romans 8:7). It is significant that the law of God should be specified in this connection. The enmity manifests itself in insubjection to the law of God. And not only so. The insubjection may be said to constitute the enmity, the contradiction. For the law is the glory of God coming to expression for the regulation of human thought, word, and action consonant with the image in which man has been created. So sin can be defined in terms of law as "lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). The contradiction which sin offers to God and to his will, if it is not adequately described as resistance, involves and is expressed in resistance. Scripture sometimes uses this term or its equivalents to express the attitude of unbelief (cf. Acts 7:51; Acts 13:45; Romans 10:21; 2 Timothy 3:8; Titus 1:9). It is obvious that sin consists

in resistance to the will of God. If the claims of God were not resistible, there would be no sin. The claims of God come to expression in the gospel and all rejection of the gospel and of its demands is resistance. In the gospel we have the supreme revelation of the grace of God, and Christ is the embodiment of that grace. The glory of God is nowhere more effulgent than in the face of Jesus Christ. Hence unbelief is resistance of grace at the zenith of its disclosure and overture. So to say that all grace is irresistible is to deny the plain facts of observation and experience as also of Scripture teaching. Stephen was bold enough to indict his unbelieving audience with resistance to the Holy Spirit: "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7:51). This is the enormity of unbelief; it is the contradiction of sin expressing itself in resistance to the claims and overtures of supreme love and grace. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved the darkness rather than the light" (John 3:19). When we speak of irresistible grace, therefore, it is not to assert that all grace is irresistible, nor is it to deny the numberless respects in which grace is resisted and resisted to the culmination of resistance in everlasting doom. In fact the truth of and necessity for irresistible grace may be most cogently demonstrated in the premise of resistible grace. The enmity of the human heart is most virulent at the point of the supreme revelation of God's glory. So deep-seated and persistent is the contradiction that the Saviour as the embodiment of grace is rejected. It is when we recognize this that the need for irresistible grace is perceived. In much of present-day evangelism it is assumed that the one thing man can do in the exercise of his own liberty is to believe in Christ for salvation. It is supposed that this is the one contribution that man himself must make to set the forces of salvation in operation and that even God himself can do nothing towards this end until there is this crucial decision on man's own part. In this assessment there is total failure to reckon with human depravity, with the nature of the contradiction that sin involves. Paul tells us that not only is the mind of the flesh not subject to the law of God but also that it cannot be (Romans 8:7). This impossibility extends to the gospel as well. It is the implication of Paul's other word that "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). But to this truth we have the most pointed and express witness of our Lord himself. "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44); "no man can come unto me, except it were given to him of the Father" (John 6:65). Here is the witness of him who knows what is in man and who knows the Father as the Father knows him. And it is to the effect that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for a man to come unto him except by the free gift from the Father in his secret and efficacious drawing. The foregoing words of our Lord must be coordinated with another in the same context. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). The giving on the part of the Father in this text has been understood as the election in Christ before the foundation of the world (cf. Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 1:5) or, at least, in terms of giving to the Son correlative with or flowing from the election. But this does not by any means appear to be the action of the Father referred to in the text. There are two reasons for this conclusion. First, in this Gospel elsewhere, when Jesus speaks of those given to him by the Father, they are identified as those given to him out of the world, as those who had kept his word, as those who had known that all things given to him were from the Father, as those who had received the words given him and had come to know the truth that he, Jesus, had come out from the Father (John 17:6-8). These characterizations require much more than election before the foundation of the world; they involve a relation of faith. Second, in the more immediate context

Jesus is referring to the effectual drawing and giving on the Father's part (John 6:44, John 6:65). So we must conclude that the giving is the giving that occurs in the actual operations of grace, defined more specifically as drawing and giving in the realm of consciousness. The constraints of the Father's grace in the hearts of men are concomitant with or, perhaps, may be construed as donation on the part of the Father to the Son. God the Father draws men, places holy constraints upon them, calls them into the fellowship of his Son, and presents them to Christ as trophies of the redemption Christ himself has accomplished. This constraint has been called "efficacious." No other inference could reasonably be drawn from John 6:44, John 6:45. Jesus is speaking of coming unto him, that is, of the commitment of faith and of the impossibility apart from the Father's drawing. In making the exception it is surely implied that when the Father draws the exception occurs—the person drawn does come. Furthermore, it would offend against all that may be conceived as to the nature and intent of the Father's drawing and giving in terms of verses 44, 65 to think of these actions as ineffectual. But John 6:37 puts this beyond all question: "All that the Father giveth me will come to me." Jesus does not say: all that the Father giveth me are brought to me. He uses the term that denotes motion on the part of the person—"will come to me." Coming to Christ is the movement of commitment to Christ, coming that engages the whole-souled activity of the person coming. It is not that he may come, not that he has the opportunity to come, not that he will in all probability come, and not simply that he is empowered to come, but that he will come. There is absolute certainty. There is a divine necessity; the order of heaven insures the sequence.

It is a moral and spiritual impossibility for a person to come to Christ apart from the Father's drawing. What we find now is that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for the person given by the Father to the Son not to come. There is by Jesus' verdict the invariable conjunction of these two diverse kinds of action—"all that the Father giveth me will come to me." There is invincible efficacy in the Father's action and this means grace irresistible. The reality of such grace is inscribed on Jesus' words. But the teaching also points to the necessity. The premise of our Lord's teaching is the impossibility of faith when only human agency obtains. The agency of the Father is interposed to meet this impossibility and the impossibility establishes the indispensability of the interposition.

Thus far attention has been focused upon the action of God the Father in the constraint that issues in faith. It is highly important that this emphasis of Scripture should be appreciated. Otherwise we dishonor God the Father and our view of the provisions of salvation is seriously distorted. The love of the Father is the fountain from which all the acts and processes of redemption proceed. But we must also recognize that at the inception of salvation in possession lie the operations of grace of which the Father is agent. It is he who calls effectually into the fellowship of his Son (cf. Romans 8:28, Romans 8:30; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 1:15, Galatians 1:16; Ephesians 1:18) and he draws men to the Saviour. When sinners first experience the invincible attraction of the Redeemer, are entranced by his beauty, and invest their all in him, it is because the Father has made a donation to his own Son and placed upon men irresistible constraint. To conceive of all this as less than irresistible grace is to deny its character and impugn the efficacy of the Father's will.

Most frequently in theology irresistible grace has been thought to find its focus in regeneration, and regeneration is specifically the act of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 3:3-8). It would be easy to say that the actions of the Father referred to above are simply different ways of expressing regeneration. This is far too simplistic and fails to reckon with the manifoldness of the operations of grace. In the

design of salvation there is an economy. In the once-for-all accomplishment of redemption there is an economy. That is, there are the specific and distinguishing functions of the distinct persons of the Godhead. There is also economy in the application of redemption and we must take full account of the diversity involved. To equate the actions of the Father with regeneration is to ignore the diversity; our theology is thereby truncated and our faith deprived of the richness which the economy requires.

Regeneration is specifically the work of the Holy Spirit, and our appreciation of the economy of salvation demands that we honor him in the distinctive functions he performs. No ingredient in the manifold of God's saving operations bears more relevantly on the subject of irresistible grace than does regeneration. Again, our Lord's own teaching is basic. "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:3, John 3:5). The impossibility we found earlier in connection with faith appears here in connection with understanding of and membership in the kingdom of God, and birth from above, of water, and of the Spirit is the interposition that meets human impotence. It cannot be questioned that our Lord's assessment of man's situation is the total incapacity in reference to what is most germane to his well-being and is to the same effect as Paul's indictment of the natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14). The provision of grace appears in this connection, as in John 6:44, John 6:65, in the exception, born from above, of water, and of the Spirit, the exception that insures understanding of and membership in the kingdom of God. And the certainty of this outcome is implied not only in the "except" of John 3:3 and John 3:5 but is expressly affirmed in John 3:6 : "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," a new person indwelt, directed, and controlled by the Holy Spirit.

It is John alone who records for us the Lord's discourse to Nicodemus. The profound effect this teaching impressed on John's thinking is evinced in his first epistle. On six occasions reference to regeneration occurs (1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 5:1, 1 John 5:4, 1 John 5:18). Pertinent to our present interest is the emphasis upon the invariable concomitance of birth from God and new life. "Every one who is begotten of God does not do sin . . . and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God" (1 John 3:9). "Every one who is begotten of God overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4). Every one who is begotten of God does not sin . . . and the evil one does not touch him" (1 John 5:18). So the person born or begotten of God no longer lives in sin but has the victory, in a word, is converted. When these data are placed in contrast with the impossibility of which our Lord spoke to Nicodemus, the only inference is that the new birth is invincibly efficacious and this is just to affirm irresistible grace.

It is significant that in the prologue of John's Gospel there occur the words, "who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God" (John 1:13). The cumulative negatives reinforce the positive and the lesson is that of divine monergism. It is not what man does but what God effects and God alone to the exclusion of all human volition or agency. The same monergism is patent in our Lord's own teaching. In John 3:3-8 we cannot suppress the analogy on which the language of regeneration turns. When a person is begotten or born according to the flesh, it is not because he or she decided for this event. It was wholly by the volition and agency of others. So in the new birth. And by whose will and agency is not left in any doubt. The Holy Spirit is the agent and he alone. In terms of John 3:3 the action is supernatural, in terms of John 3:5 it is by radical purification and impartation, in terms of John 3:6 it is invincibly determinative, in terms of

John 3:8 it is mysterious and sovereignly effective.

Why should there be any reluctance to accept the truth of irresistible grace? It is God's interposition to do for us what we cannot do of ourselves. It is God's amazing grace to meet our hopeless impotence. Here is the gospel of sovereign mercy. In evangelism it is the only hope of its success unto the salvation of lost souls. The Holy Spirit accompanies the gospel proclamation with his sovereign demonstration and power. The lost are born of the Spirit and the fruit is unto holiness and the end everlasting life. In concluding, may we return to John 6:37, John 6:44, John 6:65. When a sinner comes to Christ in the commitment of faith, when the rebellious will is renewed and tears of penitence begin to flow, it is because a mysterious transaction has been taking place between the persons of the Godhead. The Father has been making a presentation, a donation to his own Son. So perish the thought that coming to Christ finds its explanation in the autonomous determinations of the human will. It finds its cause in the sovereign will of God the Father. He has placed upon this person the constraint by which he has been captivated by the glory of the Redeemer and invests in him all his interests. Christ is made wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Here is grace surpassing; and it is grace insurmountable.

S. Law and Grace

Law and Grace by John Murray No subject is more intimately bound up with the nature of the gospel than that of law and grace. In the degree to which error is entertained at this point, in the same degree is our conception of the gospel perverted. An erroneous conception of the function of law can be of such a character that it completely vitiates our view of the gospel; and an erroneous conception of the antithesis between law and grace can be of such a character that it demolishes both the substructure and the superstructure of grace. Nothing could advertise this more than the fact that two of the major Epistles of the New Testament, and the two most polemic, have this subject as their theme. Our attention is irresistibly drawn to the gravity of the issue with which the apostle is concerned in his Epistle to the Galatians when we read at the outset, 'But even if we or an angel from heaven preach to you any gospel other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so now again I say, if anyone preach any gospel to you other than that which ye received, let him be anathema' (Galatians 1:8, Galatians 1:9). And we are no less startled when we read in the same apostle's Epistle to the Romans, 'I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ on behalf of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh' (Romans 9:1-3). What was the question that aroused the apostle to such passionate zeal and holy indignation, indignation that has its kinship with the imprecatory utterances of the Old Testament? In a word it was the relation of law and gospel. 'I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died in vain' (Galatians 2:21). 'For if a law had been given which could make alive, verily from the law righteousness would have been' (Galatians 3:21). 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight' (Romans 3:20). The simple truth is that if law is conceived of as contributing in the least degree towards our acceptance with God and our justification by him, then the gospel of grace is a nullity. And the issue is so sharply and incisively drawn that, if we rely in any respect upon compliance with law for our acceptance with God, then Christ will profit us nothing. 'Ye have been discharged from Christ whosoever of you are justified by law; ye have fallen away from grace' (Galatians 5:4). But lest we should think that the whole question of the relation of law and grace is thereby resolved, we must be reminded that Paul says also in this polemic, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea we establish the law' (Romans 3:31). We are compelled therefore to recognize that the subject of law and grace is not simply concerned with the antithesis that there is between law and grace, but also with law as that which makes grace necessary and with grace as establishing and confirming law. It is not only the doctrine of grace that must be jealously guarded against distortion by the works of law, but it is also the doctrine of law that must be preserved against the distortions of a spurious concept of grace. This is just saying that we are but echoing the total witness of the apostle of the Gentiles as the champion of the gospel of grace when we say that we must guard grace from the adulteration of legalism and we must guard law from the depredations of antinomianism. In relation to the topic with which we are concerned now it is the latter that must claim our attention. What is the place of law in the economy of grace?

It is symptomatic of a pattern of thought current in many evangelical circles that the idea of keeping the commandments of God is not consonant with the liberty and spontaneity of the Christian man, that keeping the law has its affinities with legalism and with the principle of works rather than with the principle of grace. It is strange indeed that this kind of antipathy to the notion of keeping commandments should be entertained by any believer who is a serious student of the New Testament. Did not our Lord say, 'If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments' (John 14:15)? And did he not say, 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love' (John 15:10)? It was John who recorded these sayings of our Lord and it was he, of all the disciples, who was mindful of the Lord's teaching and example regarding love, and reproduces that teaching so conspicuously in his first Epistle. We catch something of the tenderness of his entreaty when he writes, 'Little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and truth' (1 John 3:18), 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God' (1 John 4:7). But the message of John has escaped us if we have failed to note John's emphasis upon the keeping of the commandments of God. 'And by this we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that says, I know him, and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keeps his word, in him verily the love of God is made perfect' (1 John 2:3-5). 'Beloved, if our heart does not condemn, we have confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do those things that are well-pleasing in his sight . . . And he who keeps his commandments abides in him and he in him' (1 John 3:21, 1 John 3:22, 1 John 3:24). 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments' (1 John 5:3). If we are surprised to find this virtual identification of love to God and the keeping of his commandments, it is because we have overlooked the words of our Lord himself which John had remembered and learned well: 'If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love' (John 15:10) and 'He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me' (John 14:21). To say the very least, the witness of our Lord and the testimony of John are to the effect that there is indispensable complementation; love will be operative in the keeping of God's commandments. It is only myopia that prevents us from seeing this, and when there is a persistent animosity to the notion of keeping commandments the only conclusion is that there is either gross ignorance or malignant opposition to the testimony of Jesus. A great deal of the antipathy to the idea of obligation to keep the commandments of God has arisen from misconception regarding the word of the apostle Paul, 'Ye are not under law but under grace' (Romans 6:14). And much apparent support may be derived from this text to justify and reinforce this antipathy. It is easy to see how an insistence that believers are under obligation to keep the law of God would seem to contradict the express statement of the apostle that believers are not under law. In like manner, when Paul says that 'before faith came we were kept in ward under law, shut up to the faith about to be revealed' (Galatians 3:23), it is obvious that the bondage implied in being kept in ward under law is terminated with the revelation of faith. Hence to speak of the believer as bound to the obedience of God's law is to bring the believer again into that bondage which it is the great burden of Paul in both Romans and Galatians to resist and controvert! 'For freedom has Christ made us free: let us stand fast therefore and not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage' (Galatians 5:1).

It must be appreciated that when Paul says in Romans 6:14, 'Ye are not under law but under grace', there is the sharpest possible antithesis between 'under law' and 'under grace', and that in terms of Paul's intent in this passage these are mutually exclusive. To be 'under law' is to be under

the dominion of sin; to be 'under grace' is to be liberated from that dominion. What then is the antithesis and how does it bear upon our question? To answer this question it is necessary to establish what law as law can do and what law as law cannot do.

What law can do is in some respects quite obvious, in other respects frequently overlooked. (1) Law commands and demands; it propounds what the will of God is. The law of God is the holiness of God coming to expression for the regulation of thought and conduct consonant with his holiness. We must be perfect as God is perfect; the law is that which the perfection of God dictates in order to bring about conformity with his perfection. (2) Law pronounces approval and blessing upon conformity to its demands. The commandment was ordained to life (Romans 7:10), and the man that does the things of the law will live in them (Galatians 3:12). Law not only enunciates justice; it guards justice. It ensures that where there is righteousness to the full extent of its demand there will be the corresponding justification and life. Only when there is deviation from its demands does any adverse judgment proceed from the law. (3) Law pronounces the judgment of condemnation upon every infraction of its precept. The law has nought but curse for any person who has once broken its sanctity; he who is guilty at one point is guilty of all. 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them' (Galatians 3:10). (4) Law exposes and convicts of sin. It exposes the sin that may lie hid in the deepest recesses of the heart. The law is Spiritual and as the word of God it is living and powerful, searching the thoughts and intents of the heart (cf. Romans 7:14; Hebrews 4:12). It is this discriminating and searching function of the law that Paul describes when he says. 'I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet' (Romans 7:7); the law lays bare the self-complacency that blinds us to the depravity of our hearts. (5) Law excites and incites sin to more virulent and violent transgression. Law, of itself so far from renewing and reforming the depraved heart, only occasions more intensified and confirmed expression of its depravity. 'But sin taking occasion through the commandment wrought in me all manner of lust' (Romans 7:8; cf. Romans 7:9, Romans 7:11, Romans 7:13). The law, therefore, instead of relieving or relaxing our bondage to sin, intensifies and confirms that bondage. The more the light of the law shines upon and in our depraved hearts, the more the enmity of our minds is roused to opposition, and the more it is made manifest that the mind of the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither can be.

What law as law cannot do is implicit in what we have found to be the utmost of its potency. (1) Law can do nothing to justify the person who in any particular has violated its sanctity and come under its curse. Law, as law, has no expiatory provision; it exercises no forgiving grace; and it has no power of enablement to the fulfilment of its own demand. It knows no clemency for the remission of guilt; it provides no righteousness to meet our iniquity; it exerts no constraining power to reclaim our waywardness; it knows no mercy to melt our hearts in penitence and new obedience. (a) It can do nothing to relieve the bondage of sin; it accentuates and confirms that bondage. It is this impossibility to alleviate the bondage of sin that is particularly in view in Romans 6:14. The person who is 'under law', the person upon whom only law has been brought to bear, the person whose life has been determined exclusively by the resources and potencies of law, is the bondservant of sin. And the more intelligently and resolutely a person commits himself to law the more abandoned becomes his slavery to sin. Hence deliverance from the bondage of sin must come from an entirely different source.

It is in this light that the apostle's antithetical expression 'under grace' becomes significant. The word 'grace' sums up everything that by way of contrast with law is embraced in the provisions of redemption. In terms of Paul's teaching in this context the redemptive provision consists in our having become dead to the law by the body of Christ (Romans 7:4). Believers died with Christ and they lived again with him in his resurrection (cf Romans 6:8). They have, therefore, come under all the resources of redeeming and renewing grace which find their epitome in the death and resurrection of Christ and find their permanent embodiment in him who was dead and is alive again. The virtue which ever continues to emanate from the death and resurrection of Christ is operative in them through union with Christ in the efficacy of his death and the power of his resurrection life. All of this Paul's brief expression 'under grace' implies. And in respect of the subject with which Paul is dealing there is an absolute antithesis between the potency of law and the potency of grace, between the provisions of law and the provisions of grace. Grace is the sovereign will and power of God coming to expression, not for the regulation of thought and conduct consonant with God's holiness, but for the deliverance of men from thought and conduct that bind them to the servitude of unholiness. Grace is deliverance from the . dominion of sin and therefore deliverance from that which consists in transgression of the law. The purity and integrity of the gospel stand or fall with the absoluteness of the antithesis between the function and potency of law, on the one hand, and the function and potency of grace, on the other. But while all this is true it does not by any means follow that the antithesis eliminates all relevance of the law to the believer as a believer. The facile slogan of many a professed evangelical, when confronted with the claims of the law of God, to the effect that he is not under law but under grace, should at least be somewhat disturbed when it is remembered that the same apostle upon whose formula he relies said also that he was not without law to God but under law to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21). This statement of the apostle demands careful examination because it bears the implication that Paul was under law to God and he expressly states that he was under law to Christ. It would seem as if he said the opposite of what he says in Romans 6:14. But in any case what Paul says to the Corinthians prohibits us from taking the formula 'not under law' as the complete account of the relation of the believer to the law of God.

Paul is affirming that he was all things to all men—to Jews as a Jew, to those under law as under law, to those without law as without law. There is an anomalous contrast here; his conduct at one time would seem to be the moral opposite of what it was at another time. In relation to some he was 'as under law' (wJ" uJpov novmon), in relation to others he was 'as without law' (wJ" a[nomo]). And it is not only the apparent contradictoriness of the modes of conduct that strikes us as strange; the expressions in themselves are anomalous. How can Paul speak of himself as acting at any time as one 'under law'? And how can he speak of himself as acting 'without law'? It is not only we, his readers, who sense the anomaly; Paul himself anticipates the question and the implicit objection. Hence he is well aware of the necessity of guarding both expressions from misunderstanding. He adds in reference to the first, 'not being myself under law', and in reference to the second, 'not being without law to God but under law to Christ'.

Examination of this passage will disclose something very important respecting Paul's use of the expression 'under law'. When he says that for those under law he behaved as one 'under law', he cannot mean that he behaved as one 'under law' in the sense in which he uses that expression in Romans 6:14. In that passage 'under law' bears the sense, or at least the implication, of being in

bondage to sin. But Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:20, 1 Corinthians 9:21 cannot in the least be suggesting that he behaved as one under bondage to sin. Such a thought is inconceivable and therefore completely removed from the universe of discourse. So he must be using the expression 'under law' in some sense other than that of Romans 6:14. And the precise meaning is not obscure. He means 'under law' in the sense in which Jews who had not yet understood the significance of the death and resurrection of Christ for the discontinuance of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies considered themselves to be under law, and therefore obliged to keep the rites and customs of the Mosaic economy. When Paul characterizes the people in question as those under law, he is not reflecting upon their moral and spiritual state as one of bondage to sin. All unbelievers are in that category of being in bondage to sin and therefore 'under law' in the sense of Romans 6:14 consequently the characterization, 'under law' of Romans 6:14 would not differentiate between the diverse sorts of people whom Paul has in view in 1 Corinthians 9:1-27. It must be therefore that 'under law' in this latter instance carries the import of being under the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy. We are not to suppose that Paul is admitting that any at that stage of redemptive revelation were in reality bound to the observance of the Mosaic rites; he is reflecting simply upon what a certain group of people considered to be their obligation. And when he says that he was for such as one under law, he means that he accommodated himself to the customs and rites which these people observed and to which they considered themselves obligated. This force of the expression 'under law' throws a great deal of light upon the same expression in Galatians 3:23: 'Before faith came we were kept in ward under law'. The context makes it abundantly clear that what Paul means by the law in this context is the Mosaic economy. In the preceding verses he asks the question, 'What then is the law?' and he answers, 'It was added on account of the transgressions' (Galatians 3:19). He is thinking of that economy which was instituted four hundred and thirty years after the giving of the promise to Abraham (cf. Galatians 3:17), that economy which, he says, was 'ordained through angels in the hand of a mediator' (Galatians 3:19). When, in Galatians 3:23, he says that 'before faith came we were kept in ward under law' he is contrasting the pedagogical nonage and tutelage of the Mosaic economy with the mature sonship and liberty enjoyed by the New Testament believer. He is not here equating the 'under law' of which he speaks with the same expression in Romans 6:14; he is not suggesting, far less is he intimating, that the people of Israel who were kept in ward 'under law' were under the bondage of sin which is the obvious import of the 'under law' of Romans 6:14. In like manner when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:20 that he became to those under law as under law, he is referring to those who had not yet recognized the epochal change that had been signaled by the New Testament redemptive events, and to his own behaviour in conforming by way of concession to the prejudices and customs of those who considered themselves bound by what were in reality only the temporary provisions of the older economy. And when he appends the qualifying clause, 'not being myself under law', he means that, though accommodating himself by way of expediency to these customs, he did not consider himself under any divine obligation to observe such rites and practices; he was not himself under that law. Again we see how impossible it is to apply the same sense of 'not under law' in Romans 6:14 to the 'not under law' of 1 Corinthians 9:20. For if we were to do this then we should have to understand Paul as adjusting his behaviour to the practices of those who were under the dominion of sin, an utterly impossible and unthinkable supposition. The second qualification which Paul felt constrained to make in 1 Corinthians 9:20, 1 Corinthians 9:21 is the one that is more directly germane to our topic: 'not

being without law to God but under law to Christ'. He is guarding himself against the inference that, in becoming to those without law as without law, he recognized himself as free from obligation to the law of God and of Christ. What he means when he says that to those without law he became as without law is that, in his relations with such people, he did not conform to Mosaic customs and ordinances. 'Without law' in this case is the contrary of 'under law' in the same context. And since 'under law' means conformity to Mosaic rites, 'without law' means the opposite, namely, nonconformity with such rites. But lest this assertion of nonconformity should be misunderstood as implying release from all conformity to law he immediately adds that he is bound in and to the law of God and of Christ. Paul is not lawless in respect to God; he is law-bound in respect to Christ. The expression Paul uses, 'under law to Christ', is a particularly impressive one. It is as if he had said 'inlawed to Christ', 'bound in law to Christ', 'under the obligation of the law of Christ'. The intent of Paul's terms is not to contrast the law of God and the law of Christ, as if he had said, 'not under law to God but rather under law to Christ'. The negative clause is not at all, 'not under law to God', but 'not without law to God'. The implication is that he is under law to God and this 'under law to God' finds its validation and explanation in his being under law to Christ. Paul asserts most unequivocally, therefore, that he is bound by the law of Christ and of God. The conclusions to which we must come are as follows. (1) In one sense the believer is not under law. To be 'under law' in this sense is correlative with the dominion and bondservice of sin. The believer has been discharged from the law (Romans 7:6), he has been put to death to the law through the body of Christ (Romans 7:4), and therefore he has died to the law (Romans 7:6). Having died to the law he died to sin (Romans 6:2), and sin will not have dominion over him (Romans 6:14). (2) In still another sense the believer is not under law; he is not under the ritual law of the Mosaic economy. This pedagogical tutelary bondage has been terminated by the epochal events of Calvary, the resurrection, and Pentecost. Christ redeemed them that were once under this law so that all without distinction may enjoy the mature and unrestrained privilege of sons. Freedom from the law in this specific sense is just as absolute as freedom from law in the preceding sense. (3) There is another sense in which the believer is 'under law'; he is bound in law to God and to Christ. The law of God and of Christ binds him precisely because of his relation to Christ. This third conclusion is not only derived from 1 Corinthians 9:21. There are several other considerations which demand the same conclusion. The fallacy of the interpretation that Paul conceives of the believer as in no sense under law and seeks to derive this from Romans 6:14; Romans 7:1-6 should have been corrected by a more careful study of the context in which these same passages occur.

(1) Romans 6:14 cannot be dissociated from Romans 6:15 : 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law but under grace? God forbid.' The apostle repudiates in the most emphatic way any insinuation to the effect that grace gives licence to sin or provides an inducement to sin. Grace intervenes and rules over us to deliver from the dominion of sin, and therefore establishes and promotes the opposite of sin, namely, righteousness. Deliverance from the dominion of sin does not leave the person in a vacuum or in a state of neutrality; it is deliverance to if it is deliverance from. And it is deliverance to holiness and righteousness. It is this thought that Paul develops in the succeeding verses. He speaks not only of deliverance from sin but of its positive counterpart. 'Being then made free from sin ye were made bondservants to righteousness' (Romans 6:18; cf. Romans 6:22). Here he is saying not simply that believers became the servants of righteousness; he is saying that they were the subjects of the action of God's grace so that they were bound over

to righteousness. How can we understand righteousness as the positive opposite of sin unless we construe it as the opposite of what sin is? And if sin is the transgression of the law, righteousness must be conformity to the law. The law of God which Paul characterizes in this Epistle as Spiritual, that is to say, divine in its origin and nature, and holy and just and good after the pattern of him who is its author (Romans 7:12, Romans 7:14), must be regarded as the criterion of righteousness no less than it is the criterion of sin.

(2) If Paul thought of himself as released from obligation to the law of God, how could he ever have confessed as a believer, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.. . I delight in the law of God after the inward man.. . Consequently then I myself with the mind serve the law of God' (Romans 7:16, Romans 7:22, Romans 7:25)? It is fully admitted that the inner conflict and tension delineated in Romans 7:14-25 pose acute exegetical difficulties; but there is surely little room for question that when Paul describes his most characteristic self, the self that he most centrally and fundamentally is as one united to Christ in the virtue of his death and the power of his resurrection (cf. Romans 6:2-6), he describes himself as delighting in the law of God and serving that law with his mind. This service is one of bondservice, of commanded commitment; and yet it is not the bondservice of enforced and unwilling servitude. It is service constrained by delight and consent in the deepest recesses of heart and mind and will. It is total commitment, but it is the commitment also of spontaneous delight. The restraint which Paul deplors in this context and which compels him to exclaim 'O wretched man that I am' (Romans 7:24) is not the restraint which the law of God imposes, but the restraint arising from the lack of conformity to it, that he wills the good but does not carry it into effect. The burden he bemoans is not the law but that which is its contradiction, the other law in his members warring against the law of his mind (Romans 7:23).

(3) It is eloquent of what Paul had in view in these protestations regarding his delight in, and service of, the law of God that in this same Epistle Paul furnishes us with concrete illustrations of the law to which he refers and of the ways in which conformity to the law is expressed. He does this in the more immediate context of Romans 6:14 when he says, 'I had not known lust except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet' (Romans 7:7). But in that part of his Epistle which deals directly with the details of Christian conduct his reference to at least four of the commandments is even more illuminating. 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' (Romans 13:8, Romans 13:9). What is of particular interest to us at present is to note that Paul regards these precepts of the decalogue, four of which he quotes, as relevant to the behaviour which exemplifies the Christian vocation. The emphasis falls upon the fact that love fulfils them and that they are summed up, or summarized, in the word, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. But, if love fulfils them, we must still bear in mind that they are fulfilled; and if they are fulfilled they exist as precepts which call for fulfilment: and if they are summarized in one word, the summary does not obliterate or abrogate the expansion of which it is a summary. It is futile to try to escape the underlying assumption of Paul's thought, that the concrete precepts of the decalogue have relevance to the believer as the criteria of that behaviour which love dictates. And it is all the more significant that these criteria should have been enunciated by the apostle in a context where the accent falls upon love itself: 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another' (Romans 13:8).

Other passages in Paul's Epistles yield the same lesson respecting his conception of the place of law in the realm of grace. The situation in the church at Corinth made it necessary for Paul in his first Epistle to devote a considerable part of it to questions which fall within the realm of ethics and in several particulars he was called upon to administer reproof and correction for the misconduct of believers. He takes the occasion to remind them that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. He lists for us a catalogue of sins, thereby illustrating the unrighteousness which excludes from the kingdom of God—fornication, idolatry, adultery, effeminacy, sodomy, thievery, covetousness, drunkenness, reviling, extortion (1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Corinthians 6:10). His intent is to illustrate the character and conduct which identify those who have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:10), and he is saying in effect: 'You believers have been washed and sanctified and justified, and you cannot play fast and loose with any wrongdoing; as heirs of the kingdom of God you must behave accordingly; you must appreciate the antithesis between the kingdom of God amid the world'. The point of particular interest for our present study is the criterion, presupposed in Paul's teaching here, by which this antithesis is to be judged. We need but scan the sins which Paul mentions to discover what this criterion is; the precepts of the decalogue underlie the whole catalogue. Idolatry—the first and second commandments; adultery—the seventh commandment; theft and extortion—the eighth; reviling—the ninth and possibly the third; covetousness—the tenth. Hence it is only too apparent that the criteria of the equity which characterizes the kingdom of God and the criteria of the iniquity which marks off those who are without God and without hope in the world are those norms of thought and behaviour which are epitomized in the ten commandments. And it is Paul's plea that the operations of grace (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:11) make mandatory the integrity of which these precepts are the canons. It is not grace relieving us of the demands signaled in these precepts, but grace establishing the character and status which will bring these demands to effective fruition.

If it should be objected that Paul in this same Epistle provides us with an example of love as exercised in abstraction from law when he commends abstinence from meat offered to idols lest the eating of such meat should be a stumblingblock to the weak, we have not read the passage with sufficient care (1 Corinthians 8:1-13). It is true that there is no law against the eating of meat offered to idols; the apostle contends in this matter for the liberty of the strong and intelligent believer. No idol is anything in the world, and there is no other God but one. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. For the man who entertains this faith, meat is not contaminated by the fact that it was offered by another, who is an idolater, to an idol; he may freely eat and give the Lord thanks. Yet there are certain circumstances under which considerations of love to another will constrain the strong believer to abstain. It might be argued that here love operates in complete abstraction from law and therefore we have an illustration of love acting on the highest level apart from the direction or dictation of law.

Examination of the passage in question will expose the fallacy of such an interpretation. The law of God in its sanctity and authority underlies the whole situation. Why is the intelligent believer enjoined in the circumstances to abstain? Simply and solely because there is the danger of the sin of idolatry on the part of the weak brother, the danger of wounding his weak conscience in the eating of meat as offered to an idol. In other words, it is the danger of transgression, on the part of the weak believer, of the first commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'. Remove that fact from the situation and the whole argument of the apostle is nullified. The law requires that

we ourselves abstain from idolatry; but it also requires that we love our neighbour as ourselves. Therefore when our doing what, so far as we ourselves are concerned, is a perfectly innocent act, becomes, and that to our knowledge, the occasion for the commission of sin on the part of another believer, love to our neighbour as ourselves will impel us to abstain from so unloving and unworthy conduct. It is not, however, love abstracted from law but love operating under the authority and sanctity of that commandment, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'.

We have therefore abundant evidence from Paul's Epistles to elucidate what he means when he says: 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: nay, we establish the law' (Romans 3:31). This is the protestation with which Paul brings to a conclusion one of the most eloquent statements of the contrast between the function of law and the operation of grace: 'But now without the law the righteousness of God is made manifest'; 'Where then is boasting? it is excluded. Through what law? of works? Nay, but through the law of faith. For we reckon that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law' (Romans 3:21, Romans 3:27, Romans 3:28). It is a protestation that Paul fully establishes and verifies in the later portions of this Epistle. But, in manner characteristic of the apostle, he interjects at this early point, at the conclusion of his peroration respecting the impotence of law and the efficacy of grace, the most emphatic warning to the effect that this total impotence of law to justify the ungodly does not carry with it the inference that the law is thereby discarded or abrogated. The inferences so frequently drawn from Romans 6:14 should have been obviated by the reminder which Paul announces in Romans 3:31, and the context of Romans 6:14 advises us of the reasons why grace does not make the law of none effect. 'The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good' (Romans 7:12). 'The law is Spiritual' (Romans 7:14). It is unqualifiedly and unreservedly good (Romans 7:13, Romans 7:16, Romans 7:19, Romans 7:21). And how could the unreservedly good be relieved of its relevance or deprived of its sanctity? A good deal of the misconception pertaining to the relation of the law to the believer springs from a biblico-theological error of much broader proportions than a misinterpretation of Paul's statement in Romans 6:14. It is the misinterpretation of the Mosaic economy and covenant in relation to the new covenant. It has been thought that in the Mosaic covenant there is a sharp antithesis to the principle of promise embodied in the Abrahamic covenant and also to the principle of grace which comes to its efflorescence in the new covenant, and that this antithetical principle which governs the Mosaic covenant and dispensation is that of law in contradistinction from both promise and grace.¹

It is thought, therefore, that the Mosaic covenant is the outstanding example of works of law as opposed to the provisions of promise and grace. It is easy to see how such an interpretation of the Mosaic economy would radically affect our construction not only of the Mosaic economy itself but also of the Abrahamic covenant, on the one hand, and of the new covenant, on the other; the Mosaic would stand in sharp antithesis to both in respect of constitutive and governing principle. And the contrast between law and grace which we find in the New Testament would naturally be interpreted as a contrast between the Mosaic economy and the gospel dispensation of grace. In other words, the real contrast between 'under law' and 'under grace', as it appears in Romans 6:14 and Romans 7:1-4, would be exemplified in the realm of the historical unfolding of covenant revelation in the contrast between the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant. This interpretation has exercised a profound influence upon the history of interpretation and it has cast its shadow over the exegesis of particular passages. It is necessary for us to consider this question: What is

the governing principle of the Mosaic covenant? Is this principle one of law as contrasted with grace and therefore antithetical to that of the new covenant?

There is a plausible case that could be made out for this construction of the Mosaic covenant. The first express reference to the covenant made with Israel at Sinai is framed in terms of obedience to the commandments of God and of keeping the covenant. 'Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5, Exodus 19:6). And the engagement of the people is in similar terms: 'All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and be obedient' (Exodus 24:7). Surely, we might say, these are not the terms of a covenant of grace but the terms of a covenant of legal and contractual stipulations.² How, we might ask, does the condition of obedience comport with the provisions of an administration of grace? If grace is contingent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions by us, then surely it is no more grace. Hence, it may well be argued, this conditional feature of the Mosaic covenant requires that it be placed in a different category. In dealing with this question we must take several considerations into account.

1. The Mosaic covenant in respect of this condition of obedience is not in a different category from the Abrahamic. 'And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations' (Genesis 17:9). Of Abraham God said, 'For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him' (Genesis 18:19). There is nothing principally different in the necessity of keeping the covenant and of obeying God's voice, characteristic of the Mosaic covenant, from what is involved in the keeping of the covenant required in the Abrahamic.

2. The Mosaic covenant, no less than the Abrahamic, contemplates a relation of intimacy and fellowship with God epitomized in the promise 'I will be your God and ye shall be my people' (cf. Exodus 6:7; Exodus 18:1; Exodus 19:5, Exodus 19:6; Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 29:13). Religious relationship on the highest level is in view. If the covenant contemplates religious relationship of such a character, it is inconceivable that the demands of God's holiness should not come to expression as governing and regulating that fellowship and as conditioning the continued enjoyment of its blessings. This note is frequent in the Pentateuch (cf. Leviticus 11:44, Leviticus 11:45; Leviticus 19:2; Leviticus 20:7, Leviticus 20:26, Leviticus 20:21; Deuteronomy 6:4-15). It is summed up in two words: 'Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy' (Leviticus 19:2); 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy might' (Deuteronomy 6:5). And the import is that the holiness of God demands holiness on the part of those who enter into such a covenant relation with him. It is the same principle as that expressed in the New Testament, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord' (Hebrews 12:14), and is reiterated in Old Testament terms by Peter when he says, 'As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy' (1 Peter 1:15; cf. Leviticus 11:44; Leviticus 19:2; Leviticus 20:7). The holiness which is demanded by the covenant fellowship is expressed concretely in obedience to the divine commandments. This is really all that needs to be said to demonstrate not only the consonance of the demand for obedience with the covenant as one of religious relationship on the highest level of spirituality but also the necessity of such a demand. It is because the covenant is one of union and communion

with God that the condition of obedience is demanded.

3. Not only is holiness, as expressed concretely and practically in obedience, demanded by the covenant fellowship; we must also bear in mind that holiness was itself an integral element of the covenant blessing. Israel had been redeemed and called to be a holy people and holiness might be regarded as the essence of the covenant blessing. For holiness consisted in this, that Israel was a people separated unto the Lord. Their election is meaningless apart from that to which they were elected. And this holiness again is exemplified in obedience to the commandments of God (cf. Psalms 19:7 ff.).

4. Holiness, concretely and practically illustrated in obedience, is the means through which the fellowship entailed in the covenant relationship proceeds to its fruition and consummation. This is the burden, for example, of Leviticus 26:1-46. It is stated both positively and negatively, by way of promise and by way of threatening. 'If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them... I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people' (Leviticus 26:3, Leviticus 26:11, Leviticus 26:12).

We may therefore sum up the matter by saying that the holiness of God demanded conformity to his holiness, that holiness was of the essence of the covenant privilege, that holiness was the condition of continuance in the enjoyment of the covenant blessings and the medium through which the covenant privilege realized its fruition. Holiness is exemplified in obedience to the commandments of God. Obedience is therefore entirely congruous with, and disobedience entirely contradictory of, the nature of God's covenant with Israel as one of union and communion with God. In all of this the demand of obedience in the Mosaic covenant is principally identical with the same demand in the new covenant of the gospel economy. The new covenant also finds its centre in the promise, 'I will be your God and ye shall be my people'. The new covenant as an everlasting covenant reaches the zenith of its realization in this: 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people' (Revelation 21:3). But we must ask: Do believers continue in this relationship and in the enjoyment of its blessing irrespective of persevering obedience to God's commands? It is one of the most perilous distortions of the doctrine of grace, and one that has carried with it the saddest records of moral and spiritual disaster, to assume that past privileges, however high they may be, guarantee the security of men irrespective of perseverance in faith and holiness. Believers under the gospel continue in the covenant and in the enjoyment of its privileges because they continue in the fulfilment of the conditions; they continue in faith, love, hope, and obedience. True believers are kept unto the end, unto the eschatological salvation; but they are kept by the power of God through faith (cf. 1 Peter 1:5). 'We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of confidence stedfast unto the end' (Hebrews 3:14). It is through faith and patience we inherit the promises (cf. Hebrews 6:11, Hebrews 6:12). We shall be presented holy and unblameable and unproveable before God if we 'continue in the faith grounded and settled and not moved away from the hope of the gospel' (Colossians 1:22, Colossians 1:23). Paul the apostle could exult in the assurance that his citizenship was in heaven and that one day Christ would change the body of his humiliation and transform it into the likeness of the body of his glory (Php 3:20, Php 3:21). But co-ordinate with this assurance and as the condition of its enjoyment is the protestation, 'Brethren, I do not yet reckon myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are

behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (Php 3:13, Php 3:14). Paul knew well that if he were to attain to the resurrection of the dead all the resources of Christ's resurrection power must be operative in him and all the energies of his personality enlisted in the exercise of those means through which he would apprehend that for which he was apprehended by Christ Jesus (cf. Php 3:10-12). This is just to say that the goal is not reached, the consummation of covenant blessing is not achieved in some automatic fashion but through a process that engages to the utmost the concentrated devotion of the apostle himself. It is not reached irrespective of perseverance, but through perseverance. And this means nothing if it does not mean concentrated obedience to the will of Christ as expressed in his commandments. We readily see, however, that the attainment of the goal is not on the meritorious ground of perseverance and obedience, but through the divinely appointed means of perseverance. Obedience as the appropriate and necessary expression of devotion to Christ does not find its place in a covenant of works or of merit but in a covenant that has its inception and end in pure grace. The disposition to construe the demand for obedience in the Mosaic economy as having affinity with works rather than grace arises from failure to recognize that the demand for obedience in the Mosaic covenant is principally identical with the same demand under the gospel. When we re-examine the demand for obedience in the Mosaic covenant (cf. Exodus 19:5, Exodus 19:6; Exodus 24:7) in the light of the relations of law and grace in the gospel, we shall discover that the complex of ideas is totally alien to a construction in terms of works as opposed to grace. Obedience belongs here no more 'to the legal sphere of merit'³ than in the new covenant. The New Testament believer is not without law to God but under law to Christ. He delights in the law of God after the inward man and he therefore reiterates the exclamation of the Old Testament saint, 'O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day' (Psalms 119:97). And he also is not forgetful that he who was the incarnation and embodiment of virtue, he who is the supreme and perfect example, said, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart' (Psalms 40:8).

Notes

1. See Appendix E in reference to Lewis Sperry Chafer and cf. also The Scofield Reference Bible, pp. 1115, 1244f.; Charles A. Feinberg: Premillennialism or Amillennialism (Grand Rapids, 1936), pp. 126, 190. The question is not whether modern dispensationalists actually maintain that, during the dispensation of law, any were actually saved by works of obedience to law. Dispensationalists will acknowledge that in all ages men were saved by the blood of Christ through the grace of God. In Feinberg's words, 'All the blessing in the world in all ages is directly traceable to the death of Christ' (op. cit., p. 210). 'Paul's argument in the fourth chapter of the Romans seeks to make clear that God has always justified guilty sinners by faith' (p. 202; cf. pp. 217f. and Roy L. Aldrich in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January, 1955, pp. 49ff.). The question is whether the dispensationalist construction of the Mosaic dispensation is correct and whether the concession that people had been even then saved by grace through the blood of Christ is consistent with this construction. Obviously, if the construction is erroneous, the error involved is of such a character that it must radically affect not only the view entertained of the Mosaic dispensation but of the whole history of revelation, particularly of the revelation embodied in the three pivotal covenants, the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the New. For criticism of modern dispensationalism in general cf. Oswald T. Allis: *Prophecy and the Church* (Philadelphia, 1945). On the place of law in Scripture cf. Patrick

Fairbairn: *The Revelation of Law in Scripture* (New York, 1869).

2. Cf. my booklet, *The Covenant of Grace* (London, 1953), for a more detailed study of the concept of covenant and of the Mosaic covenant as one of grace.

3. Geerhardus Vos: *Biblical Theology. Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids, 1954), p. 143. The context is worthy of quotation. 'It is plain, then, that law-keeping did not figure at that juncture as the meritorious ground of life-inheritance. The latter is based on grace alone, no less emphatically than Paul himself places salvation on that ground. But, while this is so, it might still be objected that law-observance, if not the ground for receiving, is yet made the ground for retention or the privileges inherited. Here it can not, or course, be denied that a real connection exists. But the Judaizers went wrong in inferring that the connection must be meritorious, that, if Israel keeps the cherished gifts of Jehovah through observance of His law, this must be so, because in strict justice they had earned them. The connection is of a totally different kind. It belongs not to the legal sphere of merit, but to the symbolico-typical sphere of appropriateness of expression.' This article was originally a part of the Payton Lectures delivered by Professor Murray in March of 1955 at Fuller Theological Seminary. The entire lecture series was expanded and reprinted by Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1957 in book form with the title, *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics* by John Murray.

S. Pictures of Christ

Pictures of Christ

John Murray The question of the propriety of pictorial representations of the Saviour is one that merits examination. It must be granted that the worship of Christ is central in our holy faith, and the thought of the Saviour must in every instance be accompanied with that reverence which belongs to his worship. We cannot think of him without the apprehension of the majesty that is his. If we do not entertain the sense of his majesty, then we are guilty of impiety and we dishonor him.

It will also be granted that the only purpose that could properly be served by a pictorial representation is that it would convey to us some thought or lesson representing him, consonant with truth and promotive of worship. Hence the question is inescapable: is a pictorial representation a legitimate way of conveying truth regarding him and of contributing to the worship which this truth should evoke?

We are all aware of the influence exerted on the mind and heart by pictures. Pictures are powerful media of communication. How suggestive they are for good or for evil and all the more so when accompanied by the comment of the spoken or written word! It is futile, therefore, to deny the influence exerted upon mind and heart by a picture of Christ. And if such is legitimate, the influence exerted should be one constraining to worship and adoration. To claim any lower aim as that served by a picture of the Saviour would be contradiction of the place which he must occupy in thought, affection, and honour. The plea for the propriety of pictures of Christ is based on the fact that he was truly man, that he had a human body, that he was visible in his human nature to the physical senses, and that a picture assists us to take in the stupendous reality of his incarnation, in a word, that he was made in the likeness of men and was found in fashion as a man. Our Lord had a true body. He could have been photographed. A portrait could have been made of him and, if a good portrait, it would have reproduced his likeness.

Without doubt the disciples in the days of his flesh had a vivid mental image of Jesus' appearance and they could not but have retained that recollection to the end of their days. They could never have entertained the thought of him as he had sojourned with them without something of that mental image and they could not have entertained it without adoration and worship. The very features which they remembered would have been part and parcel of their conception of him and reminiscent of what he had been to them in his humiliation and in the glory of his resurrection appearance. Much more might be said regarding the significance for the disciples of Jesus' physical features.

Jesus is also glorified in the body and that body is visible. It will also become visible to us at his glorious appearing "he will be seen the second time without sin by those who look for him unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

What then are we to say of pictures of Christ? First of all, it must be said that we have no data whatsoever on the basis of which to make a pictorial representation; we have no descriptions of

his physical features which would enable even the most accomplished artist to make an approximate portrait. In view of the profound influence exerted by a picture, especially on the minds of young people, we should perceive the peril involved in a portrayal for which there is no warrant, a portrayal which is the creation of pure imagination. It may help to point up the folly to ask: what would be the reaction of a disciple, who had actually seen the Lord in the days of his flesh, to a portrait which would be the work of imagination on the part of one who had never seen the Saviour? We can readily detect what his recoil would be. No impression we have of Jesus should be created without the proper revelatory data, and every impression, every thought, should evoke worship. Hence, since we possess no revelatory data for a picture or portrait in the proper sense of the term, we are precluded from making one or using any that have been made.

Secondly, pictures of Christ are in principle a violation of the second commandment. A picture of Christ, if it serves any useful purpose, must evoke some thought or feeling respecting him and, in view of what he is, this thought or feeling will be worshipful. We cannot avoid making the picture a medium of worship. But since the materials for this medium of worship are not derived from the only revelation we possess respecting Jesus, namely, Scripture, the worship is constrained by a creation of the human mind that has no revelatory warrant. This is will worship. For the principle of the second commandment is that we are to worship God only in ways prescribed and authorized by him. It is a grievous sin to have worship constrained by a human figment, and that is what a picture of the Saviour involves.

Thirdly, the second commandment forbids bowing down to an image or likeness of anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. A picture of the Saviour purports to be a representation or likeness of him who is now in heaven or, at least, of him when he sojourned upon the earth. It is plainly forbidden, therefore, to bow down in worship before such a representation or likeness. This exposes the iniquity involved in the practice of exhibiting pictorial representations of the Saviour in places of worship. When we worship before a picture of our Lord, whether it be in the form of a mural, or on canvas, or in stained glass, we are doing what the second commandment expressly forbids. This is rendered all the more apparent when we bear in mind that the only reason why a picture of him should be exhibited in a place is the supposition that it contributes to the worship of him who is our Lord. The practice only demonstrates how insensitive we readily become to the commandments of God and to the inroads of idolatry. May the Churches of Christ be awake to the deceptive expedients by which the archenemy ever seeks to corrupt the worship of the Saviour. In summary, what is at stake in this question is the unique place which Jesus Christ as the God-man occupies in our faith and worship and the unique place which the Scripture occupies as the only revelation, the only medium of communication, respecting him whom we worship as Lord and Saviour. The incarnate Word and the written Word are correlative. We dare not use other media of impression or of sentiment but those of his institution and prescription. Every thought and impression of him should evoke worship. We worship him with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God. To use a likeness of Christ as an aid to worship is forbidden by the second commandment as much in his case as in that of the Father and Spirit.

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S. Society for Parent-Controlled Christian Schools in Scotland

Society for Parent-Controlled Christian Schools in Scotland

John Murray The following is the statement of purpose and principles from the society's constitution. The society established a Christian school at Dornoch about 1975. See John Murray, "Christian Education," in *Collected Writings*, 1:367-74, and Iain H. Murray's "Life of John Murray," in *John Murray, Collected Writings*, 3:149. "Faced once with the question, 'How do you account for the spiritual decline in Scotland?' he commenced his answer with the words, 'The surrender of the young by parents to the State. This had not been so in former years.' " The purpose of the Society is to establish and maintain Christian Schools, both primary and secondary, and to engage in such other educational activities as shall promote and support this project. In defining the purpose it is necessary to set forth the following principles.

1. Day-school education is the responsibility of the parents. This principle is particularly applicable to Christian parents and it is a violation of the responsibility for nurture devolving upon them to commit their children to the tutelage of an organization over which they do not exercise control. Though church-controlled schools may supply and often have supplied the nurture Christian parents should insure for their children, yet day-school education is not the province of the church.
2. The Christian school is one in which all of the instruction is conditioned by and integrated with the world and life view given in the Christian revelation deposited in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments. As no sphere of neutrality is allowed by the Christian faith, so no department of the day-school curriculum can be neutral in respect of its religious orientation.
3. The Bible as the inerrant Word of God is the supreme norm for all Christian faith and life and therefore for the educational enterprise.
4. Subordinate to the Bible as the Word of God the Society accepts the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms as setting forth the system of truth taught in Holy Scripture and that the educational undertaking must accord with the specifically Reformed position formulated in these documents.
5. The educational goal is to prepare youth for the fulfillment of the calling of God. This goal unifies the educational process and, when consistently applied, insures that the pupils are confronted with the claims of God upon them in every area of life. Since sin has made us incapable of fulfilling the demands of the calling of God, it is the privilege of the Christian School to inculcate the provisions of redemptive, regenerating and sanctifying grace in Christ Jesus and it thus seeks to train young people in that dedication by which every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The Society aims to maintain the highest standards of academic competence in the promotion of this goal.
6. As the obligation for day-school education rests upon parents, so the control of the Christian school resides in the hands of Christian parents. Other members of the Christian community,

however, may and should unite with them in the promotion and support of the enterprise. Parents and others above the age of eighteen who are in agreement with the purpose and principles stated above are eligible for membership in the Society.

S. The Adamic Administration

The Adamic Administration by John Murray

MAN was created in the image of God, a self-conscious, free, responsible, religious agent. Such identity implies an inherent, native, inalienable obligation to love and serve God with all the heart, soul, strength, and mind. This God could not but demand and man could not but owe. No created rational being can ever be relieved of this obligation. All that man is and does has reference to the will of God. But man was also created good, good in respect of that which he specifically is. He was made upright and holy and therefore constituted for the demand, endowed with the character enabling him to fulfil all the demands devolving upon him by reason of God's propriety in him and sovereignty over him. As long as man fulfilled these demands his integrity would have been maintained. He would have continued righteous and holy. In this righteousness he would be justified, that is, approved and accepted by God, and he would have life. Righteousness, justification, life is an invariable combination in the government and judgment of God. There would be a relation that we may call perfect legal reciprocity. As this would be the minimum, so it would be the maximum in terms of the relation constituted by creation in the image of God. This relation falls short in two respects of what may readily be conceived of as higher. (1) It is a contingent situation, one of righteousness but mutably so, and likewise of justification and life. There is always the possibility of lapse on man's part and, with the lapse, loss of integrity, justification, life, the exchange of these for unrighteousness, condemnation, death. (2) There is the absence of full-orbed communion with God in the assurance of permanent possession and increasing knowledge. In addition to the account given of man's creation and of the creation ordinances, we find a special series of provisions dispensed to our first parents. In other words, there are data which cannot be construed in terms simply of creation in the divine image and the demands of awards belonging to that relationship. THE DATA

God gave to Adam a specific command or, more accurately, a specific prohibition. The term prohibition is significant. It is negative and, as such, differs from all the other ordinances. It is in character and intent not in the same category and stands off in this distinctness (Genesis 2:17). It applied to Adam and Eve alone and had relevance to the particular conditions of Eden. We are constrained to ask: Why or for what purpose? To disobedience was attached the threat of death (Genesis 2:17). Failure to comply with the other ordinances would have been disobedience and disobedience would carry the consequences of penal judgment. But only in connection with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was this eventuality enunciated. Again we ask: Why?

There was also in Eden the tree of life (Genesis 3:22, Genesis 3:24). As the other tree represented the knowledge of good and evil, this tree must have been symbolic of life, and we may infer that in some way it would have been the seal of everlasting life (Genesis 3:22 — "take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"; also Genesis 3:24 in that Adam having forfeited life was prevented from access to it — "to keep the way of the tree of life"). There must have been in the institution some provision for eternal life. And it is natural, if not necessary, to infer that it is the opposite of

what actually transpired that would have secured this life, that to obedience was appended the promise of life, after the analogy of Genesis 2:17 in respect of disobedience. Although from Genesis 3:22 we infer that Adam had not partaken of the tree of life, and although it was not forbidden as was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (cf. Genesis 2:16), yet, apparently, by the arrangements of providence or of revelation, it was recognized as reserved for the issue of probationary obedience. This would explain Genesis 3:22, Genesis 3:24 (cf. Revelation 2:7; Revelation 22:2, Revelation 22:14, especially the expression, "right to the tree of life").

We know that Adam acted in a public capacity. Not only his destiny but that of the whole race was bound up with his conduct for good or for evil (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22, 1 Corinthians 15:45, 1 Corinthians 15:46). The race has been confirmed in sin, condemnation, and death by Adam's trespass. Surely this principle of confirmation would have been applied with similar consistency in the direction of life in the event of obedience on Adam's part.

Analogy is drawn between Adam and Christ. They stand in unique relations to mankind. There is none before Adam — he is the first man. There is none between — Christ is the second man. There is none after Christ — he is the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:44-49). Here we have an embracive construction of human relationships. We know also that in Christ there is representative relationship and that obedience successfully completed has its issue in righteousness, justification, life for all he represents (1 Corinthians 15:22). So a period of obedience successfully completed by Adam would have secured eternal life for all represented by him. The Adamic administration is, therefore, construed as an administration in which God, by a special act of providence, established for man the provision whereby he might pass from the status of contingency to one of confirmed and indefectible holiness and blessedness, that is, from *posse peccare* and *posse non peccare* to *non posse peccare*. The way instituted was that of "an intensified and concentrated probation", the alternative issues being dependent upon the issues of obedience or disobedience (cf. G. Vos: *Biblical Theology*, 22f). This administration has often been denoted "The Covenant of Works". There are two observations. (1) The term is not felicitous, for the reason that the elements of grace entering into the administration are not properly provided for by the term "works". (2) It is not designated a covenant in Scripture. Hosea 6:7 may be interpreted otherwise and does not provide the basis for such a construction of the Adamic economy. Besides, Scripture always uses the term covenant, when applied to God's administration to men, in reference to a provision that is redemptive or closely related to redemptive design. Covenant in Scripture denotes the oath-bound confirmation of promise and involves a security which the Adamic economy did not bestow.

Whether or not the administration is designated covenant, the uniqueness and singularity must be recognized. It should never be confused with what Scripture calls the old covenant or first covenant (cf. Jeremiah 31:31-34; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Hebrews 8:7, Hebrews 8:13). The first or old covenant is the Sinaitic. And not only must this confusion in denotation be avoided, but also any attempt to interpret the Mosaic covenant in terms of the Adamic institution. The latter could apply only to the state of innocence, and to Adam alone as representative head. The view that in the Mosaic covenant there was a repetition of the so-called covenant of works, current among covenant theologians, is a grave misconception and involves an erroneous construction of the Mosaic covenant, as well as fails to assess the uniqueness of the Adamic administration. The Mosaic covenant was distinctly redemptive in character and was continuous with and extensive of the Abrahamic covenants. The Adamic had no redemptive provision, nor did its promissory

element have any relevance within a context that made redemption necessary. THE NATURE OF THE ADMINISTRATION The administration was sovereignly dispensed by God. It was not a contract or compact. Sovereign disposition is its patent characteristic. That Adam was constituted head of the human race and acted accordingly, we necessarily infer from the following considerations:

1. All that befell Adam as a consequence of his disobedience has as much reference to posterity as to Adam. Death is the lot of mankind, not through a repetition of the temptation and fall of Eden, but by solidarity with Adam. The earth is cursed for all, even though they do not individually pass through the crisis of Adam's fall and the direct pronouncement of God's judgment. The same is true of the judgment upon Eve.
2. The solidarity is clearly implied in Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22.
3. The plan of redemption is erected on the principle of representative identification, and the parallel by which righteousness, justification, and life come to lost men is that exemplified in sin, condemnation, death through Adam.
4. The principle of representation underlies all the basic institutions of God in the world — the family, the church, and the state. In other words, solidarity and corporate relationship is a feature of God's government. We should expect the prototype to reside in racial solidarity. At least, racial solidarity is congruous with what we find on a less inclusive scale in the other institutions of God's appointment.

We need not suppose that Adam knew of this headship nor of the consequences issuing for posterity. All we know is that God constituted Adam the head. We do not know how much Adam knew of this relationship. THE CONDITION The condition was obedience. Obedience was focused in compliance with the prohibition respecting the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The effect, however, was not to confine the demand for obedience to this prohibition. It was not the only command given to Adam, but it served to exemplify in an acute and condensed way the obedience owing to God, obedience unreserved and unswerving in all the extent of divine obligation. The ambit of obligation was not contracted, but the intensity required was thereby illustrated. In order to appreciate the significance of the tree as the test of obedience we must observe the twofold circumstance under which the obedience was to be rendered, probation and temptation.

1. Probation. It was symbolized by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The question we may ask is: What is denoted by the knowledge of good and evil? There are four possibilities.

(i) The good and evil would refer respectively to the issue of a successful or unsuccessful probation, the knowledge of good in the former event and of evil in the latter. But there are two objections.

(a) The phrase scarcely allows for this view. It is the knowledge of good and evil, not good or evil. Good and evil are correlatives and not alternatives.

(b) In the sequel of an unsuccessful probation it is said that "man is become as one of us to know good and evil" (Genesis 3:22), not simply evil, as the interpretation in question would require.

(ii) The tree derived its name from the foreordained result. This view has the advantage of relating the designation to an event; it eliminates the question: How the knowledge of evil on the alternative of a successful probation?

It is difficult to rule out the relevance to the alternative of a successful probation since there are elements in the situation that do have reference to this alternative. Besides, since evil was present in the universe, it would seem necessary for Adam's enlarged knowledge to include this phase of God's all-embracing providence. Eve, at least, encountered this evil in the state of integrity. So, to some extent, it came within her acquaintance, and the knowledge derived from this encounter would have been hers even if she had resisted the temptation.

(iii) The tree had reference exclusively to the knowledge to be attained through successful probation. This would require us to regard Genesis 3:22 as a irony, not as a statement of fact, an interpretation scarcely tenable, since Genesis 3:22 is given as the reason for Genesis 3:22-23. Irony would not provide the ground for the liability and the expulsion of these two verses.

(iv) We seem, therefore, to be shut up to the fourth view that the knowledge of good and evil describes the issue of either alternative of the probation. In the event of a successful probation the experience of the crisis of temptation, and the experience of assured and indefectible goodness, would have imparted a renewed and greatly increased knowledge of the contrast between good and evil, and a renewed appreciation of the good as the opposite of evil. Furthermore, as suggested above, Adam, if elevated to a higher state of knowledge, would be given enlarged knowledge, not only of God but also of created reality and of God's providential order. The latter would include the system of evil of which Satan was the prince. Empirically, knowledge is knowledge of good and evil as correlated and contrasted realities. In the event of unsuccessful probation, the event that actually occurred, the experience of all the evils that befell our first parents gave them a vivid sense of the bitterness of sin and its consequences in contrast with the good of their former condition. They knew the good of integrity; they came to know the evil of apostasy.

We must not suppose that the knowledge would have the same content in either case. How diverse the states of consciousness! By the fall there invaded man's consciousness elements that would never have crossed the threshold, the sense of guilt, of fear, of shame. There entered a new dispositional complex of desires, impulses, affections, motives, and purposes. We may never conceive of knowledge as a state of mind apart from the total condition of heart and will.

Yet in both cases the description applies, the knowledge of good and evil. This advises us that, in the usage of Scripture, two diverse states of mind, totally diverse in complexion, may be denoted by the same term. It also reminds us that of man as fallen is predicated the knowledge of good and evil, though we cannot ascribe to the knowledge predicated the qualities that belong to man's knowledge when renewed and illumined by the Holy Spirit in the operations of saving grace.

Probation in the nature of the case must be limited in duration. A destiny contingent upon an event can never become settled until the event has occurred. We see this exemplified in Adam, the elect angels, and Christ himself. How significant is Christ's word from the cross, "It is finished" (cf. also John 17:4)!

2. Temptation. This was symbolized by the serpent (cf. John 8:44; Matthew 13:38, Matthew 13:39; Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9). The sense in which temptation is used in this instance is that of solicitation to sin and the placing of an inducement to sin in the way of another. It is temptation in this sense that is denied of God (James 1:13). He did not solicit sin in Adam and Eve; he did the opposite. He warned them against it and placed the inducement in the opposite direction. God did try our first parents. He was the agent of the probation. The serpent was the agent in the temptation. It is of God to try and prove with a view to moral and religious strength, confirmation, and increased blessing (cf. Genesis 22:1, Genesis 22:12, Genesis 22:16-18). It is satanic to seduce and it is designed for weakening and degradation. In the temptation our first parents were accosted by the serpent as the instrument of Satan and were subjected to doubting, unbelieving, and apostatizing suggestions and allegations. These suggestions did not originate in the mind of Eve. They were injected. It was not sin for Eve to have been confronted with these suggestions and solicitations, and it was in the circumstance of this temptation that our first parents were called upon to fulfil the condition of the administration. The temptation was of divine appointment, though Satan, not God, was the agent.

It was in the double circumstance of probation and temptation that our first parents were called upon to obey. The probation was epitomized in the prohibition, the temptation was directed to the contravention of the prohibition. Thus the stringency of the condition was pointed up in the tension between the demand for obedience to the divine prohibition and the pressures of temptation in the tempter's allegations. Our first parents had the ability to resist the temptation and to obey the prohibition. But they did not will to obey (Calvin: Inst., I, xv, 8.) and so they fell.

PROMISE That there was a promise, though not expressly enunciated, we infer from the following data:

1. The tree of life represented everlasting life (Genesis 3:22). But it could not have this application unless there had been some provision connected with Eden which contemplated such life. Adam's expulsion signified forfeiture of that which the tree of life symbolized and was complementary to the fulfilment of the threat of Genesis 2:17 and the pronouncement of Genesis 3:19. It must have represented the opposite of death, as its designation also clearly indicates. Furthermore, the references to the tree of life (Revelation 22:2, Revelation 22:14) hark back to Genesis 3:22, Genesis 3:24 and they are fraught with this meaning.

2. The analogy of Romans 5:12-19 would require that confirmation in righteousness would carry the same of life.

3. In view of the foregoing, and the usage of Scripture in general that a negative in command implies the positive, we should infer the promise of life from the threat of death (Genesis 2:17).

It may be that Genesis 3:22 implies a disposition on Adam's part to grasp at the life he knew he had forfeited, and thus sacrilegiously to partake of the tree. If so, then Adam must have known of its significance and therefore of the promise involved. But we cannot be sure of this. Genesis 3:22 may imply no more than the liability on Adam's part to partake of the tree which now, by reason of his sin, could not have for him any benefit, but rather the opposite, and would entail further judgment. It would have been sacrilege for him to partake, and mercy as well as judgment is evident in expulsion from access to it.

Difficulty resides in the words "eat and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22). How could this be when Adam had forfeited the life signified, and of which the tree would have been the sign and seal? It is possible that the words do not refer to what would have been the actual sequel, but to Adam's intent in eating, namely, that he should live for ever and thus attempt to defeat the judgment of God. In that event we would have to suppose knowledge on Adam's part of the purpose of the tree. However, this construction is harsh. "Live for ever", in the syntax, points rather to a result. On this assumption what is the import? A dogmatic answer is not warranted. But a possible solution can be proposed.

We found that the knowledge of good and evil described the result on either alternative of the probation. This is striking because in Scripture knowledge is equated with life. Yet the double reference is required. A radical difference is necessary between the two states in the respective cases, as observed already. In one case it is knowledge in a state of death, in the other it is knowledge in a state of indefectible blessedness and life. By analogy, may we not regard the tree of life as having likewise a twofold reference, the sign and seal of life on the highest level of realization on the one hand, and also of that life in death and misery to which Adam by sin degraded himself on the other? In this condition and state the tree would still have its sealing significance, but in the opposite direction, confirmation in the life of sin and death. In Adam's expulsion we should find, therefore, a signal manifestation of preventive grace, not only the grace of preventing an aggravation of Adam's sin, as noted already, but of preventing confirmation in sin, misery, and death, of preventing a sin that would have sealed his doom. God shielded Adam from the sin that would have put him outside the sphere of redemption. In connection with the promise of life it does not appear justifiable to appeal, as frequently has been done, to the principle enunciated in certain texts (cf. Leviticus 18:5; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12), "This do and thou shalt live". The principle asserted in these texts is the principle of equity, that righteousness is always followed by the corresponding award. From the promise of the Adamic administration we must dissociate all notions of meritorious reward. The promise of confirmed integrity and blessedness was one annexed to an obedience that Adam owed and, therefore, was a promise of grace. All that Adam could have claimed on the basis of equity was justification and life as long as he perfectly obeyed, but not confirmation so as to insure indefectibility. Adam could claim the fulfilment of the promise if he stood the probation, but only on the basis of God's faithfulness, not on the basis of justice. (cf. Shedd: Dogmatics, II, p. 153; Witsius: Economy of the Covenants, I, pp. 61, 91.) God is debtor to his own faithfulness. But justice requires no more than the approbation and life correspondent with the righteousness of perfect conformity with the will of God.

THREATENING The threat was death (Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:17-19). Death has a threefold aspect, spiritual (moral and religious), judicial, and psycho-physical. In Genesis 2:17, as interpreted by the pronouncement of Genesis 3:17-19, the emphasis falls upon psycho-physical death (cf. Romans 5:12-19). It may well be that this is the only aspect expressly intended. But in the broader context of Scripture we shall have to take account of the other aspects. For example, when Paul describes the condition of the unregenerate as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), we cannot exclude this death from the death threatened in the original reference to death. Again, judicial death, as will be noted, consists in separation from God and the infliction of the curse. But sin is said expressly to be the cause of both separation and curse (Isaiah 59:2; Galatians 3:10). This separation is symbolized in expulsion from Eden, for it meant expulsion from

that which betokened the favour of God.

Spiritually our first parents became dead in the day they sinned. Their sin constituted this death; they estranged themselves from God and their mind became enmity against God. Judicially they also died the day they sinned; they became subject to the curse. Psycho-physical death can be said to have befallen them the day they sinned, in that mortality became their lot. They became mortal even though the actual dissolution did not take place. This death consists in the separation of the integral elements of their being, and exemplifies the principle of death, namely, separation. Since it is this aspect of death that is in the foreground in Genesis 2:17 and Genesis 3:17-19, and properly so, because of the prominence given to what is phenomenal in the administration as a whole, we are advised of the significance of this aspect in the judgment upon sin. It is not a mere incident. It consists in the disintegration of man's person, and demonstrates as such the gravity and total abnormality of sin and of its consequence. The body returns to dust and sees corruption, and the spirit, though it continues to be active, is no longer existent or active in its normal and natural relationship. Death is not merely a physical event; it is separation of body and spirit; and disembodied existence for man is punitive and expresses God's condemnation.

Spiritual death describes man's moral and religious condition; judicial death describes his status in reference to God; psycho-physical death describes the disruption of his very being. **THE RELEVANCE OF THE ADAMIC ADMINISTRATION** We may subsume the necessary observations under two captions, negative and positive:

Negative

1. The special prohibition of Eden does not apply to us now. It was restricted to the conditions and circumstances of Eden and has no relevance outside the same. The whole-souled obedience it was intended to exemplify is our obligation, but not this way of discharging it.
2. As individuals we do not undergo probation in terms of the Adamic administration. It is totally wrong to say we are all Adam, and sin as he did. His sin was unique, in that it was from integrity he fell. We do not individually fall from integrity. Hence to construe the probations that we undergo as individuals, or even in our corporate responsibilities, in terms of the Adamic probation, fails to take account of the unique character of Adam's situation and relationships.
3. We cannot attain to life in terms of the Adamic institution. This possibility was once for all forfeited for Adam and posterity by the fall of our first parents. And the Adamic institution had no redemptive provisions.

Positive

1. We all stood the probation in Adam as our representative head, and failed in Adam. His sin was our sin, his fall our fall, by reason of solidarity with him. Likewise the fulfilment of the threat draws posterity within its scope. All who die, die in Adam, and in Adam all died (cf. Romans 5:12; 1 Corinthians 15:22). The threat exercises its sanction with unrelenting severity, unless totally different provisions of redemptive grace intervene.
2. Christ's vicarious sin-bearing on behalf of the new humanity included the Adamic sin as well as all other sins. This aspect should not be overlooked.

3. The obedience Christ rendered fulfilled the obedience in which Adam failed. It would not be correct to say, however, that Christ's obedience was the same in content or demand. Christ was called on to obey in radically different conditions, and required to fulfil radically different demands. Christ was sin-bearer and the climactic demand was to die. This was not true of Adam. Christ came to redeem, not so Adam. So Christ rendered the whole-souled totality obedience in which Adam failed, but under totally different conditions and with incomparably greater demands.

We are liable to regard the Adamic administration as abstract, unrelated to our situation and practical interest, and so far removed from us that it has little or no relevance. If we are inclined to think so, it is because we do not have a biblically conditioned way of thinking. The Adamic institution is intensely relevant if our thought is regulated by the biblical revelation.

We are sinners and we come into the world as such. This situation demands explanation. It cannot stand as an empirical fact. It requires the question: Why or how? It is the Adamic administration with all its implications for racial solidarity that alone provides the answer. This is the biblical answer to the universality of sin and death.

We need salvation. How does salvation come to bear upon our need? Racial solidarity in Adam is the pattern according to which salvation is wrought and applied. By Adam sin-condemnation-death, by Christ righteousness-justification-life. A way of thinking that makes us aloof to solidarity with Adam makes us inhabile to the solidarity by which salvation comes. Thus the relevance of the Adamic administration to what is most basic, on the one hand, and most necessary, on the other, in our human situation.

S. The Atonement

THE ATONEMENT

John Murray

Atonement is the term that has come to be widely used to denote the substitutionary work of Christ which culminated in the sacrifice of Calvary. The term occurs frequently in the A.V. of the Old Testament as the rendering of the Hebrew root kaphar but only once in the New Testament (Romans 5:11) where it refers to the reconciliation. The term itself is not adequate to express what is involved in Christ's vicarious work. In fact, no one term can express the manifold aspects from which, according to Scripture, this work of Christ must be viewed. Atonement, however, when understood in the way that usage has determined, is sufficiently inclusive to serve as a general designation.

I. The Source. Any doctrine of the atonement is misdirected from the outset if it does not take account of the fact that the atonement is the provision of God's love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" (John 3:16). "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10; cf. Romans 5:8; Romans 8:32; Ephesians 2:4, Ephesians 2:5; 1 John 4:9). The title "God" in these texts refers specifically to God the Father. So it is to the initiative of the Father's love that our attention is drawn when we think of the fountain from which the atonement emanates. And all that has been achieved by Christ's vicarious undertaking must always be subordinated to the design and purpose of the Father's love. This is the orientation which the classic exponents of Reformed doctrine have always recognized, and it is a caricature of their position to suppose that they represented the love and compassion of the Father as constrained by the sacrifice of Christ. In this fact that the love of God is the spring from which the atonement flows we encounter an ultimate of revelation and of human thought. It is the marvel that evokes wonder, adoration, and praise. It is a love that arises from the unsearchable riches of God's goodness. But though an ultimate of revelation, the Scripture not only permits but requires further characterization of this love. The love of God is differentiating in respect of its objects. It is the love of God the Father that Paul has in view when he speaks of Him who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Romans 8:32). But it is within the orbit defined by Romans 8:29 that this love must be understood, and the latter text speaks of distinguishing love that predestinates to a determinate end — conformity to the image of his Son. Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 1:5 is to the same effect. God chose a people in Christ and in love predestinated them unto adoption through Jesus Christ. It would annul the witness of Scripture if we ignored the differentiation which the love of God institutes and failed to construe the atonement as the provision of this distinguishing love and as that which secures the design of God's electing grace.

II. The Necessity. The love of God is the cause of the atonement. But why did the love of God take this way of realizing its end? This is the question of the reason as distinguished from the cause. Notable theologians in the history of the church have taken the position that there was no absolute

reason, that God could have saved men by other means than by the blood-shedding of His own Son, that, since God is omnipotent and sovereign, other ways of forgiving sin were available to Him. But God was pleased to adopt this method because the greatest number of advantages and blessings accrued from it. God could have redeemed men without the shedding of blood, but He freely chose not to and thereby He magnifies the glory of His grace and enhances the precise character of the salvation bestowed (e.g., Augustine, Aquinas, Thomas Goodwin, John Ball, Thomas Blake).

It might appear that this view does honor to the omnipotence, sovereignty, and grace of God and, also, that to posit more would be presumptuous on our part and beyond the warrant of Scripture. Is it not the limit of our thought to say that "without the shedding of blood" (Hebrews 9:22) there is actually no remission and be satisfied with that datum? There are, however, certain things God cannot do. "He cannot deny himself" (2 Timothy 2:13) and it is "impossible for God to lie" (Hebrews 6:18). The only question is: are there exigencies arising from the character and perfections of God which make it intrinsically necessary that redemption should be accomplished by the sacrifice of the Son of God? It should be understood that it was not necessary for God to redeem men. The purpose to redeem is of the free and sovereign exercise of His love. But having purposed to redeem, was the only alternative the blood-shedding of His own Son as the way of securing that redemption? There appear to be good reasons for an affirmative answer.

A. Salvation requires not only the forgiveness of sin but also justification. And justification, adequate to the situation in which lost mankind is, demands a righteousness such as belongs to no other than the incarnate Son of God, a righteousness undefiled and undefilable, a righteousness with divine property and quality (cf. Romans 1:17; Romans 3:21-22; Romans 10:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Php 3:9). It is the righteousness of the obedience of Christ (Romans 5:19). But only the Son of God, incarnate, fulfilling to the full extent the commitments of the Father's will, could have provided such a righteousness. A concept of salvation bereft of the justification which this righteousness imparts is an abstraction of which Scripture knows nothing.

B. Sin is the contradiction of God and he must react against it with holy wrath. Wherever sin is, the wrath of God rests upon it (cf. Romans 1:18). Otherwise God would be denying Himself, particularly His holiness, justice, and truth. But wrath must be removed if we are to enjoy the favor of God which salvation implies. And the only provision for the removal of wrath is propitiation. This is surely the import of Romans 3:25, Romans 3:26, that God set forth Christ a propitiation to declare His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the ungodly.

C. The cross of Christ is the supreme demonstration of the love of God (cf. Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 1 John 4:10). But would it be a supreme demonstration of love if the end secured by it could have been achieved without it? Would it be love to secure the end by such expenditure as the agony of Gethsemane and the abandonment of Calvary for God's own well-beloved and only-begotten Son if the result could have been attained by less costly means? In that event would it not have been love without wisdom? In this we cannot suppress the significance of our Lord's prayer in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39). If it had been possible for the cup to pass from him, his prayer would surely have been answered. It is when the indispensable exigencies fulfilled by Jesus' suffering unto death are properly assessed that we can see the marvel of God's love in the ordeal of Calvary. So great was the Father's love to lost men that He decreed their redemption

even though the cost was nought less than the accursed tree. When Calvary is viewed in this light, then the love manifested not only takes on meaning but fills us with adoring amazement. Truly this is love.

Those who think that in pursuance of God's saving purpose the cross was not intrinsically necessary are, in reality, not dealing with the hypothetical necessity of the atonement but with a hypothetical salvation. For, on their own admission, they are not saying that the actual salvation designed and bestowed could have been enjoyed without Christ but only salvation of lesser character and glory. But of such salvation the Scripture knows nothing and no good purpose can be served by an imaginary hypothesis.

III. Nature. The nature of the atonement is concerned with the ways in which the Scripture characterizes Christ's vicarious undertakings and accomplishments. The most basic and inclusive of these categories is obedience. And there are four categories that are more specific — sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption.

A. Obedience. Obedience does not define for us the specific character of the other categories but it does point us to the capacity in which Christ discharges all phases of his atoning work. No passage in Scripture provides more instruction on our topic than Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12. It is in the capacity of Servant that the person in view is introduced and it is in the same capacity he executes His expiatory function (Isaiah 52:13, Isaiah 52:15; Isaiah 53:11). The title "Servant" derives its meaning from the fact that He is the Lord's Servant, not the Servant of men (cf. Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 42:19; Isaiah 52:13). He is the Father's Servant and this implies subjection to and fulfillment of the Father's will. Servant defines His commitment, and obedience the execution. Psalms 40:7, Psalms 40:8 points in the same direction. Our Lord Himself confirms what the Old Testament foretold. "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38; cf. John 4:34; John 10:17-18). The pivotal events of redemptive accomplishment He performed in pursuance of the Father's commandment and in the exercise of messianic authority. Paul's witness is to the same effect as that of the Old Testament and of Jesus Himself. Most important is Php 2:7, Php 2:8. For this text in respect of the capacity in which Jesus acted attaches itself to Isaiah 52:13-15, Isaiah 53:1-12 and represents the climactic event of Jesus' commitment, the death of the cross, as an act of obedience. And Romans 5:19 expresses that it is by the obedience of Christ that many are constituted righteous. This evidence shows that our thought respecting the nature of the atonement is not biblically conditioned unless it is governed by the concept of the obedience of Christ in His capacity as the Servant fulfilling the Father's commission.

We must not view this obedience mechanically or quantitatively. It did not consist simply in the sum-total of formal acts of obedience. Obedience springs from the dispositional complex of motive, intention, direction, and purpose. And since our Lord was truly human and fulfilled the Father's will in human nature, we must appreciate the progression in knowledge, understanding, resolution, and will which was necessary to and came to expression in the discharge of the Father's will in its increasing demands upon Him until these demands reached their climax in the death upon the cross. This explains the word in Hebrews 5:8 that "he learned obedience from the things which he suffered." At no point was He disobedient. But the demands of obedience were so expansive and progressively exacting that he had to learn in the furnace of trial, temptation, and

suffering. Since His obedience thus attained to the perfection and completeness required for the discharge of His commitments to the fullest extent of their demands, He was made perfect as the captain of salvation (Hebrews 2:10) and "being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). This is but saying that it was by obedience that he accomplished the salvation of the many sons who are to be brought to glory, and we see how integral to salvation secured is the obedience of Christ.

B. Sacrifice. There is abundant evidence in the New Testament to show that Christ's giving of Himself is to be construed in terms of sacrificial offering (1 Corinthians 5:7; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 8:3; Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 9:23, Hebrews 9:25, Hebrews 9:26, Hebrews 9:28; Hebrews 10:10, Hebrews 10:12, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 10:26). And it is not only these express statements which support the thesis but also references which can only be interpreted in terms of the altar of sacrifice (cf., e.g., Hebrews 13:1-13). The notion of sacrifice entertained by these New Testament writers is that derived from the Old Testament, for the allusions to the sacrificial ritual of the levitical economy make it apparent that the latter provided the type in terms of which the sacrifice of Christ was to be interpreted. The Old Testament sacrifices were expiatory of guilt. This is particularly true of the sin-offerings, and these are specifically in view in some of the New Testament passages (cf. Hebrews 9:6-15, Hebrews 9:23, Hebrews 9:24; Hebrews 13:1-13). The idea of expiation is the removal of the liability accruing from sin. Sacrifice is the provision whereby this liability is removed — it is the substitutive endurance of penalty and transference of liability from the offerer to the sacrifice. The Old Testament sacrifices were truly typological of the sacrifice of Christ. Isaiah 53:10 expressly applies to the self-sacrifice of the Servant what was figuratively represented by the trespass-offering, and in New Testament passages, as indicated above, the levitical offerings provide the analogy after which Christ's sacrifice is to be understood. But of more significance is the fact that the sacrifice of Christ is the archetype after which they were patterned — they were patterns of the things in the heavens and only figures of the true (Hebrews 9:23, Hebrews 9:24). Christ's offering is the heavenly exemplar. This is additional confirmation that what was signified in shadow by the ritual offerings, namely expiation, was transcendentally and really true in the sacrifice of Christ. The shadow portrays the outline of the reality. It is, however, this truth, that the sacrifice of Christ is the heavenly reality, that insures the efficacy and finality and perfection of His sacrifice in contrast with the obvious shortcomings of the levitical offerings (cf. Hebrews 9:9-14, Hebrews 9:24-28). "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

It is the work of Christ, viewed in terms of sacrifice, that thrusts into the foreground the high priestly office of our Redeemer. It is the prerogative of the priest to offer sacrifice and only in the exercise of His prerogative as the great high priest of our profession did Jesus offer Himself. He was "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 5:10). Here the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice is further demonstrated. He offered Himself, and the sacrifice He offered was Himself. He acted as both priest and offering (cf. Hebrews 7:27; Hebrews 8:3; Hebrews 9:14, Hebrews 9:25; Hebrews 10:5-9) and thus purged our sins. The transcendent perfection, efficacy, and finality of His sacrifice reside in the transcendent character of the offering and the dignity of His priesthood.

C. Propitiation. The language of propitiation is clearly applied to the work of Christ in the New Testament (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10). Plausible attempts have been

made to interpret propitiation in terms of expiation and thus avoid the prima facie import of propitiation. The fallacy of these attempts has been successfully demonstrated by scholarly and painstaking study of the biblical data (see bibliography). The reason for the attempt to relieve the work of Christ of its strictly propitiatory character is obvious. To propitiate means to pacify, to conciliate, to make propitious. It presupposes that the person propitiated is angry and needs to be pacified. If Christ propitiates, it must be God whom he propitiates. And surely, it is alleged, we cannot think of God as needing to be pacified or made propitious by the blood of Christ. If the atonement springs from the love of the Father and is the provision of His love, as has been shown above, is it not contradiction to maintain that He is conciliated by that which is the expression of His love? If invincible love is antecedent, then no place remains for the pacifying of wrath!

There is deplorable confusion in this line of reasoning. To love and to be propitious are not convertible terms. Even in the human sphere the unique object of love may at the same time be the unique object of holy wrath and displeasure. It is the denial of God's holiness in relation to Sin, as the contradiction of what He is and demands, not to recognize that sin must evoke His wrath. And just as sin belongs to persons, so the wrath rests upon the persons who are the agents of sin. Those whom God loved with invincible love were the children of wrath, as Paul expressly says (Ephesians 2:3). It is to this fact that the propitiation made by Christ is directed. Those whom God loved were the children of His wrath. It is this truth that enhances the marvel of His love, and if we deny it or tone it down we have eviscerated the greatness of His love. The doctrine of the propitiation is precisely this that God loved the objects of His wrath so much that He gave His own Son to the end that He by His blood should make provision for the removal of this wrath. It was Christ's to deal with the wrath so that those loved would no longer be the objects of wrath, and love would achieve its aim of making the children of wrath the children of God's good pleasure. It is a cabined perspective that can dispense with the necessity and glory of propitiation. The disposition to deny or even underrate the doctrine of propitiation betrays a bias that is prejudicial to the atonement as such. The atonement means that Christ bore our sins and in bearing sin bore its judgment (cf. Isaiah 53:5). Death itself is the judgment of God upon sin (cf. Romans 5:12; Romans 6:23). And Christ died for no other reason than that death is the wages of sin. But the epitome of the judgment of God upon sin is His wrath. If Jesus in our place met the whole judgment of God upon our sin, He must have endured that which constitutes the essence of this judgment. How superficial is the notion that the vicarious endurance of wrath is incompatible with the immutable love of the Father to Him! Of course, the Father loved the Son with unchangeable and infinite love. And the discharge of the Father's will in the extremities of Gethsemane's agony and the abandonment of Calvary elicited the supreme delight of the Father (cf. John 10:17). But love and wrath are not contradictory; love and hatred are. It is only because Jesus was the Son, loved immutably as such and loved increasingly in His messianic capacity as He progressively fulfilled the demands of the Father's commission, that He could bear the full stroke of judicial wrath. This is inscribed on the most mysterious utterance that ever ascended from earth to heaven, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalms 22:1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). God in our nature forsaken of God! Here is the wonder of the Father's love and of the Son's love, too. Eternity will not scale its heights or fathom its depths. How pitiable is the shortsightedness that blinds us to its grandeur and that fails to see the necessity and glory of the propitiation. "Herein is love," John wrote, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). Christ is truly the propitiation for our sins because He propitiated the wrath which was

our damnation. The language of propitiation may not be diluted; it bespeaks the essence of Calvary.

D. Reconciliation. Just as sacrifice has in view the exigency created by our guilt and propitiation the exigency arising from the wrath of God, so reconciliation is concerned with our alienation from God and the need of having that alienation removed. In the Scripture the actual terms used with reference to the reconciliation wrought by Christ are to the effect that we are reconciled to God (Romans 5:10) and that God reconciles us to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:18, 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:2-22). Never is it expressly stated that God is reconciled to us. It has often been stated, therefore, that the cross of Christ, insofar as it contemplated reconciliation, did not terminate upon God to the removal of His alienation from us but simply and solely upon us to the removal of our alienation from Him. In other words, it is not that which God has against us that is dealt with in the reconciliation but only our enmity against Him. It is strange that this contention should be so persistent, that scholars should be content with what is, to say the least, so superficial an interpretation of the usage of Scripture in reference to the term in question.

It is not to be denied that the reconciliation is concerned with our enmity against God. Reconciliation, like all the other categories deals with sin and the liability proceeding from it. And sin is enmity against God. But, when the teaching of Scripture is properly analyzed, it will be seen that reconciliation involves much more than that which might appear at first sight to be the case. When in Matthew 5:24 we read, "Be reconciled to thy brother," we have an example of the use of the word "reconcile" that should caution us against a common inference. In this instance the person bringing his gift to the altar is reminded that his brother has something against him. It is this grievance on the part of the other that is the reason for interrupting his act of worship. It is the grievance and, in that sense, the against of the other that the worshipper must take into account, and it is the removal of that grievance, of that alienation, of that against," that the reconciliation which he is required to effect contemplates. He is to do all that is necessary to remove the alienation in the mind and attitude of the other. It is plain, therefore, that the situation requiring reconciliation is the frame of mind or the attitude of the other and what the reconciliation must effect is the change of mind on the part of the other, namely, the person called the brother. Thus we are pointed in a very different direction from that which we might have expected from the mere formula "be reconciled." And although it is the "against" of the brother that is in view as requiring a change, the exhortation is in terms of "be reconciled to thy brother" and not at all "Let thy brother be reconciled to thee." By this analysis it can easily be seen that the formula "reconciled to God" can well mean that what the reconciliation has in view is God's alienation from us and the removal of that alienation. Matthew 5:23, Matthew 5:24 shows how indefensible is an interpretation that rests its case upon what, at best, is mere appearance.

Another example points in the same direction. It is Romans 11:15. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" The "casting away" is that of Israel and the "reconciling" (reconciliation) is that of the Gentile nations. The "casting away" is contrasted with the "reconciliation" and the meaning of the latter is to be discovered from this contrast. The "casting away" is also contrasted with the "receiving," that is, the receiving of them back again. The "casting away" can be nothing other than the rejection of them from the divine favor and blessing they once enjoyed and the "receiving" is the restoration of them again to the divine favor and blessing from which for a time they had been excluded. It is

apparent that in both words the thought is focused upon the relation of Israel to God's favor and saving blessing. Reconciliation, being in contrast with casting away, must, therefore, mean the reception of the Gentiles into the favor of God and the blessing of the gospel; it is the relation to God's favor that is expressed. Hence it is upon the change in the disposition of God and the change in the resulting relationship of God to the Gentiles that thought is focused in the word "reconciliation." This demonstrates that the term can be used with reference to a change that takes place in God's mind and relation with reference to men. And we are thus prepared for the appreciation of the teaching of Scripture on the reconciliation accomplished by Christ in His death.

Any proper assessment of the nature and liabilities of sin shows that sin separated us from the favor and fellowship of God (cf. Isaiah 59:2). Sin elicits not only the wrath of God but also its complement, alienation from Him. This alienation is the result of our estrangement from Him. The latter is sinful and constitutes our sin but the former is holy as is God's wrath. It is that holy alienation that reconciliation contemplates and it is directed to its removal. This is the gospel of the reconciliation, and what a hiatus there would be in the atonement if it did not provide for this exigency of our sinful state!

If reconciliation consists merely in the change that takes place in the heart of man, the change from enmity to penitence and love, then the reconciliation itself is something inward; it is a change in the subjective disposition and attitude of man. It becomes impossible to adjust the teaching of the two most relevant passages to this conception. These passages are Romans 5:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

1. In Romans 5:8 it is the greatness of God's own love towards us that is being accented. This love is demonstrated by two considerations (1) that Christ died for us and (2) that He died for us while we were yet sinners. Our attention is directed to what God did when we were still in our sinful state and, therefore, when we were estranged from Him. This verse, furthermore, enunciates the essence of what follows in the next three verses. For the clause "Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8) is expanded in Romans 5:10 in the words "we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son." Hence it is reconciliation through the death of Christ that was accomplished while we were yet sinners. How nullifying this would be if the reconciliation were conceived of as consisting in the change of our hearts from sin and enmity to love and penitence! The whole point of Romans 5:8 is that what God did in the death of Christ took place when we were still sinners and did not consist in nor was it premised upon any change in us. To introduce the thought of change in us is to contradict the pivot of the declaration.

2. Romans 5:9-10 are parallel to each other; they express the same substantial truth in two different ways. More specifically, "justified now in his blood" is parallel to "reconciled to God in the death of his Son." "Justified" and "reconciled" must, therefore, belong to the same orbit; they must express similar concepts. But the term "justify," particularly in this epistle, has forensic meaning. It does not mean to make righteous; it is declarative in force and is the opposite of "condemn." It is concerned with judicial relations. "Reconcile" must likewise have the same force and cannot refer to an inward change of heart and attitude. The same conclusion is derived from 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Not imputing trespasses is either explanatory of the reconciliation or it is the consequence of the latter. In either case it shows the category to which reconciliation belongs and is far removed from that of

a subjective change in us.

3. Both passages emphasize the historic once-for-allness of the action denoted by reconciliation. It was in the death of Christ reconciliation was accomplished, and this was once for all. The tenses indicate the same thought — "we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10); "all things are of God who reconciled us to himself . . . God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18, 2 Corinthians 5:19). But a change of heart in men is not a once-for-all accomplished event; it is being continuously realized as reconciliation is applied.

4. In 2 Corinthians 5:21 we are pointed to the kind of action involved in the reconciliation spoken of in the preceding verses. It is that "him who knew no sin he made to be sin for us." This unquestionably refers to the vicarious sin-bearing of Christ and belongs to the objective realm; it has no affinity with a subjective change registered in our hearts.

5. In Romans 5:10 it is all but certain that the expression "when we were enemies" reflects not on our active enmity against God but upon God's alienation from us. The same term enemies occurs in Romans 11:28 : "concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes." "Enemies" here must mean alienated from God's favor for two reasons. (1) What Paul is referring to is the rejection of Israel, their being disinherited for the present from the covenant privileges. (2) In the same verse "enemies" is contrasted with "beloved." But "beloved" is certainly beloved of God. Hence "enemies" must reflect on God's relation to them, the casting away of them (cf. Romans 5:15). This sense is well suited to the thought of Romans 5:10. For what the reconciliation accomplishes is the removal of God's alienation, in that sense His holy enmity, and the argument is that, if when we were in a state of alienation from God, He brought us into His favor by the death of His Son, how much more shall we be saved from the wrath to come by the resurrection of Christ. If, however, the term "enemies" here means our active enmity against God, then the thought is similar to, and has the same force as, that of Romans 5:8, noted above.

6. The statement in Romans 5:11, "through whom now we have received the reconciliation," ill comports with the viewpoint being controverted. Reconciliation here is represented as a gift bestowed and received, indeed as a status established. The language is not adapted to the notion of a change in us from hatred to love and penitence. This kind of change is one that must enlist our activity to the fullest extent. But here (Romans 5:11) we are viewed as the recipients. It is that representation that is in accord with the whole emphasis of the preceding verses. God has come to sustain a new relationship, and we have received this new status. This, likewise, agrees with the declaration of 2 Corinthians 5:19: "and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The message of the gospel is the proclamation of what God has done, particularly that which He has done once for all in Christ. In terms of reconciliation it is the proclamation of his reconciling action and cannot be construed as a change in our hearts. This latter is the fruit of the gospel proclamation. Love or penitence on our part is that to which the gospel constrains. Hence "the word of reconciliation" is antecedent and cannot consist in the proclamation of our change of heart. The import of the exhortation in 2 Corinthians 5:20 is also to be understood in this light. "Be ye reconciled to God" is often regarded as the appeal to us to lay aside our hostility. This is not of itself an improper appeal as the appropriate response to the gospel proclamation. But the evidence derived from the passages dealt with do not support this interpretation. It is rather an appeal to us to take advantage of that which the reconciliation is and has accomplished. It is to the

effect: enter into the grace of the reconciliation; embrace the truth that "him who knew no sin he made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The sum of the doctrine is, therefore, that reconciliation as action refers to what God has done in Christ to provide for the alienation from God which is the necessary consequence of our sin, and reconciliation as a result is the restoration to the favor and fellowship of God. It is the disruption caused by sin that made the reconciliation necessary, it is this disruption that the reconciliation healed, and it is fellowship with God that the reconciliation secured. At no point do the provisions of the atonement register its grace and glory more than at the point where our separation from God is the exigency contemplated and communion with God the secured result.

E. Redemption. No category is inscribed more deeply upon the consciousness of the church of Christ than that of redemption. No song of the saints is more characteristic than the praise of redemption by Jesus' blood: "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

Redemption views the atonement from its own distinctive aspect. Sacrifice views the atonement from the perspective of guilt, propitiation from that of wrath, reconciliation from that of alienation. Redemption has in view the bondage to which sin has consigned us, and it views the work of Christ not simply as deliverance from bondage but in terms of ransom. The word of our Lord settles this signification. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28; cf. Mark 10:45). There are three propositions that lie on the face of this declaration. (1) The work Jesus came to do was one of ransom. (2) The giving of His life was the ransom price. (3) This ransom price was substitutionary in character and design. It is this same idea, by the use of the same Greek root in different forms, that appears in most of the New Testament passages which deal with redemption (Luke 1:68; Luke 2:38; Luke 24:21; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:6; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:12, Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18). In some other passages a different term is used. But it likewise conveys the thought of purchase (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Corinthians 7:23; Galatians 3:13; Galatians 4:5; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 5:9; Revelation 14:3, Revelation 14:4). Hence the language of redemption is that of securing release by the payment of a price, and it is this concept that is applied expressly to the laying down of Jesus' life and the shedding of His blood. Jesus shed his blood in order to pay the price of our ransom. Redemption cannot be reduced to lower terms.

Since the word of our Lord (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45) sets the points for the doctrine of redemption and since He represented the giving of His life as the ransom price, we are prepared for the emphasis which falls upon the blood of Christ as the medium of redemptive accomplishment. "We have redemption through his blood" (Ephesians 1:7; cf. Colossians 1:14). "Ye were redeemed," Peter says, "not with corruptible things such as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18, 1 Peter 1:19). It is through His own blood that Jesus entered once for all into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption (Hebrews 9:12). And Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant brought his death to bear upon the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant (Hebrews 9:15). The new song of the redeemed is, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Revelation 5:9). We cannot doubt then that, when Paul says, "We were bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 Corinthians 7:23), the price is none other than the priceless blood of Christ. It is to the same truth that we are pointed in Galatians 3:13 where Christ's being made a curse for us is clearly to be understood as

that which secured our redemption from the curse of the law. There can be no question then but the death of Christ in all its implications as the consequence of His vicarious identification with our sins is that which redeems and redeems in the way that is required by and appropriate to the redemptive concept, namely, by ransom price. That from which we are represented as being released intimates the bondage that redemption has in view. As we might expect, there are several respects in which this bondage is to be construed. This diversity of aspect and the corresponding manifold of virtue belonging to the death of Christ are borne out by the witness of Scripture.

1. Redemption from Sin. That deliverance or salvation from sin is basic in the saving action of Christ needs no demonstration. It is sufficient to be reminded that this is the meaning of the name "Jesus" (Matthew 1:21). And the title "Saviour" is that by which He is frequently identified — He is the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The saving action comprehends much more than is expressly specified in the term "redemption." All of the categories in which the atonement is defined sustain a direct relation to sin and its liabilities. And, apart from express statements to this effect, we should have to understand that, if redemption contemplates our bondage and secures release by ransom, the bondage must have in view that arising from sin. But the express intimations must also be appreciated. Christ Jesus, Paul states, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Though the relation to our sins is not as expressly stated, it is equally implied when redemption through Jesus' blood is defined as "the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Ephesians 1:7; cf. Colossians 1:14). And similarly apparent is the reference to transgression in Hebrews 9:15 — Jesus' death was unto the redemption under the first covenant. Since the reference to sin is overt in these passages we are compelled to infer that in others where sin is not mentioned it is, nevertheless, the assumed liability making redemption necessary and giving character to it (cf. Romans 3:24; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:12). And this reference to sin finds its Old Testament counterpart in Psalms 130:7, Psalms 130:8, that with the Lord is "plenteous redemption" and that "he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." The bondage which sin entails for us is threefold, guilt, defilement, and power. All three aspects come within the scope of the redemption wrought by Christ. It would not be feasible to dissociate any of these aspects from the passages which reflect on Jesus' redemptive accomplishment. But it may well be that thought is more particularly focused on one aspect in some passages and on another in other passages. In Romans 3:24, by reason of the context, it is no doubt provision of sin as guilt that is in view. The same is true of Ephesians 1:7. In Titus 2:14 it is probably sin as guilt and defilement that is contemplated. Because the aspect of sin as power is so frequently neglected it is necessary to devote more attention to this feature of the biblical teaching. This aspect was, no doubt, uppermost in the mind of Zacharias when he said: 'he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people" (Luke 1:68). In the succeeding verses the references to the "horn of salvation" and to "salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us" (vss. 69, 71) indicate that the earliest New Testament expression of the redemptive hope is construed in terms of deliverance was understood in terms of redemption (cf., also, Luke 2:38). Acquaintance with the Old Testament will show that the faith of Jesus which these earliest witnesses reflect was framed in terms of that same category which occupies so prominent a place in the religion of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is steeped in the language of redemption. It is particularly the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt that shapes the meaning of redemption under the old covenant. Though redemption applied to

Abraham (Isaiah 29:22) and though Jacob likewise could use the language of redemption (Genesis 48:16), yet it is the exodus from Egypt that constitutes par excellence the Old Testament redemption. The assurance given to Moses was, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" (Exodus 6:6), and the song of deliverance was, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed" (Exodus 15:13). Later books abound with allusions in similar terms (cf. Deuteronomy 7:8; Deuteronomy 9:26; Deuteronomy 13:5; Deuteronomy 21:8; Deuteronomy 24:18; 1 Chronicles 17:21; Psalms 77:15; Psalms 106:10; Isaiah 43:1; Isaiah 63:9; Micah 6:4). And God Himself has no name more replete with significance for the consolation of His people than that of Redeemer (cf. Psalms 19:14; Isaiah 41:14; Isaiah 43:14; Isaiah 47:4; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 50:34). It is eloquent of the richness of the messianic promise that the Redeemer will come to Zion (Isaiah 59:20). It is this Old Testament witness that provides the background for the New Testament faith expressed in Luke 1:68; Luke 2:38. It should not surprise us, therefore, that in the New Testament the death of Christ should be represented as having direct bearing upon the archenemy of the people of God and upon the power of sin itself. Sin, as power, brings us into captivity, and Satan as the prince of darkness and god of this world wields his suzerainty and brings us into bondage. With reference to Satan's power we have explicit reference to the victory accomplished by Jesus' death in John 12:31; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8. And Colossians 2:15 refers to the triumph secured over the principalities of wickedness (cf. Ephesians 6:12). It is significant that the first promise should have been in terms of the destruction of the serpent (Genesis 3:15) and that the consummation should carry with it the casting of the old serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). Although redemptive terms are not expressly used in connection with the destruction executed upon Satan, yet since they are used for deliverance from the bondage of alien powers and since Satan is the epitome of alien power, we are required to apply to the language of release (Hebrews 2:15) redemptive import. The redemption from Egypt is the type of Christ's redemptive work. The former was an act of judgment against all the gods of Egypt (Exodus 12:12), the latter an act of judgment upon Satan (John 12:31). If the former is construed as redemption, so must the latter be. Furthermore, we cannot dissociate the deception of Satan as the god of this world who blinds the minds of them that believe not (2 Corinthians 4:4) from the vain manner of life from which the precious blood of Christ redeems (1 Peter 1:18). At the center of Christ's redemptive accomplishment, therefore, is emancipation from the thralldom of Satan's deception and power.

We cannot dissociate the power of sin from the embrace of the redemption spoken of expressly in several of the passages already cited (cf. Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:18). But when the power of sin is particularly reflected on, the consideration most relevant to deliverance is the truth that those for whom Christ died are also represented as having died in Him and with Him (Romans 6:1 - Romans 6:10; Romans 7:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 2:20; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 4:1, 1 Peter 4:2). Of basic importance in this connection is the fact that Christ in His vicarious undertakings may never be conceived of apart from those on whose behalf He fulfilled these commitments and, therefore, when He died they were united to Him in the virtue and efficacy of His death. But when He died He died to sin once for all (Romans 6:10). Those in Him also died to sin (Colossians 2:20; Rom. 6:24; 2 Corinthians 5:14), and, if they died to sin, they died to the power of sin. This is the guarantee that those united to Christ will not be ruled

by the power of sin (Romans 6:11, Romans 6:14; 1 Peter 4:1, 1 Peter 4:2). It would be artificial to construe this precise aspect of our relation to the death of Christ and of our deliverance from the power of sin in the terms of redemption. Yet at no other point may it more appropriately be introduced. Our death to sin is bound up with Christ's death on our behalf (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14), and to the latter the redemptive concept is clearly applied.

2. Redemption from the Curse of the Law. The curse of the law does not mean that the law is a curse. The law is holy and just and good (Romans 7:13), but, because so, it exacts penalty for every infraction of its demands. The curse of the law is the curse it pronounces upon transgressors (Galatians 3:10). The law's penal sanction is as inviolable as its demands. To this sanction as it bears upon us redemption is directed. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). Nowhere in Scripture is the price of redemption more forcefully portrayed than in this text. It reminds us that the cost was not merely the death of Christ and the shedding of His blood but these in the circumstance of Golgotha's shame — He was "made a curse for us." We cannot measure the intensity of the reproach nor fathom the humiliation. To be unmoved before the spectacle is to be insensitive to the sanctions of holiness, the marvels of love, and the wonder of angels.

It is because we are ransomed from the curse of the law that we are represented as having died to the law (Romans 7:6; Galatians 2:19), as put to death to the law (Romans 7:4), and as discharged from the law (Romans 7:6). We are released from the bondage of condemnation and are free to be justified apart from the law. The relation between redemption from sin in its guilt, defilement, and power and redemption from the curse of the law is intimate. For the strength of sin is the law (1 Corinthians 15:56). In Galatians 4:5 it is redemption from the bondage of the ceremonial law that is specifically in view (cf. Galatians 3:23-29, Galatians 4:1-3). It was by being made under this law that Christ redeemed those who were under it. He secured this release because He Himself fulfilled all the truth that was symbolically and typically set forth in the provisions of the levitical economy. These provisions were but shadows of the good things to come and, when that which they foreshadowed appeared, there was no need or place for the shadows themselves. This redemption has the fullest significance for all. By the faith of Jesus all without distinction enter into the full privilege of sons without the necessity of the disciplinary tutelage ministered by the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. This is the apex of privilege and blessing secured by Christ's redemption — we receive the adoption. On several occasions in the New Testament the term "redemption" denotes the consummation of bliss realized at the advent of Christ in glory (Luke 21:28; Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:14; Ephesians 4:30). This shows how closely related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus' blood is the final fruition of the saving process and how the glory awaiting the people of God is conditioned by the thought of redemption.

IV. The Perfection. This characterization is concerned with the uniqueness, efficacy, and finality of the atonement. There is no repetition on the part of Christ Himself. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). He "was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews 9:28). And there is no participation on the part of men or angels. It was He Himself "who bore our sins in his own body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). The offering of Himself was a high priestly function to which only He, by reason of His unique person and dignity, was equal (cf. Hebrews 7:2-28). Christ is indeed our supreme example and it is also true that His unique accomplishments are adduced to illustrate and enforce the sum-total of devotion required

of us. Nothing less than the whole-hearted commitment to the Father's will exemplified in His obedience unto death is demanded of us (cf. Matthew 20:27, Matthew 20:28; Php 2:5-8; 1 Peter 2:21-24). But nowhere are we represented as following Him in the discharge of that which constitutes atonement, and we are not asked to do so. We are to be obedient to the utmost of divine demands as they bear upon us. But by our obedience no one is constituted righteous (cf. Romans 5:19). We may have to die in loyalty to Christ and His example. But we do not thereby expiate guilt, propitiate wrath, reconcile the world to God, and secure redemption. All these categories belong exclusively to Christ. The atonement was likewise efficacious. It was intrinsically adequate to the end designed. He purged our sins (Hebrews 1:3). He reconciled us to God (Romans 5:10). He accomplished redemption (Hebrews 9:12; Revelation 5:9). He is the propitiation for our sins (1 John 2:2). It was not a token obedience He rendered to God; He fulfilled all righteousness, and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation (Matthew 3:15; Hebrews 5:9). It was not token sin-bearing that He endured; the Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all and He bore our sins (Isaiah 53:6, Isaiah 53:11; 1 Peter 2:24). The reconciliation He wrought was of such a character that it guarantees the consummating salvation (Romans 5:9, Romans 5:10; Romans 8:32). He purchased the church by His blood and obtained eternal redemption (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 9:12). The sum is that Christ by His own atoning work secured and insured the consummation that will be registered in the resurrection of life (cf. John 6:39).

V. The Extent. For whom did Christ die? Sober evaluation of the nature of the atonement and of its perfection leads to one conclusion. If it accomplished all that is implied in the categories by which it is defined and if it secures and insures the consummating redemption, the design must be coextensive with the ultimate result. If some fail of eternal salvation, as the Scripture plainly teaches, if they will not enjoy the final redemption, they cannot be embraced in that which procured and secured it. The atonement is so defined in terms of efficacious accomplishment that it must have the same extent as salvation bestowed and consummated. Unless we believe in the final restoration of all mankind, we cannot have an unlimited atonement. On the premise that some perish eternally we are shut up to one of two alternatives — a limited efficacy or a limited extent; there is no such thing as an unlimited atonement.

It is true that many benefits accrue from the redemptive work of Christ to the non-elect in this life. It is in virtue of what Christ did that there is a gospel of salvation and this gospel is proclaimed freely to all without distinction. Untold blessings are dispensed to the world for the simple reason that God has his people in the world and is fulfilling in it His redemptive purpose. Christ is head over all things and it is in the exercise of His mediatorial lordship that He dispenses these blessings. But His lordship is the reward of His atoning work. Hence all the favors which even the reprobate receive in this life are related in one way or another to the atonement and may be said to flow from it. If so, they were designed to flow from it, and this means that the atonement embraced in its design the bestowment of these benefits upon the reprobate. But this is not to say that the atonement, in its specific character as atonement, is designed for the reprobate. It is one thing to say that certain benefits accrue to the reprobate from the atonement; it is entirely different to say that the atonement itself is designed for the reprobate. And the fallacy of the latter supposition becomes apparent when we remember that it is of the nature of the atonement to secure benefits which the reprobate never enjoy. In a word, the atonement is bound up with its efficacy in respect of obedience, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. When the Scripture speaks of

Christ as dying for men, it is His vicarious death on their behalf that is in view and all the content which belongs to the atonement defines the significance of the formula "died for." Thus we may not say that He died for all men any more than that He made atonement for all men. The restriction which applies to the extent of the atonement is borne out not only by the evidence pertaining to the nature of the atonement but also by passages which define its design. Nothing should be more obvious than that Jesus came into the world to save. He did not come to make salvation merely possible nor to make men salvable. Such a notion would contradict the express declarations of Jesus Himself and of other inspired witnesses (cf. Luke 19:10; John 6:39; Luke 2:11; John 3:17). The word of the angel to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21) implies the certitude of salvation and not mere possibility. And this certitude must, therefore, inhere in that by which He wrought salvation, namely, the atonement. Even John 3:16, so often appealed to in support of universal atonement, points to this same certitude and security. The purpose of giving the only-begotten Son is stated to be "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The import is that He makes infallibly secure the salvation of all who believe, and there is no suggestion that the design extended beyond the securing of that end. When Paul says that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25), he is alluding to Christ's sacrificial offering. But he also states the design: "that he might sanctify and cleanse it . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church" (Ephesians 5:26-27). The love spoken of here, the reference of the sacrificial offering, and the design are all restricted to the church. The design will certainly be fulfilled, and so the love and the giving of Himself achieve their object in the glorifying of that to which they were directed. It is impossible to universalize the reference of the sacrifice of Christ alluded to here; it is severely limited to those who will finally be holy and without blemish. Differentiation belongs to this text and therefore limitation, in a word, limited designed. In Romans 8:32, Romans 8:34 we have references to the death of Christ and to its implications. The atonement is in view in the delivering Him up for us all (Romans 8:32) and in the clause, "Christ Jesus is the one who died" (Romans 8:34). But it is impossible to place these references to the intent and effect of the death of Christ outside the ambit so clearly established by the context and defined in terms of those predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son (Romans 8:29), the elect (Romans 8:33), and those embraced in the love of God which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:39). Besides, the delivering up (Romans 8:32) is that which insures the free bestowal of all things, the "all things" specified in the context as the blessings of salvation culminating in glorification. And the scope of the atonement cannot be more embracive than those other actions with which it is coordinated, namely, justification (Romans 8:33), the intercession of Christ (Romans 8:34), and indissoluble participation of the love of Christ (Romans 8:35). Much more evidence could be adduced directly from Scripture passages. These, however, suffice to show that the extent of the atonement cannot be made universal.

Universal terms are frequently used in connection with the death of Christ, as also in connection with the categories which define its import (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15, 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 2:2). It is surprising that students of Scripture should with such ease appeal to these texts as if they determined the question in favor of universal atonement. The Scripture frequently uses universal terms when, obviously, they are not to be understood of all men inclusively and distributively or of all things inclusively. When we read in Genesis 6:13. "The end of all flesh is come before me," it is plain that this is not to be

understood absolutely or inclusively. Not all flesh was destroyed. Or when Paul says that the trespass of Israel was the riches of the world (Romans 11:12), he cannot be using the word "world" of all men distributively. Israel is not included, and not all Gentiles were partakers of the riches intended. When Paul says, "all things are lawful for me" (1 Corinthians 6:12; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:23), he did not mean that he was at liberty to do anything and everything. Examples could be multiplied and every person should readily perceive the implied restriction. An expression must always be interpreted in terms of the universe of discourse. Thus in Hebrews 2:9 the expression "every one on whose behalf Christ tasted death must be understood as referring to every one of whom the writer is speaking, namely, every one of the sons to be brought to glory, of the sanctified, of the children whom God has given to Christ and of whom He is not ashamed (Hebrews 2:10-13). And it must not be overlooked that in 2 Corinthians 5:14, 2 Corinthians 5:15 the "all" for whom Christ died do not embrace any more than those who died in Him "one" died for all: therefore all died." In Paul's teaching to die with Christ is to die to sin (cf. Romans 6:2-10). The atonement is efficacious — it accomplishes redemption, it makes purification for sin, it reconciles to God, it secures the salvation of those for whom it was intended. Only on this premise is He the Saviour. Only on this basis is He freely offered as Saviour to all without distinction. It is not as Saviour He would be offered to all men if He did not actually save (cf. Matthew 1:21).

Conclusion. The atonement springs from the fountain of the Father's love; He commends His own love towards us. We must not think, however, that the action of the Father ended with the appointment and commission of the Son. He was not a mere spectator of Gethsemane and Calvary. The Father laid upon His own Son the iniquities of us all. He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up. He made Him to be sin for us. It was the Father who gave Him the cup of damnation to drink. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. Here is love supremely demonstrated. No stronger expression appears in Scripture than this that God made Christ to be sin for us. We fall far short of a proper assessment of Christ's humiliation if we fail to appreciate this fact. It was not simply the penalty of sin that Jesus bore. He bore our sins. He was not made sinful, but He was made sin and, therefore, brought into the closest identification with our sins that it was possible for Him to come without thereby becoming Himself sinful. Any exposition of ours can only touch the fringe of this mystery. The liability with which the Lord of glory had to deal was not merely the penalty of sin but sin itself. And sin is the contradiction of God. What Jesus bore was the contradiction of what He was as both God and man. The recoil of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39) was the inevitable recoil of His holy soul from the abyss of woe which sin-bearing involved. And His "nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt, bespeaks the intensity of His commitment to the extremities of Calvary, the bitter dregs of the cup given Him to drink. Here is love unspeakable; He poured out His soul unto death. Psalms 22:1-31 and Psalms 69:1-36 are the prophetic delineature of His agony, the gospel story is the inspired record of fulfilment, the apostolic witness the interpretation of its meaning. We cannot but seek to apprehend more and more of the mystery. The saints will be eternally occupied with it. But eternity will not fathom its depths nor exhaust its praise.

S. The Calling of the Westminster Assembly

The Calling of the Westminster Assembly

John Murray From The Presbyterian Guardian, volumes 11 and 12 (1942-1943)

It should be conceded, without fear of intelligent contradiction, that the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms are the finest creedal formulations of the Christian Faith that the church of Christ has yet produced. This is not to deny that in certain particulars some other creeds may surpass these Westminster standards, nor does it mean that these standards have attained such a degree of perfection that they could not possibly be improved. But it does mean that they are the most perfect creedal exhibitions that we possess of the truth revealed in Holy Scripture. Many people are familiar with the Confession and Catechisms and yet know very little regarding the history of the Assembly that produced these documents.

One of the most important Parliaments that ever existed in England was what is known as the Long Parliament. It continued from November 1640, until it was dissolved by Oliver Cromwell in April 1653. It was this Parliament that was responsible for the calling of the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

Shortly after the Long Parliament began its work, the House of Lords appointed a committee consisting of ten bishops and twenty lay peers to take into consideration all innovations in the church concerning religion. In the autumn and winter of 1641 there was prepared what is known as the Grand Remonstrance of the House of Commons. In this remonstrance the desire was expressed that there should be "a general Synod of the most grave, pious, learned and judicious divines of this island, assisted by some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us, to consider all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church." In 1642 a declaration of the Parliament of England was sent to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. This declaration contained a plea for the prevention of civil war. The answer of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland deplored the tardiness with which the reformation of religion progressed, and contended that religion is not only the means of the service of God and the saving of souls but also "the base and foundation of kingdoms and estates". It also reiterated the plea "that in all his Majesty's dominions there might be one Confession of Faith, one Directory of Worship, one publick Catechisme, and one form of Kirk Government". On April 19, 1642, the House of Commons ordered that the names of divines fit to be consulted with be presented to the House. In less than a week this list was completed. It consisted of two divines from each county in England, two from each university, two from the Channel Islands, one from each county in Wales, and four from the city of London. On May 9th of this year the bill for the calling of an assembly of divines was brought in to the House of Commons. The House of Lords slightly amended the bill and fourteen names were added to the list of divines. By June 1st, the bill passed both Houses of Parliament. But the King's assent was withheld. Two other bills met with the same fate. Both Houses then resorted to the method of Ordinance by their own authority. By June 12, 1643, this Ordinance for the calling of an assembly passed both Houses. As so much interest and

importance attach to this Ordinance, part of it should be quoted here. It reads thus:

"Whereas, amongst the infinite blessings of Almighty God upon this nation, none is or can be more dear unto us than the purity of our religion; and for that, as yet, many things remain in the Liturgy, Discipline, and Government of the Church, which do necessarily require a further and more perfect reformation than as yet hath been attained; and whereas it hath been declared and resolved by the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament, that the present Church-government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries, deans, dean and chapters, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical officers depending upon the hierarchy, is evil, and justly offensive and burdensome to the kingdom, a great impediment to reformation and growth of religion, and very prejudicial to the state and government of this kingdom; and that therefore they are resolved that the same shall be taken away, and that such a government shall be settled in the Church as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other Reformed Churches abroad; and, for the better effecting hereof, and for the vindicating and clearing of the doctrine of the Church of England from all false calumnies and aspersions, it is thought fit and necessary to call an Assembly of learned, godly, and judicious Divines, who, together with some members of both the Houses of Parliament, are to consult and advise of such matters and things, touching the premises, as shall be proposed unto them by both or either of the Houses of Parliament, and to give their advice and counsel therein to both or either of the said Houses, when, and as often as they shall be thereunto required."

Chapter XXIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith deals with "the Civil Magistrate". Section III of this chapter reads as follows: "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the Word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." The last sentence of this section is the defense, on the part of the Westminster Assembly, of that Ordinance of the English Parliament of 1643 in accordance with which the Assembly convened on July 1st of that year. The Westminster Assembly was the creature of the Long Parliament. The Westminster divines did not, of course, regard the authority of Parliament or of any civil magistrate as essential to the calling of an assembly such as the Westminster Assembly was. In Chapter XXXI, which deals with "Synods and Councils", the divines also said: "As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion; so, if magistrates be open enemies to the Church, the ministers of Christ of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons, upon delegation from their Churches, may meet together in such assemblies" (Section II). Nevertheless the Westminster Assembly was actually convened by Ordinance of Parliament. The Assembly consisted of some one hundred and fifty members. Thirty were members of Parliament, the remainder divines, representing the chief parties of English Protestants except that of Archbishop Laud. The Assembly was called to meet on July 1, 1643. Two days before the meeting a royal proclamation was issued prohibiting the meeting. Notwithstanding this royal interdict, sixty-nine of

those appointed met. They convened in Westminster Abbey for divine service, and both Houses of Parliament adjourned for the purpose of attending the service of worship. Dr. Twisse, the prolocutor of the Assembly, preached. After divine service the members of the Assembly met in the Chapel of Henry VII. The Assembly adjourned until July 6th.

Certain instructions for the conduct of the Assembly were framed by both Houses of Parliament in consultation with certain of the divines. As given by John Lightfoot, a member of the Assembly, these read as follows:

(1) That two Assessors be joined to the Prolocutor, to supply his place in case of absence or infirmity.

(2) That Scribes be appointed, to set down all proceedings, and those to be Divines, who are not of the Assembly, viz. Mr. Henry Robens and Mr. Adoniram Byfield.

(3) Every member, at his first entry into the Assembly, shall make serious and solemn protestation, not to maintain any thing but what he believes to be truth in sincerity, when discovered unto him.

(4) No resolution to be given upon any question the same day, wherein it is first propounded.

(5) What any man undertakes to prove as necessary, he shall make good out of Scripture.

(6) No man to proceed in any dispute, after the Prolocutor has enjoined him silence, unless the Assembly desire he may go on.

(7) No man to be denied to enter his dissent from the Assembly, and his reasons for it, in any point, after it hath been first debated in the Assembly, and thence (if the dissenting party desire it) to be sent to the Houses of Parliament by the Assembly, not by any particular man or men, in a private way, when either House shall require.

(8) All things agreed on and prepared for the Parliament, to be openly read and allowed in the Assembly, and then offered as the judgment of the Assembly, if the major part assent. Provided that the opinion of any persons dissenting, and the reasons urged for it, be annexed thereunto, if the dissenters require it, together with the solutions, if any were given to the Assembly, to these reasons. When the Assembly met on July 8th, the following protestation was taken by every member, Lords and Commons, as well as divines: "I, A.B. do seriously and solemnly protest, in the presence of Almighty God, that in this Assembly, whereof I am a member, I will not maintain any thing in matters of doctrine, but what I think in my conscience to be truth; or in point of discipline, but what I shall conceive to conduce most to the glory of God, and the good and peace of his church." This protestation, it should be noted, is of the nature of a solemn oath. It would be well for all to be animated by the spirit that evoked its composition and by the determination that the taking of it expresses. In accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance quoted above, the Assembly was largely occupied for the first three months with the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England.

One of the most interesting accounts we possess of the actual work of the Assembly is given us by Robert Baillie, one of the Scottish commissioners to the Assembly. It gives us, from the pen of one admirably fitted to write, a sample of actual procedure in the sessions of the Assembly. Under date of December 7, 1643, Baillie writes:

"On Monday morning we sent to both Houses of Parliament for a warrant for our sitting in the Assemblée. This was readily granted, and by Mr. Hendersone presented to the Proloquator; who sent out three of their number to convoy us to the Assemblée. Here no mortal man may enter to see or hear, let be to sitt, without ane order in wryte from both Houses of Parliament. When we were brought in, Dr. Twisse had ane long harangue for our welcome, after so long and hazardous a voyage by sea and land, in so unseasonable a tyme of the year. When he had ended, we satt down in these places which since we have kepted. The like of that Assemblée I did never see, and, as we hear say, the like was never in England, nor any where is shortlie lyke to be. They did sit in Henry the 7th's Chappell, in the place of the Convocation; but since the weather grew cold, they did go to Jerusalem chamber, a fair roome in the Abbey of Westminster, about the bounds of the College fore-hall, but wyder. At the one end nearest the doore, and both sydes are stages of seats as in the new Assemblée-House at Edinburgh, but not so high; for there will be roome but for five or six score. At the upmost end there is a chair set on ane frame, a foot from the earth, for the Mr. Proloquator Dr. Twisse. Before it on the ground stands two chairs for the two Mr. Assessors, Dr. Burgess and Mr. Whyte. Before these two chairs, through the length of the roome, stands a table, at which sitts the two scribes, Mr. Byfield and Mr. Roborough. The house is all well hung, and hes a good fyre, which is some dainties at London. Foranent the table, upon the Proloquator's right hand, there are three or four rankes of formes. On the lowest we five doe sit. Upon the other, at our backs, the members of Parliament deputed to the Assemblée. On the formes foranent us, on the Proloquator's left hand, going from the upper end of the house to the chimney, and at the other end of the house, and backsyde of the table, till it come about to our seats, are four or five stages of fourmes, whereupon their divines sitts as they please; albeit commonlie they keep the same place. From the chimney to the door there is no seats, but a void for passage. The Lords of the Parliament uses to sit on chaires, in the void, about the fire. We meet every day of the week, but Saturday. We sitt commonlie from nine to one or two afternoon. The Proloquator at the beginning and end hes a short prayer. The man, as the world knows, is very learned in the questions he has studied, and very good, beloved of all and highlie esteemed; but merelie bookish, and not much, as it seems, acquaint with conceived prayer, [and] among the unfittest of all the company for any action; so after the prayer he sitts mute. It was the canny convoyance of these who guides most matters for their own interest to plant such a man of purpose in the chaire. The one assessour, our good friend, Dr. Whyte, hes kepted in of the gout since our coming; the other, Dr. Burgess, a very active and sharpe man, supplies, so farr as is decent, the Proloquator's place. Ordinarlie there will be present above three-score of their divines. These are divided in three Committees; in one whereof every man is a member. No man is excluded who pleases to come to any of the three. Every Committee, as the Parliament gives order in wryte to take any purpose to consideration, takes a portion, and in their afternoon meeting prepares matters for the Assemblée, setts doune their minde in distinct propositions, backs their propositions with texts of Scripture. After the prayer, Mr. Byfield the scribe, reads the proposition and Scriptures, whereupon the Assemblée debates in a most grave and orderlie way. No man is called up to speak; bot who stands up of his own accord, he speaks so long as he will without interruption. If two or three stand up at once, then the divines confusedlie calls on his name whom they desyre to hear first: On whom the loudest and manifest voices calls, he speakes. No man speaks to any bot to the Proloquator. They harangue long and very learnedlie. They studie the questions well before hand, and prepares their speeches; but withall the men are exceeding prompt, and well spoken. I doe marvell at the very

accurate and extemporall replyes that many of them usuallie doe make. When, upon every proposition by itself, and on everie text of Scripture that is brought to confirme it, every man who will hes said his whole minde, and the replyes, and duplies, and triplies, are heard; then the most part calls, To the question. Byfield the scribe rises from the table, and comes to the Proloqutor's chair, who, from the scribe's book, reads the proposition, and says, as many as are in opinion that the question is well stated in the proposition, let them say I; when I is heard, he says, as many as think otherwise, say No. If the difference of I's and No's be cleare, as usuallie it is, then the question is ordered by the scribes, and they go on to debate the first Scripture alleadged for proof of the proposition. If the sound of I and No be near equall, then sayes the Proloqutor, as many as say I, stand up; while they stand, the scribe and others number them in their minde; when they sitt down, the No's are bidden stand, and they likewise are numbered. This way is clear enough, and saves a great deal of time, which we spend in reading our catalogue. When a question is once ordered, there is no more debate of that matter; but if a man will vaige, he is quicklie taken up by Mr. Assessor, or many others, confusedlie crying, Speak to order, to order. No man contradicts another expresslie by name, bot most discretlie speaks to the Proloqutor, and at most holds on the generall, The Reverend brother, who latelie or last spoke, on this hand, on that syde, above, or below. I thought meet once for all to give yow a taste of the outward form of their Assemblie. They follow the way of their Parliament. Much of their way is good, and worthie of our imitation: only their longsomenesse is wofull at this time, when their Church and Kingdome lyes under a most lamentable anarchy and confusion. They see the hurt of their being to establish a new Plattforme of worship and discipline to their Nation for all time to come, they think they cannot be answerable, if solidlie and at leisure, they doe not examine every point thereof."

S. The Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly

The Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly

John Murray From *The Presbyterian Guardian*, volume 12 (1943) In the records of the Westminster Assembly we find a great deal of debate concerning catechism long before the date upon which the Assembly actually turned to the composition of the two Catechisms with which we are familiar. This prolonged study of catechism was not, however, lost labor; in very admirable fashion it fitted the Assembly for the framing of the Catechisms that were finally adopted.

It was early in 1647 that the Assembly addressed itself to the composition of the two Catechisms we know as the Larger and Shorter. On January 14th of that year it was ordered "that the Committee for the Catechism do prepare a draught of two Catechisms, one more large and another more brief, in which they are to have an eye to the Confession of Faith, and to the matter of the Catechism already begun". From April 15, 1647, a good part of the time of the Assembly was devoted to debate on the Larger Catechism.

It was on August 5th that a committee was chosen to take in hand the matter of the Shorter Catechism. On August 9th we have the first mention of report on the Shorter Catechism. There are several references to the Shorter Catechism in the course of the next two months. On October 25th we have reference in the Minutes to debate on the Shorter Catechism. Considerable speed must have been made after that date, for on November 15th the Shorter Catechism was read as far as the fourth commandment and was ordered to be transcribed. On September 10th Mr. Gower made report on the last questions of the Larger Catechism. Several minor changes were made after this date but on October 15th the Larger Catechism was completed and it was ordered to be transcribed so that it might be sent to both Houses of Parliament. On October 22nd it was ordered to be sent. Not later than November 25th the Shorter Catechism was completed, for on November 26th the prolocutor of the Assembly reported that the Shorter Catechism had been delivered to the House of Commons the preceding day and that the House extended its special thanks to the Assembly for its care and pains in the preparation of the said Catechism. In no country has the Shorter Catechism exercised a greater influence than in Scotland. Yet the evidence requires the conclusion of A. F. Mitchell that "though in Scotland, as elsewhere, this catechism has been, and deservedly so, the most popular of all the productions of the Assembly, it was the one with the elaboration of which the Scotch Commissioners had least to do" (*The Westminster Assembly*, London, 1883, p. 429). This conclusion must not, however, be allowed to obscure or minimize the importance of certain other facts. The Shorter Catechism was completed on or before November 25, 1647. On November 15th the Catechism was read as far as the fourth commandment and was ordered to be transcribed. It was only six days earlier that Samuel Rutherford took his leave of the Assembly. Rutherford was, therefore, at Westminster until the greater part of the work on the Shorter Catechism had been performed and for three weeks after the Larger Catechism had been completed. In this connection the minute of October 15th is full of interest and significance. After the Larger Catechism was ordered to be transcribed, we find that upon motion by Mr. Rutherford it

was ordered to be recorded in the Scribes' books that "the Assembly hath enjoyed the assistance of the Honorable Reverend and learned Commissioners from the Church of Scotland in the work of the Assembly; during all the time of the debating and perfecting of the 4 things mentioned in the Covenant, viz. the Directory for Worship, the Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, and Catechism, some of the Reverend and learned Divines Commissioners from the Church of Scotland have been present in and assisting to this Assembly". It would, therefore, be going too far to say that the Scottish Commissioners exercised no influence in the preparation of the Catechisms. Rutherford may have exercised considerable influence in the preparation of both Catechisms. And Gillespie may have exercised considerable influence in the preparation of a great part of the Larger Catechism. Besides, it must be remembered that the Scottish Commissioners took a very active part in the prolonged study of catechism that antedated January 1647, when the Assembly addressed itself to the task of preparing the two Catechisms finally approved. Even though, as A. F. Mitchell points out (*op. cit.*, pp. 414-15), the Scottish Commissioners in these earlier discussions favored a method of catechising different from that followed in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, it is nevertheless impossible to believe that the influence, theological influence at least, of the Scottish Commissioners has not left its mark upon both Catechisms. Furthermore, we must not forget that the order of January 14, 1647, directing the Committee for the Catechism to prepare a draft of two Catechisms, instructed the Committee to have an eye to the Confession of Faith and to the matter of the Catechism already begun. Though it is true, then, that the Scottish Commissioners had less to do with the preparation of the Catechisms than with the other documents, there are also several considerations which prevent us from concluding that their influence was negligible. From December 1647, to April 1648, considerable time was devoted to the preparation of the Scripture proofs for both Catechisms. By April 12, 1648, the proofs for both had been completed, for on that date the proofs were ordered to be transcribed and sent to both Houses of Parliament. On July 20, 1648, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland approved the Larger Catechism and on July 28th the Shorter. The two Catechisms and the Confession of Faith as well as the acts of approbation of the General Assembly were ratified and approved by the Convention of Estates of the Scottish Parliament on February 7, 1649. The Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly were, of course, intended to serve a different purpose from that of the Confession, and any comparison of the Catechisms with the Confession should bear this in mind. It should be said, however, that the formulations of the Catechism, especially of the Larger, are at certain points an improvement over the formulations of the Confession. It is altogether natural that the greater maturity of thought attained at the time the Catechisms were prepared should have had this effect. For example, the formulation of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace found in the Larger Catechism is more lucid and felicitous than that found in Chapter VII, Section III, of the Confession. A comparison of this section with Questions 30 to 32 in the Larger Catechism will readily show what is meant. Again, the definition of the sinfulness of the estate into which the fall brought mankind, given in both Catechisms, is in at least one respect more adequate than Chapter VI, Sections I to IV, of the Confession. This concerns the question of the imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin, a doctrine distinctly asserted in the Confession (Chapter VI, Section III) but not clearly grounded in the covenant relationship between Adam and posterity, as is done in the Larger Catechism, Question 22, and in the Shorter, Question 16. Well-grounded may be the surmise of William Cunningham that the discussions taking place in France in connection with Placaeus' doctrine of mediate imputation

and the decisions of the Synod of Charenton (1644-1645) had become better known and their implications better understood when the divines prepared the Catechisms. In any case, greater precision is manifest in both Catechisms than appears in the Confession. Examples like these show how necessary it is, in determining the position of the Westminster Assembly, to consult the Catechisms as well as the Confession, and in the matter of the subordinate standards in Presbyterian churches a great deal is to be gained by the inclusion of the Catechisms as well as the Confession.

S. The Contradiction of God

The Contradiction of God

John Murray

"Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Matthew 16:22.

It was sin that brought contradiction into this universe. If there had been no sin there would have been no contradiction and no occasion for contradiction. Everything would have been after the pattern of that perfection that characterized God's handiwork when he created it. This contradiction is the contradiction between good and evil, between truth and the lie, between love and hate, between mercy and judgment, between justice and injustice. This contradiction began with the sin of the devil and his angels. The sin of the devil and his angels preceded the sin of the human race. This contradiction appeared first of all on the scene of this world when the serpent as the instrument of the devil said to the woman, first by way of insinuating doubt: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Then it appeared in blatant contradiction when the serpent said: "Ye shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." You see how sin appeared in the contradiction of God and it entered into the human race when the woman acceded to that contradiction and believed the tempter rather than God. This is the essence of sin, the contradiction of God. It is implied of course in that definition that is given of sin in the scripture: Sin is the transgression of the law. The law, of course, is the transcript of divine perfection. Sin is therefore the transgression of that which is the transcript of divine perfection and therefore the contradiction of God. Because sin offers contradiction to God, God must offer contradiction to it. It belongs to the very holiness, the perfection, of his being to offer contradiction to that which is the contradiction of himself. This contradiction which sin offers to God appears in our text. We might not suspect it, but it appears in the very indictment that our Savior brought against Peter when he said: "Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." That is, thou mindest not, thou hast concern, not for the things of God but the things that be of men." That is what our first parents did when they fell at the beginning: they began to mind the things of the creature rather than the creator, and became preoccupied with human things instead of being completely absorbed in the divine will.

Here is a question for us: What is the governing pattern of our thought? It is a question that each one of us must ask, a question that the most sanctified of you must ask of yourself. What is your paramount interest? What is your paramount concern? Is it the things of God? Is it the interests of his glory, of his kingdom? Is it the interests of his counsel? Or is our governing pattern of thought that which is dictated by our own imaginations? Is it dictated by human things or is it dictated by divine things - God's glory and kingdom? This is a question that comes to me and it comes to you. My friends, here is a criterion by which we must interrogate our own consciences, hearts and

minds. Do we mind the things of men or do we mind the things of God? Our Savior was holy, blameless, undefiled and separate from sinners. There was no sin in him. Because there was no sin in him he was completely governed by the things of God. It was because of the contradiction that there was between himself and sinful men that he brought the indictment against Peter: "Thou mindest not the things that be of God but those that be of men."

Contradiction appears in this chapter in other ways. It appears in a most striking, almost unbelievable way. Peter had made the great confession at Caesarea Philippi: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There was the corresponding benediction: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." There is not only the corresponding benediction on Jesus' part, but there is also the corresponding investiture: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Just observe the elements of the situation: the confession, the benediction and the investiture. What a contrast but a short time after! Peter began to rebuke Jesus, to rebuke the person whom he had confessed: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." When he confessed him as the Son of the living God, he confessed him in his divine identity as equal with God and as himself God. Is it possible, you might say, that in a very brief period of time Peter began to rebuke the Savior? - "Be it far from thee, this shall not be unto thee." Presumptuous! - to rebuke the living God.

You have also the corresponding response on the part of the Savior. What a contradiction between the benediction that Jesus had uttered a little before then: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," and now, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." So you see these two elements which we shall focus attention upon for a little while. First we have the contrast in the case of Peter between noble confession and presumptuous rebuke, and then second we observe the contrast between Jesus' benediction, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona," and the devastating reprimand, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling block to me."

First of all, in Peter you have contrast and contradiction, between confession and presumptuous rebuke. It might seem impossible for Peter to entertain such contradictory sentiments. Remember that they were not separated by a long period of time. We read in this chapter, after the great confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him" So there was not much of an interval, and we might think it impossible for Peter to entertain such contradictory sentiments within such a brief period of time.

There is the even more staggering concern, and apparent impossibility, regarding the different sources from which Peter derived inspiration. When he said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," it was from God the Father that he was inspired and actuated. When he said "This shall not be unto thee," it was from Satan that he was inspired and actuated. Could there be within such a brief period of time the inspiration and the actuation of such diverse sources, God the Father in all his immaculate holiness and majesty, and Satan in all his unspeakable malignity and iniquity? It is well for us to consider this. I fear that my limitations are such that I cannot elicit from

this by way of exposition or by way of suggestion all that is involved in it. But I do not think that it is useless to mention a few lessons that we should derive from the contradiction in the case of Peter between holy confession and iniquitous rebuke. The first lesson is this - that in the people of God, and Peter was a man of God, there is the morally, the religiously, contradictory. That is the only explanation of this apparent impossibility. Because there is in a man of God that which is morally and religiously contradictory, you can have contradictory sentiments, contradictory actions and contradictory sources of inspiration and instigation. It is for our warning and also for our consolation that the apostle Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us his own autobiography. You find it in Romans 7:14-25 : "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Even in the final word of that autobiography there is placed on record by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

There is the explanation of Peter's contradiction. The apostle Paul has given us, in very brief summary, his own autobiography of the contradiction. When we find this contradiction in the people of God, we must remember that it arises from the fact that there are two laws in our members and they are warring against each other. But a second lesson is this. When Peter began to rebuke our Lord, he was actuated by what he considered very high and noble motives. To a certain extent he was actuated by love for the Savior. Oh, what a warning! These very motives, however noble and worthy they were in the esteem of Peter himself, induced diabolic opposition to the counsel and will of God. Think of it: they offered diabolic opposition to the highest wisdom, the highest counsel, the highest will of heaven. It teaches us this great lesson: not to measure by our motives, but to test our motives by the revealed will of God, the law of God. Oh, what a lesson! We are so liable to think that because our motives appear to be worthy, we can resort to all sorts of methods by which to fulfill the design of these motives. But here is a devastating indictment against the deceit of the human heart, even the deceit that resides in the hearts of the people of God. The third lesson that we may derive from this contradiction in Peter is that we may attain, my beloved friends, to the summit of noblest confession and momentarily lapse into the deepest unfaithfulness. Let us never put our confidence in past achievement. Let us never even put our confidence in the divine investiture with high office. Peter attained to a great height of noble confession when he said: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." With came Jesus' corresponding benediction, and also Jesus' investiture: "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." Of course Peter was the spokesman of the apostles. When he received the benediction, Peter received what belonged to all of the apostles except Judas. When Peter received the investiture it was not for himself alone but as a representative of the apostles. What high office is accorded to these apostles! But here is the great lesson: you may never trust in achievements of the past. We may never trust even in God's investiture of us with high office. This is because our only refuge at any moment is complete reliance upon the grace and the wisdom and the power of God. Whenever our thoughts get focused upon even that which God has given to us, or upon that benediction that God has bestowed upon us and upon that very office with which he may have invested us, in that very moment we are ready to be the prey of the great archenemy. It is when we are weak, then we

are strong. There is not a moment of our lives to which that does not apply. You see how confident Peter was in his past achievements, when he said: "Though all should deny thee, yet will not I." It was Peter that denied him with cursing and swearing. What a lesson for us! - that our lives, moment by moment, must always rely upon the all-sufficient grace of God, and not upon past achievement or past investiture.

We come to the next contrast that appears in this chapter: the contrast in Jesus' responses. We might well say that it is impossible in the psychology of our Lord himself, for him to have given such benediction and investiture to Peter, and then such devastating reprimand: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Apparently impossible! And that apparent impossibility is only accentuated in our Lord's case because there was no sin in him. In the case of Peter, there is an explanation of the contradiction between noble confession and presumptuous reprimand, because there was within Peter that which was morally and religiously contradictory. How are we to explain this in the case of our Lord? There are one or two lessons here. There is also a grandeur here. The first lesson is about the Lord's immaculate faithfulness. It is a lesson of truth. Our Lord, you see, reacts to each situation in perfect equity, in faithfulness to truth because he is the faithful witness. If our Lord had been, as it were, unduly sympathetic, had refrained from giving this withering reprimand to Peter, there would have been a defect. Our Lord reacted to each situation as truth and faithfulness demanded. When he said to Peter, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," he was responding in a perfect manner to that which was the fruit of the Father's grace. You could say with all reverence that since this was the fruit of the Father's grace, he could not but have responded with his benediction. He could not have responded otherwise than with complacency and benignity. But when Peter took him and began to rebuke him, Peter was instigated by Satan, and Jesus' faithfulness demanded the corresponding rebuke, the corresponding condemnation, the corresponding reprimand.

Try to catch something, my beloved friends, of the grandeur of the contrast in the case of our Lord himself. It is the contrast that faithfulness demands. You can see it all along in the witness of our Lord - the contrast between blessing and curse. You have it very elegantly inscribed in Luke 6:1-49, verses 20 through 24, the form in which our Lord's sermon on the mount is given in the gospel according to Luke. He turns to his disciples and says, "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. . . ." Then he turns, in what you might call the same breath, to say, "But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." You see the contrast, the contradiction indeed, between blessing and woe; but that is what faithfulness demands. This was faithfulness in the case of Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona. . . . Get behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me." There is no compromise. The faithful witness, my friends, will be that unto you if you are his. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Remember, there will be in the reactions and responses of your Savior to you both benediction and correction, and accept both. But then there is another lesson here in the contrast that there is in the response of the Savior. How different is the attitude of our Lord to Peter when Peter denied him in the palace of the high priest. The Lord warned Peter, "Before the cock

crow, thou shall deny me thrice." He had told him, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." You remember that Peter denied the Savior three times and he did it with cursing and swearing; and the cock crew. The Lord heard the cock, and he turned and looked upon Peter. It was no withering, devastating look that time. It was the look of tender compassion. It was the look of the bowels of compassion for Peter. But on this occasion, see how different! With vehement indignation he says, "Get behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me." What is the reason for the difference between the loving look of compassion and the withering, devastating reprimand on this occasion? There is much here for our instruction. When Peter denied his Lord, it was succumbing on Peter's part to temptation. It was a temptation directed to Peter himself, and Peter succumbed. And our Lord looked upon him with bowels of tender compassion. But when Peter took him and began to rebuke him, and said "This shall not be unto thee," what was the temptation? Peter was now the instrument of a plea directed to the Savior himself. He was the instrument of a plea that would have turned the Savior from the counsel and will for which he came into the world. That is the reason for the contrast between the look of compassion in the palace of the high priest, and the devastating reprimand on this occasion. What Jesus was now resisting with all the vehemence of righteous indignation was a temptation directed to him by Peter as the instrument of Satan to turn him aside from his duty for which he came into the world. There, my friends, you have the grandeur of the Savior's commitment. He came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him who sent him. Again, he said "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straightened until it be accomplished!"

Consequently, the plea of this disciple whom he loved had to be resisted with all of the vehemence of that devastating reprimand. For it was a plea to turn aside from the highest counsel of God the Father. There was to be no truck with such a plea: "Get behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me." Can you not see in this the Savior's commitment to that purpose for which he came into the world? There was not to be one moment of hesitation in administering the rebuke!

Now in conclusion, may I invite you to recognize in this particular instance the disclosure of the glory of Christ? The apostle Paul says, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the Spirit of God." Let us meditate carefully. Let us meditate prayerfully. Let us meditate persistently upon the revelation of the glorious Redeemer that is given to us in the Scripture of truth. Let us catch new facets of that revelation of glory. As we catch new facets, as we meditate prayerfully in dependence upon the enlightening of the Holy Spirit, we will be transformed more and more into his likeness. For that is the great destination of the people of God, that they shall be conformed to the image of him who is the firstborn among many brethren. We see in this chapter, perhaps in an unsuspecting way, disclosure to us of the unsurpassed glory of the Redeemer in the different reactions, the different responses, that he gave to the actions of Peter.

S. The Covenant of Grace

[The Covenant of Grace] A BIBLICO-THEOLOGICAL STUDY Prof. John Murray

INTRODUCTION

STUDENTS of historical theology, even those who entertain a radically different view of the history of divine revelation from that which governs the thought of classic Reformed theology, have recognized that the covenant theology marked an epoch in the appreciation and understanding of the progressiveness of divine revelation. William Robertson Smith, for example, gives the following appraisal: 'With all its defects, the Federal theology of Cocceius is the most important attempt, in the older Protestant theology, to do justice to the historical development of revelation'. Geerhardus Vos, steeped in and sympathetic towards the covenant theology, says that it 'has from the beginning shown itself possessed of a true historic sense in the apprehension of the progressive character of the deliverance of truth.' When we use the term "covenant theology", however, we must not restrict this evaluation to the more fully developed covenant theology of the seventeenth century. For in John Calvin there is a distinct emphasis upon the historic progressiveness and continuity of redemptive revelation. We need only to be reminded of the Institutes, Book II, Chapters x and xi where he unfolds in detail the similarities and differences of the two Testaments. It is in connection with this discussion that he says: 'The covenant of all the fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours, that it is the very same. Only the administration varies.' Later, in one of the most significant statements relevant to this subject, he says: 'If the subject still appears involved in any obscurity, let us proceed to the very form of the covenant; which will not only satisfy sober minds, but will abundantly prove the ignorance of those who endeavour to oppose it. For the Lord has always covenanted thus with his servants: 'I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people" (Leviticus 26:12). These expressions, according to the common explanation of the prophets, comprehend life, and salvation, and consummate felicity.' Nothing could be more pertinent to the perspective which is indispensable to the proper understanding of covenant revelation than the recognition that the central element of the blessing involved in covenant grace is the relationship expressed in the words, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people'. The covenant theology not only recognized the organic unity and progressiveness of redemptive revelation but also the fact that redemptive revelation was covenant revelation and that the religion of piety which was the fruit and goal of this covenant revelation was covenant religion or piety. The necessity of this conclusion can readily be shown by the fact that the relation of grace and promise established by God with Abraham was a covenant relation. It is this Abrahamic covenant, so explicitly set forth in Genesis 15:1-21 and Genesis 17:1-27, that underlies the whole subsequent development of God's redemptive promise, word, and action. It is in terms of the promise given to Abraham, that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed, that God sent forth His Son in the fulness of time in order that He might redeem them that were under the law and all without distinction might receive the adoption of sons. It is in fulfilment of this promise to Abraham that there is now no longer Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, bond nor free, that Christ is all and in all, and that all believers are blessed with faithful Abraham. The redemptive grace of

God in the highest and furthest reaches of its realization is the unfolding of the promise given to Abraham and therefore the unfolding of the Abrahamic covenant. Soteriology is covenant soteriology and eschatology is covenant eschatology. The covenant theology was governed by this insight and by this conception. It was in the Reformed theology that the covenant theology developed, and the greatest contribution of covenant theology was its covenant soteriology and eschatology.

It would not be, however, in the interests of theological conservation or theological progress for us to think that the covenant theology is in all respects definitive and that there is no further need for correction, modification, and expansion. Theology must always be undergoing reformation. The human understanding is imperfect. However architectonic may be the systematic constructions of any one generation or group of generations, there always remains the need for correction and reconstruction so that the structure may be brought into closer approximation to the Scripture and the reproduction be a more faithful transcript or reflection of the heavenly exemplar. It appears to me that the Covenant theology, notwithstanding the finesse of analysis with which it was worked out and the grandeur of its articulated systematization, needs recasting. We would not presume to claim that we shall be so successful in this task that the reconstruction will displace and supersede the work of the classic covenant theologians. But with their help we may be able to contribute a little towards a more biblically articulated and formulated construction of the covenant concept and of its application to our faith, love, and hope.

DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'COVENANT' From early times in the era of the Reformation and throughout the development of the covenant theology the formulation has been deeply affected by the idea that a covenant is a compact or agreement between two parties. As early as Henry Bullinger's *De Testamento seu Foedere Dei* we find such statements as the following. 'A diaqhvkx in the singular number signifies a pact and agreement and promise. And Bullinger proceeds to construe the covenant of grace as a uniting together of God and man in terms of certain prescriptions - on God's side promises, on man's side the condition of keeping the covenant by fearing the Lord, walking in His ways, and serving Him with the whole heart. Ursinus, in like manner, says: 'A covenant in general signifieth a mutual contract or agreement of two parties joined in the covenant, whereby is made a bond or obligation on certain conditions for the performance of giving or taking something, with addition of outward signs and tokens, for solemn testimony and confirmation that the compact and promise shall be kept inviolable'. Hence God's covenant is a mutual promise and agreement between God and men, whereby God giveth men assurance, that he will be gracious and favorable to them . . . and on the other side men bind themselves to faith and repentance'. This mutual compact, Ursinus holds, is sealed by the sacraments, testifying God's will toward us and our dutifulness toward Him. John Preston, likewise, defines a covenant as a compact, agreement, mutual engagement. The covenant with Abraham comprised four things: (1) the seed promised and fulfilled in Christ; (2) the condition — faith in the promise; (3) the confirmation — promise and oath; (4) the parts which answer to the three offices of Christ.' And William Perkins says that the covenant of grace is nothing more than 'a compact made between God and man touching reconciliation and life everlasting by Christ'. The parties reconciled are God and man, God being the principal, promising righteousness and life in Christ, and man binding himself to faith. Christ is the mediator in whom all the promises are yea and amen. The more scholastic and systematic theologians took their point of departure from this

type of definition. Peter Van Mastricht, for example, says that a covenant denotes an agreement (consensus) between God and His people in which God promises beatitude and stipulates obedience. Van Mastricht applies this notion of agreement or consent of parties in different ways to different covenants and thus makes important distinctions. But these distinctions are not our concern at present. Cocceius also construes the covenant of grace as 'an agreement between God and man a sinner'.

Francis Turretine defines the covenant of grace as 'a gratuitous pact between God offended and man the offender, entered into in Christ, in which God promises to man freely on account of Christ remission of sins and salvation, and man relying on the same grace promises faith and obedience. Or it is a gratuitous agreement between God the offended one and man the offender concerning grace and glory in Christ to be conferred upon man the sinner on the condition of faith'. Consequently the elements in the covenant consist in (1) the Author, (2) the Parties contracting, (3) the Mediator, and (4) the Clauses a parte Dei and a parte hominis.

Herman Witsius, to take another example, says that 'the covenant of grace is an agreement between God and the elect sinner; God declaring his free goodwill concerning eternal salvation, and everything relative thereto, freely to be given to those in covenant by and for the sake of the Mediator Christ; and man consenting to that goodwill by a sincere faith'. THE USE OF THE TERM IN SCRIPTURE As we study the biblical evidence bearing upon the nature of divine covenant we shall discover that the emphasis in these theologians upon God's grace and promise is one thoroughly in accord with the relevant biblical data. As we shall see, the gracious, promissory character of covenant cannot be over-accented. But the question that confronts us is whether the notion of mutual compact or agreement or convention provides the proper point of departure for our construction of the covenant of grace. The question now is not whether the theologians who made use of this concept were entirely governed by its implications and carried it out so rigidly in their construction of the covenant of grace that the total result was warped and distorted by the importation and application of this idea. Furthermore, the question is not whether the idea of compact may not with propriety be used in the interpretation and construction of certain aspects of those divine provisions which lie behind and come to expression in God's administration of saving grace to fallen men. And, finally, the question is not whether mutuality must be ruled out of our conception of what is involved in the relation which the covenant of grace constitutes. The question is simply whether biblico-theological study will disclose that, in the usage of Scripture, covenant (berith in Hebrew and diatheke in Greek) may properly be interpreted in terms of a mutual pact or agreement.

(a) Covenants between men When we examine the Scripture we do find that berith is applied to relationships established between men. Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant at Beersheba (Genesis 21:27, Genesis 21:32).¹⁶ Abimelech said to Isaac, 'Let us make a covenant with thee' (Genesis 26:28). Laban said to Jacob, 'Now therefore come thou, and let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee' (Genesis 31:44). The Gibeonites said to Joshua, 'Make ye a covenant with us' (Joshua 9:6, Joshua 9:11, RV, cf. Joshua 9:15). David made a covenant with Jonathan, and Jonathan with David (1 Samuel 18:3). David made a covenant with Abner (2 Samuel 3:12, 2 Samuel 3:13, 2 Samuel 3:21); he also made a covenant with all the elders of Israel in Hebron when he became king over all Israel (2 Samuel 5:3). Solomon and Hiram made a covenant (1 Kings 5:12). It might seem that here undoubtedly the notion of agreement or

contract prevails and that to make a covenant is simply to enter into a mutual compact or league.

It must be said, first of all, that, even should it be true that in these covenants the idea of mutual compact is central, it does not follow that the idea of compact is central in or essential to the covenant relation which God constitutes with man. We have to recognize a parity existing between men which cannot obtain in the relation between God and man. And we must also appreciate the flexibility that attaches to the use of terms in Scripture as well as in other literature. Hence we might find that mutual compact is of the essence of covenant when a merely human relationship is in view and that such an idea would be entirely out of place when a divine-human relationship is contemplated. In the second place, it needs to be noted that the LXX in these cases renders the Hebrew *berith* by the Greek word *diatheke*. This is significant because, if mutual compact belonged to the essence of covenant in these cases, we should have expected the translators to use *suntheke*. To say the least this raises our suspicion that the LXX translators were not governed by the thought of mutual agreement when they came to these instances of covenantal human relationships. Geerhardus Vos is mistaken when he says that 'where the *berith* is made between man and man and consists in a mutual agreement, the translators do not employ *diathkh* but *sunqkh*, a word exactly corresponding to the word covenant'. The term *suntheke* hardly ever appears in the canonical books of the LXX. It appears two or three times but only once possibly as the translation of *berith*. In this one possible case it refers to the Lord's covenant with Israel. In the third place, when we examine some of the instances in question we shall discover that the thought of pact or contract is not in the foreground. It is not denied that there is engagement or commitment in reference to something upon which the person entering into covenant is agreed. Abimelech said to Isaac, 'Let us make a covenant with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee' (Genesis 26:28, Genesis 26:29). And Laban said to Jacob, 'Let us make a covenant, I and thou, and let it be for a witness between me and thee' (Genesis 31:44). And Laban and Jacob apparently agreed that they would not pass over the heap and pillar to each other for harm (cf. Genesis 31:52). There is engagement or commitment indeed. But when all the instances of merely human covenants are examined, it would definitely appear that the notion of sworn fidelity is thrust into prominence in these covenants rather than that of mutual contract. It is not the contractual terms that are in prominence so much as the solemn engagement of one person to another. To such an extent is this the case that stipulated terms of agreement need not be present at all. It is the giving of oneself over in the commitment of truth that is emphasized and the specified conditions as those upon which the engagement or commitment is contingent are not mentioned. It is the promise of unreserved fidelity, of whole-souled commitment that appears to constitute the essence of the covenant. There is promise, there may be the sealing of that promise by oath, and there is the bond resultant upon these elements. It is a bonded relationship of unreserved commitment in respect of the particular thing involved or the relationship constituted. This is well illustrated by what David says to Jonathan: 'thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee' (1 Samuel 20:8). David accords to Jonathan's commitment the bonded character of divine sanction and regards it as sealed by divine oath.

If this analysis of the nature of these human covenants is correct, then the idea of stipulations and conditions devised by mutual consultation and agreed upon as the terms of engagement need not to be present even in human covenants. There is, of course, the bond of commitment to one another, but so profound and all-embracing is this commitment that the notion of contractual

stipulations recedes into the background or disappears entirely. To say the least, the case is such in these instances of human relationship that no evidence can be derived from them to support the idea of mutual contract or compact. b) Covenants made by man with God The next type of covenant to be considered is the covenant of human initiative entered into with the Lord. In the days of Joshua the people said, 'The Lord our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken' (Joshua 24:24, RV), and in answer to this promise 'Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem.' (Joshua 24:25). There is the case of Jehoiada who 'made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people' (2 Kings 11:17). Josiah 'made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to confirm the words of this covenant that were written in this book: and all the people stood to the covenant' (2 Kings 23:3, RV). Finally, Ezra said to the people in his day, 'Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives' (Ezra 10:3). These are instances of covenanting with God. We cannot fail to note that what is in the forefront in these cases is not a contract or compact. Strictly speaking, it is not an agreement. Though the persons entering into covenant agree to do certain things, the precise thought is not that of agreement by the people among themselves, nor a mutual agreement between the people and the Lord. We must distinguish between devising terms of agreement or striking an agreement, on the one hand, and the agreement of consent or commitment, on the other. What we find in these instances is solemn, promissory commitment to faith or truth on the part of the people concerned. They bind themselves in bond to be faithful to the Lord in accordance with His revealed will. The covenant is solemn pledging of devotion to God, unreserved and unconditional commitment to His service. We are far away from the idea of a bond as sealed on the acceptance of certain prescribed stipulations and the promise of fulfilment of these stipulations on the condition that other parties to the contract fulfil the conditions imposed upon them. The thought is rather that of unreserved, whole-souled commitment. c) Divine covenants When we pass on to those instances of covenant which are specifically divine it is here that the question becomes particularly pointed and urgent: does the idea of mutual compact or agreement constitute the essence of a divine covenant? Or, if this points the question too sharply, is mutual compact or agreement an integral element in the biblical conception of a covenant which God dispenses to men?

There are a few instances in the Old Testament where the word covenant is used with reference to God's creative and providential ordinances. The covenant of the day and of the night is synonymous with the ordinances of day and night (Jeremiah 33:20, Jeremiah 33:25). Obviously what is emphasized is the stability and perpetuity of these ordinances arising from the ordination of God and the immutability arising from such ordination. There may also be an allusion to the promise given after the flood that while the earth remained seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night would not cease (Genesis 8:22). In that event the faithfulness of God not only to His providential ordinances but also to His promise would be brought into view, and the total thought would be that covenant in this connection points to the ordinances of God as immovably established by the ordination, power, and faithfulness of God. We are given some indication of the way in which covenant may be used to express divine monergism and fidelity.

THE POST-DILUVIAN NOAHIC COVENANT

We come now to those instances of covenant administration which have respect to God's bestowal of grace upon men, instances with which we are directly concerned in our attempt to discover what precisely constitutes a covenant and what precisely is the nature of that relation on the part of God to men which covenant constitution contemplates. We may consider, first of all, that instance which, perhaps more than any other in Scripture, assists us in discovering what the essence of covenant is, namely, the post-diluvian Noahic covenant (Genesis 9:9 - Genesis 9:17). In regard to this covenant the following features are patent.

1. It is God's covenant in that it is conceived, devised, determined, established, confirmed, and dispensed by God Himself. 'And I, behold, I am establishing my covenant with you' (Genesis 9:9; cf. Genesis 9:11-13, Genesis 9:17).

2. It is universal in its scope, a covenant not only with Noah but with his seed after him and with every living creature (Genesis 9:9-10). This places in obvious relief the fact that it affects for good even those who do not have any intelligent understanding of its meaning. The covenant operates for good to such an extent that its benefits are not contingent upon intelligent appreciation of the covenant or of the benefits which are dispensed in terms of it.

We must not forget, of course, that the blessings bestowed in terms of this covenant are not dispensed in complete abstraction from the revelation given at the time of its establishment nor in abstraction from understanding of its significance on the part of men. God spoke to Noah and to his sons. This was revelation, and revelation implies subjects endowed with the intellectual capacity to understand its character and its effects. Furthermore, we may not forget that the covenant purpose and grace were made known to Noah, and the perpetuity of the covenant is continuously attested in order that those capable of understanding may have confidence in the security and perpetuity of the covenant grace bestowed. But we must also observe that the covenant operates on behalf of, and dispenses its blessings to, those who are wholly unaware of its existence. It is a covenant with all flesh.

3. It is an unconditional covenant. This feature is, of course, co-ordinate with the fact that intelligent understanding is not indispensable to the reception of its benefits. But the particular consideration now in view is that no commandment is appended which could be construed as the condition upon which the promise is to be fulfilled. And there is not the slightest suggestion to the effect that the covenant could be annulled by human unfaithfulness or its blessing forfeited by unbelief; the thought of breaking the covenant is inconceivable. The confirmation given is to the opposite effect. In a word, the promise is unconditional.

4. The covenant is intensely and pervasively monergistic. Nothing exhibits this more clearly than the fact that the sign attached to attest and seal the divine faithfulness and the irrevocability of God's promise is one produced by conditions over which God alone has control and in connection with which there is rigid exclusion of human co-operation. The sign is not an action instituted by God and performed by man at the divine behest. It is one in which there is no human agency whatsoever. Even what is said regarding the bow in the cloud has a Godward reference. God will see it to remember the everlasting covenant. There is, doubtless, anthropomorphism here. But it is anthropomorphism for the purpose of bringing to the forefront the unilateral character of the covenant. It is true that the revelatory purpose of the bow in the cloud is not to be forgotten. But the significant fact is that the revelatory purpose is to bear witness to the divine faithfulness. It is

the constant reminder that God will not prove unfaithful to His promise. The main point to be stressed now, however, is that this continuance is dependent upon divine faithfulness alone; in anthropomorphic terms, upon the divine remembrance alone. And if we fail to interpret the sign aright, if we regard it simply as a natural phenomenon without any reference to its covenantal meaning, this does not negate or nullify the divine remembrance and the perpetuity of God's faithfulness. 'I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth.' (Genesis 9:16).

5. It is an everlasting covenant. All flesh will not again be cut off by the waters of the flood (Genesis 9:11). The perpetuity is bound up with its divinely unilateral and monergistic character. It is because it is divine in its origin, administration, establishment, and confirmation that it can be perpetual. And we may say that the perpetuity both stems from and witnesses to its divinity. Perpetuity and divinity are complementary and mutually interdependent.

These features of the covenant plainly evince that this covenant is a sovereign, divine administration, that it is such in its conception, determination, disclosure, confirmation, and fulfilment, that it is an administration or dispensation of forbearance and goodness, that it is not conditioned by or dependent upon faith or obedience on the part of men. It is an administration of grace which emanates from the sovereign good pleasure of God and continues without any modification or retraction of its benefits by the immutable promise and faithfulness of God.

It is quite apparent that in this covenant we must not take our point of departure from the idea of compact, or contract, or agreement in any respect whatsoever. It is not contractual in its origin, or in its constitution, or in its operation, or in its outcome. Its fulfilment or continuance is not in the least degree contingent even upon reciprocal obligation or appreciation on the part of its beneficiaries. Yet it is a covenant made with men, with Noah and his sons and their seed after them to perpetual generations. It is a covenant characterized by divinity in a way unsurpassed by any other covenant and yet it draws men within the scope of its operation as surely as any other covenant does. Here we have covenant in the purity of its conception, as a dispensation of grace to men, wholly divine in its origin, fulfilment, and confirmation. The question inevitably faces us: may we consider the post-diluvian Noahic covenant as providing us with the essential features of a divine covenant with men? Is there not in this covenant that which makes it inappropriate as the criterion of the terms which could govern the covenant relationship of God with men on the highest level? In this covenant creation as a whole is brought within the scope of the favour bestowed. Hence it can be argued that the relationship with men involved in this covenant must be on a denominator that is common to man and to the non-moral creation and cannot, therefore, possess any of the differentiating features which would characterize covenant relationship to men as men. Needless to say this consideration must be taken into account in our interpretation of what constitutes divine covenant on the highest level of blessing and relationship. And yet it would be unwarranted to disregard entirely the direction of thought provided by this particular covenant. An aspect of this differentiation appears in the pre-diluvian Noahic covenant, the first instance of reference to covenant in the Old Testament (see Genesis 6:15). In this case Noah was commanded to do certain things and the doing of these things on the part of Noah was the indispensable condition of the fulfilment of the grace provided for in the covenant. 'Thus did Noah according to all that God commanded him, so did he' (Genesis 6:22). Yet even in this case, where obedience to commandments is the means through which the grace of the covenant is to be

realized and enjoyed, we must also take note of the fact that in other respects this covenant exhibits the features of divine initiation, determination, establishment, and confirmation which are so conspicuous in the post-diluvian Noahic covenant. The idea of compact or agreement is just as conspicuously absent as in the post-diluvian.

Significantly enough, the commandments which, are appended, compliance with which on the part of Noah is indispensable to the blessing of preservation, do not in the least suggest mutuality of agreement or compact. The commandments are added in such a way that they are just as sovereign and unilateral in prescription or dispensation as is the annunciation of the covenant itself. The appended requirements are simply extensions, applications, expressions of the grace intimated in the covenant. The directions are as sovereign as the annunciation of the covenant and they flow naturally from it so that there is no deflection from the idea of sovereign dispensation. We may think of Noah as cooperating with God in carrying out the provisions of the covenant but the co-operation is quite foreign to that of pact or convention. It is the co-operation of response which the grace of the covenant constrains and demands. THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT When we come to the Abrahamic covenant we find features which are entirely new in connection with covenant administration. The first distinctive feature appears in connection with the initial reference to the covenant (Genesis 15:8-18). It is the solemn sanction by which the Lord confirmed to Abraham the certainty of the promise that he would inherit the land of Canaan. It is perhaps the most striking sanction that we have in the whole of Scripture, particularly if we interpret it as a self-maledictory oath in which, anthropomorphically, God calls upon Himself the curse of dismemberment if He does not fulfil to Abraham the promise of possessing the land. The second distinctive feature is the reference to keeping and breaking the covenant (Genesis 17:9, Genesis 17:10, Genesis 17:14). With reference to the first distinctive feature there are certain observations which are pertinent to the question we are now pursuing.

(1) Though this feature is signally distinctive, it underlines what we have found already respecting the earlier covenants, namely, that a covenant is a divine administration, divine in its origin, establishment, confirmation and fulfilment. It is not Abraham who passes through between the divided pieces of the animals; it is the theophany. And the theophany represents God. The action therefore is divinely unilateral. It is confirmation to Abraham, not confirmation from him. Abraham here does not pledge his truth to God by a self-maledictory oath but God condescends to pledge truth to His promise, a fact which advertises the divine sovereignty and faithfulness as brought to bear upon and as giving character to the covenant constituted. 'In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.' (Genesis 15:18).

(2) The distinctiveness of the sanction and the added solemnity which it involves are correlative with the intimacy and spirituality of the blessing which the covenant imparts. The essence of the blessing is that God will be the God of Abraham and of his seed, the characteristic promise of the Old Testament, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people'. In a word, this consists in union and communion with the Lord. With reference to the second distinctive feature, namely, the necessity of keeping the covenant and the warning against breaking it, we cannot suppress the inference that the necessity of keeping is complementary to the added richness, intimacy, and spirituality of the covenant itself. The spirituality of the Abrahamic covenant in contrast with the Noahic consists in the fact that the Abrahamic is concerned with religious relationship on the

highest level, union and communion with God. Where there is religious relationship there is mutuality and where we have religious relationship on the highest conceivable level there mutuality on the highest plane of spirituality must obtain. This is just saying that there must be response on the part of the beneficiary and response on the highest level of religious devotion. The keeping of the covenant, therefore, so far from being incompatible with the nature of the covenant as an administration of grace, divine in its initiation, confirmation, and fulfilment, is a necessity arising from the intimacy and spirituality of the religious relation involved. The more enhanced our conception of the sovereign grace bestowed the more we are required to posit reciprocal faithfulness on the part of the recipient. The demands of appreciation and gratitude increase with the length and breadth and depth and height of the favour bestowed. And such demands take concrete practical form in the obligation to obey the commandments of God.

We are led to the conclusion that in the Abrahamic covenant there is no deviation from the idea of covenant as a sovereign dispensation of grace. We have found that grace is intensified and expanded rather than diminished and the greater the grace the more accentuated becomes the sovereignty of its administration. The necessity of keeping the covenant on the part of men does not interfere with the divine monergism of dispensation. The necessity of keeping is but the expression of the magnitude of the grace bestowed and the spirituality of the relation constituted. Even in this case the notion of compact or agreement is alien to the nature of the covenant constitution.

It may plausibly be objected, however, that the breaking of the covenant envisaged in this case interferes with the perpetuity of the covenant. For does not the possibility of breaking the covenant imply conditional perpetuity? 'The uncircumcised male . . . shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant' (Genesis 17:14, RV). Without question the blessings of the covenant and the relation which the covenant entails cannot be enjoyed or maintained apart from the fulfilment of certain conditions on the part of the beneficiaries. For when we think of the promise which is the central element of the covenant, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people', there is necessarily involved, as we have seen, mutuality in the highest sense. Fellowship is always mutual and when mutuality ceases fellowship ceases. Hence the reciprocal response of faith and obedience arises from the nature of the relationship which the covenant contemplates (cf. Genesis 18:17-19, Genesis 22:16-18). The obedience of Abraham is represented as the condition upon which the fulfilment of the promise given to him was contingent and the obedience of Abraham's seed is represented as the means through which the promise given to Abraham would be accomplished. There is undoubtedly the fulfilment of certain conditions and these are summed up in obeying the Lord's voice and keeping His covenant.

It is not quite congruous, however, to speak of these conditions as conditions of the covenant. For when we speak thus we are distinctly liable to be understood as implying that the covenant is not to be regarded as dispensed until the conditions are fulfilled and that the conditions are integral to the establishment of the covenant relation. And this would not provide a true or accurate account of the covenant. The covenant is a sovereign dispensation of God's grace. It is grace bestowed and a relation established. The grace dispensed and the relation established do not wait for the fulfilment of certain conditions on the part of those to whom the grace is dispensed. Grace is bestowed and the relation established by sovereign divine administration. How then are we to construe the conditions of which we have spoken? The continued enjoyment of this grace and of

the relation established is contingent upon the fulfilment of certain conditions. For apart from the fulfilment of these conditions the grace bestowed and the relation established are meaningless. Grace bestowed implies a subject and reception on the part of that subject. The relation established implies mutuality. But the conditions in view are not really conditions of bestowal. They are simply the reciprocal responses of faith, love and obedience, apart from which the enjoyment of the covenant blessing and of the covenant relation is inconceivable. In a word, keeping the covenant presupposes the covenant relation as established rather than the condition upon which its establishment is contingent.

It is when viewed in this light that the breaking of the covenant takes on an entirely different complexion. It is not the failure to meet the terms of a pact nor failure to respond to the offer of favourable terms of contractual agreement. It is unfaithfulness to a relation constituted and to grace dispensed. By breaking the covenant what is broken is not the condition of bestowal but the condition of consummated fruition.

It should be noted also that the necessity of keeping the covenant is bound up with the particularism of this covenant. The covenant does not yield its blessing to all indiscriminately. The discrimination which this covenant exemplifies accentuates the sovereignty of God in the bestowal of its grace and the fulfilment of its promises. This particularization is correlative with the spirituality of the grace bestowed and the relation constituted and it is also consonant with the exactitude of its demands. A covenant which yields its blessing indiscriminately is not one that can be kept or broken. We see again, therefore, that the intensification which particularism illustrates serves to accentuate the keeping which is indispensable to the fruition of the covenant grace. THE MOSAIC COVENANT The Mosaic covenant offers more plausible support to the conception of compact than does any other covenant of God with men. Furthermore, the notion of prescribed conditions would appear to receive more support from the circumstances of this covenant than from those of any other. Such considerations as these have been the occasion for constructions which set the Mosaic covenant in sharp contrast both with the Abrahamic covenant and the New Testament. At the outset we must remember that the idea of conditional fulfilment is not something peculiar to the Mosaic covenant. We have been faced quite poignantly with this very question in connection with the Abrahamic covenant. And since this feature is there patent, it does not of itself provide us with any reason for construing the Mosaic covenant in terms different from those of the Abrahamic. Another preliminary observation is that the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt is stated expressly to be in pursuance of the Abrahamic covenant. With reference to the Egyptian bondage we read: 'And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob' (Exodus 2:24). The only interpretation of this is that the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the bringing of them into the land of promise is in fulfilment of the covenant promise to Abraham respecting the possession of the land of Canaan (Exodus 3:16, Exodus 3:17; Exodus 3:4-8; Psalms 105:8-12, Psalms 105:42-45, Psalms 106:45). A third observation is that the spirituality of relationship which is the centre of the Abrahamic covenant is also at the centre of the Mosaic. 'And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God' (Exodus 6:7; cf. Deuteronomy 29:13). This fact links the Mosaic very closely with the Abrahamic and shows that religious relationship on the highest level is contemplated in both, namely, union and communion with God. We must not, therefore, suppress or discount these important considerations that the Mosaic covenant was made with Israel as the sequel to their deliverance

from Egypt, a deliverance wrought in pursuance of the gracious promises given by covenant to Abraham, wrought with the object of bringing to fulfilment the promise given to Abraham that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan, and a deliverance wrought in order to make Israel His own peculiar and adopted people. The first express reference to the covenant made with Israel at Sinai occurs in connection with keeping the covenant. 'Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation' (Exodus 19:5, Exodus 19:6). The next explicit reference appears as the sequel to the promise of the people, 'All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient' (Exodus 24:7, RV) and Moses sprinkled the blood and said, 'Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words' (Exodus 24:8). The foregoing references as well as other considerations might create the impression that the making of the covenant had to wait for the voluntary acceptance on the part of the people and their promise to obey and keep it. A close study of these passages will not bear out such an interpretation. It is an importation contrary to the texts themselves and one that has deflected the course of thought on this subject. Exodus 19:5 does not say, 'If ye will obey my voice and accept the terms stipulated, then I will make my covenant with you'. What is said is, 'If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me'. The covenant is conceived of as dispensed, as in operation, and as constituting a certain relation, in the keeping of it and in obeying God's voice. The covenant is actually presupposed in the keeping of it. Undoubtedly there is a conditional feature to the words, 'If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant'. But what is conditioned upon obedience and keeping of the covenant is the enjoyment of the blessing which the covenant contemplates. In like manner in Exodus 24:7, Exodus 24:8, the covenant is not to be regarded as contingent upon the promise of the people, so that the dispensing of the covenant had to wait for this promise. And verse 8 is not to be construed as if then the covenant had been inaugurated or as if acceptance on the part of the people completed the process of constituting the covenant relation. The covenant had already been established and the blood was simply the confirmation or seal of the covenant established and of the relation constituted. This gives a different perspective to our interpretation of the Mosaic covenant, and we find that the Mosaic covenant also is a sovereign administration of grace, divinely initiated, established, confirmed, and fulfilled. Later references in the Pentateuch confirm this interpretation of sovereign appointment or dispensation (Exodus 34:27, Exodus 34:28; Leviticus 24:8; Numbers 18:19, Numbers 18:25; cf. Nehemiah 13:29). The question of the condition referred to above does call, however, for some consideration. How does the condition of obedience comport with the concept of a monergistic administration of grace? The answer must follow the lines which have been delineated above in connection with the keeping of the Abrahamic covenant. What needs to be emphasized now is that the Mosaic covenant in respect of the condition of obedience is not in a different category from the Abrahamic. It is too frequently assumed that the conditions prescribed in connection with the Mosaic covenant place the Mosaic dispensation in a totally different category as respects grace, on the one hand, and demand or obligation, on the other. In reality there is nothing that is principally different in the necessity of keeping the covenant and of obedience to God's voice, which proceeds from the Mosaic covenant, from that which is involved in the keeping required in the Abrahamic. In both cases the keynotes are obeying God's voice and keeping the covenant (cf. Genesis 18:17-19; Exodus 19:5, Exodus 19:6).

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

If the Mosaic covenant does not disclose deviation from the fundamental notion of a covenant, namely, that it is a sovereign dispensation, divine in its origin, establishment, confirmation, and fulfilment, we should not expect that subsequent covenant administrations would evince a radically different conception. Indeed so basic to the whole subsequent process of redemptive history are the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants that the later developments would be expected to confirm and intensify what we have found to be the specific character of covenant administration. Although the word covenant does not occur in 2 Samuel 7:12-17, we must conclude that this is specifically the annunciation to David, which is elsewhere spoken of as the covenant made with David. In Psalms 89:3, Psalms 89:4 the terms of 2 Samuel 7:12-17 are clearly reiterated. 'I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant: thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.' And the same is true in later verses of the same Psalm (cf. Psalms 89:26 ff.). 'My covenant shall stand fast with him' (Psalms 89:28). 'My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips' (verse 34; cf. Psalms 132:11ff.). A study of these passages will show that the most striking feature is the security, the determinateness, and immutability of the divine promise. Nothing could serve to verify the conception of the covenant which has been elicited from earlier instances more than the emphasis in these passages (relating to the Davidic covenant) upon the certainty of fulfilment arising from the promise and oath of God. Security and certainty as characterizing the covenant could not be more plainly demonstrated than by the parallelism: 'I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant'. And David reflects this note of certainty when, at the close of his career, his resort for consolation and assurance was nothing else than the covenant of his God: 'Verily my house is not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for it is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow' (2 Samuel 23:5). No example of covenant in the Old Testament more clearly supports the thesis that covenant is sovereign promise, promise solemnized by the sanctity of an oath, immutable in its security and divinely confirmed as respects the certainty of its fulfilment.

These Davidic promises are, of course, messianic; it is in Christ that David's seed is established for ever and his throne built up to all generations. In this connection we cannot overlook the relevance of those passages in Isaiah in which the servant of the Lord is said to be given for a covenant of the people. The prophet introduces this messianic personage with the words, 'Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth' (Is. xlii. 1). And he quickly adds, 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles' (verse 6). Later he reiterates: 'And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people' (Isaiah 49:8). The co-ordination of Isaiah 55:3Isaiah 55:3, Isaiah 55:4 is equally significant: 'Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander to the peoples' (RV). Nothing less than sovereign dispensation and unilateral bestowment will comport with the donation of the servant as a covenant of the people. Any notion of agreement or compact would ruthlessly violate the sovereignty of the grace involved and the divine monergism of the action entailed. And no doubt this unusual way of expressing the bestowment of grace is dictated by the consideration that nothing accentuates the certainty and security of promise and fulfilment more than to invest the assurance given with the sanction of covenant. Furthermore, in these Isaianic passages the inference is inevitable that the everlasting

covenant which the Lord makes with the people is correlative with the fact that He has given the servant as a covenant of the people. The security of the covenant with the people is grounded in the security of the donation of the servant as a covenant of the people. And when Malachi calls the messenger 'the messenger of the covenant' (Malachi 3:1), there is the implication that not only is the Messiah given for a covenant of the people but that when He is sent forth to discharge His office it is in terms of the covenant that He does this. He is the angel of the covenant because He comes in pursuance of the covenant promise and purpose, and He is Himself the covenant because the blessings and provisions of the covenant are to such an extent bound up with Him that He is Himself the embodiment of these blessings and of the presence of the Lord with His people which the covenant insures. To whatever extent the response of inclining the ear, of hearing, and of coming (Isaiah 55:3) may be requisite in order that the blessings of covenant grace and relationship may be ours, it must be apparent that the covenant itself is a sovereign donation of the child born and the Son given (Isaiah 9:6). There is nothing that corresponds to the contractual in the declaration 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people' nor in the promise I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David'. Elsewhere in this prophecy of Isaiah it is the certitude and immutability of God's grace that is thrust into prominence in connection with covenant disclosure. 'This is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee' (Isaiah 54:9, Isaiah 54:10; cf. Isaiah 59:21). This passage shows that the post-diluvian Noahic covenant provides the pattern or type of what is involved in God's covenant of peace with His people, namely, that it is an oath-bound and oath-certified assurance of irrevocable grace and promise.

COVENANT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT When we come to the New Testament a goodly number of the instances of *diatheke* are references to Old Testament covenants, sometimes in quotation from the Old Testament (Luke 1:72; Acts 3:35, Acts 3:7-8; Romans 9:4, Romans 9:11, Romans 9:27; 2 Corinthians 3:14; Galatians 3:15, Galatians 3:17, Galatians 3:4, Galatians 3:24; Ephesians 2:12; Hebrews 8:9). There are others which refer to Old Testament promises, though not specifically to Old Testament covenants.

There are instructive lessons, pertinent to our inquiry, to be derived from these Old Testament allusions. The first (Luke 1:72) is illumining in this respect. When Zacharias says that the Lord, the God of Israel, had remembered His holy covenant, the oath which He had sworn to Abraham, it is apparent that he construes the redemptive events which form the subject of his doxology as a fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant. The language of his blessing is unmistakably reminiscent of the language used when God had been preparing His people for the imminent deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. We cannot escape the inference that the redemptive accomplishment signaled by the coming of Christ found its historical prototype in the redemption from Egypt. In Zacharias' esteem it is the same fidelity to covenant promise and oath that is exemplified in the accomplishment of redemption through Christ and in the redemption from Egypt by the hand of Moses and Aaron. This indicates that the undergirding principle of the thought of pious Israelites at this time was the unity and continuity of God's covenant revelation and action, a principle which came to spontaneous expression in the thanksgiving of Zacharias and bears the imprimatur of the

Holy Spirit. It was by inspiration that Zacharias spoke, for we are told that he 'was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied' (Luke 1:67).

Another observation worthy of note is the occurrence of the plural 'covenants' in reference to the privilege of Israel (Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12). Apparently the New Testament writers did not think of the peculiar prerogatives of Israel in terms simply of the Abrahamic covenant even though this covenant is given very distinct prominence in other passages. And of more significance is the fact that Paul speaks of these covenants as 'the covenants of promise' (Ephesians 2:12). He does not hesitate to place the various covenants which constituted the distinctiveness of Israel in the category of promise just as he does not hesitate to list the 'covenants' together with the adoption and the glory and the giving of the law and the service of God and the promises (Romans 9:4). In this we are advised of the direction in which we are to seek for the New Testament conception of covenant.

Most significant of all, perhaps, in this classification of New Testament passages is Galatians 3:15, Galatians 3:17. Paul's emphasis here is upon the immutability, security, inviolability of covenant. 'Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it hath been confirmed, no one makes it void, or adds thereto.' 'A covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, does not disannul, so as to make the promise of no effect.' Whatever view we may entertain regarding the precise import of *diatheke* in this passage, whether it is the testamentary or the dispensatory, we cannot escape the governing thought of the apostle, namely, that a human covenant is irrevocable once it has been confirmed and that it is that same inviolability which characterizes the Abrahamic covenant and therefore, also, the promise which the covenant embraced. Here, without question, covenant appears as a promise and dispensation of grace, divinely established, confirmed, and fulfilled, inviolable in its provisions and of permanent validity. a) The new covenant and the old When we come to those passages in the New Testament which deal specifically with the new covenant in contrast with the old it is highly significant that the contrast between the new economy and the old is not expressed in terms of difference between covenant and something else not a covenant. The contrast is within the ambit of covenant. This would lead us to expect that the basic idea of covenant which we find in the Old Testament is carried over into the New. We are confirmed in this expectation when we take account of the fact that the new covenant is the fulfilment of the covenant made with Abraham (Luke 1:72; Galatians 3:15 ff.). The new economy as covenant attaches itself to the Old Testament covenant promise and cannot be contrasted with Old Testament covenant in respect of that which constitutes the essence of covenant grace and promise. We can express the fact that the new covenant is the expansion and fulfilment of the Abrahamic by saying that it was just because the promise to Abraham had the bonded and oath-bound character of a covenant that its realization in the fulness of the time was inviolably certain. The new covenant in respect of its being a covenant does not differ from the Abrahamic as a sovereign administration of grace, divine in its inception, establishment, confirmation, and fulfilment. The most conclusive evidence, however, is derived from a study of the New Testament respecting the nature of the new covenant. We shall find that the features of the covenant are the same as those we found in connection with covenant in the Old Testament. When our Lord said that His blood was the blood of the covenant that was shed for many for the remission of sins and that the cup of the last supper was the new covenant in His blood (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25), we cannot but regard the

covenant as a designation of the sum-total of grace, blessing, truth, and relationship comprised in that redemption which His blood has secured. Covenant must refer to the bestowment and the relationship secured by the sacrificial blood which He shed. It is the fulness of grace purchased by His blood and conveyed by it. By way of comparison there is an allusion, no doubt, to the blood by which the old covenant, the Mosaic, had been sealed (Exodus 24:6-8; cf. Hebrews 9:18). And since the new is contrasted with the old it cannot be that the contrast inheres in any retraction or dilution of the grace which we have found to be the essence of covenant under the Old Testament.

Apart from the reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:25, the only passage in Paul where he refers expressly to the new covenant 2 Corinthians 3:6. Here, however, we have the most illumining reflection upon the nature of the new covenant. It is the ministration of the Spirit as the Spirit of life (2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 3:8). It is the ministration of righteousness (2 Corinthians 3:9), and of liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17). Most characteristically of all, it is the ministry of that transfiguration by which we are transformed into the image of the Lord Himself. When we assess the significance of such blessings in terms of New Testament teaching and specifically of Pauline teaching we see that Paul conceives of the new covenant as that which ministers the highest blessing and constitutes the relationship to God which is the crown and goal of the redemptive process and the apex of the religious relationship. When we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, and particularly to those passages in which the contrast is drawn between the inferiority of the Mosaic covenant and the transcendent excellence of the new and better covenant, we find that the conception of covenant which we have already found is applied to the highest degree. However accentuated may be the problem connected with the writer's evaluation of the Mosaic covenant, which he contrasts with the new, the resolution of this question will not interfere with our understanding of the conception he entertains respecting the new and better covenant. It is a covenant with a more excellent ministry (Hebrews 8:6), that is to say, more excellent in respect of the access to God secured and the fellowship maintained. To whatever extent the old covenant was the means of establishing the peculiar relation of the Lord to Israel as their God and their relation to Him as His people, the new covenant places this older intimacy of relation in the shadow. For it is the new covenant par excellence which brings to realization the promise 'I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people' (Hebrews 8:10). In other words, the spiritual relationship which lay at the centre of the covenant grace disclosed in both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants reaches its ripest fruition in the new covenant. So grace is the enhancement that a comparative contrast can be stated as if it were absolute. The new covenant is enacted upon better promises (Hebrews 8:6). We found that bonded and oath-bound promise constitutes the essence of the covenant conception. In the new covenant the promises are better and they are placed in the forefront as defining its superiority. Again, the new covenant is not indifferent to law. It is not contrasted with the old because the old had law and the new has not. The superiority of the new does not consist in the abrogation of that law but in its being brought into more intimate relation to us and more effective fulfilment in us. 'I will put my laws into their mind, and upon their hearts will I write them' (Hebrews 8:10). The new covenant is the dispenser of the forgiveness of sins: 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins will I remember no more' (Hebrews 8:12). Finally, the new covenant is one that universalizes the diffusion of knowledge: 'They shall all know me from the least unto the greatest of them' (Hebrews 8:11). In all of this we have the covenant as a sovereign administration of grace and promise, constituting the relation of communion with God, coming to its richest and fullest expression. In a word, the new covenant is

covenant as we have found it to be all along the line of redemptive revelation and accomplishment. But it is covenant in all these respects on the highest level of achievement. If the mark of covenant is divinity in initiation, administration, confirmation, and fulfilment, here we have divinity at the apex of its disclosure and activity. b) The concept of 'testament' No instance of diatheke in the New Testament is more relevant to the thesis now being developed than Hebrews 9:16-17. There have been interpreters who have taken the position that even in this passage the word should not be rendered or construed as testament but as covenant. It seems to me that Geerhardus Vos has effectively dealt with the fallacy of this interpretation. We may assume, therefore, that in these two verses the writer does introduce the testamentary notion of a last will. It is admittedly an exceptional use of the term as far as the New Testament is concerned, and it is introduced for the specific purpose of illustrating the transcendent efficacy or effectiveness of the death of Christ in securing the benefits of covenant grace. Just as the dispolement made in a last will goes into effect with the death of the testator and is thereupon of full force and validity for the benefit of the legatee, so, since Christ through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, the blessing of the new covenant becomes ours. Specifically in terms of the context, our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God and we receive the promise of an eternal inheritance. The testamentary provisions referred to in verses 16 and 17 are introduced simply for the purpose of enforcing the efficacy of Jesus' death in bringing into effect the blessings of the new covenant. There is no more possibility or feasibility of interference with the effective application of the blessings of the covenant than there is of interfering with a testamentary dispolement once the testator has died. This use of the testamentary provision of Roman law to illustrate the inviolable security accruing from the sacrificial death of Christ serves to underline the unilateral character of the new covenant. One thing is apparent that a testament is a unilateral disposition of possession. How totally foreign to the notion of compact, contract, or agreement is the disposition or dispensation which can be illustrated in respect of its effective operation by a last will! This occasional use of diatheke as testament cannot comport with a concept of covenant which in any way derives its definition from the idea of mutual agreement.

CONCLUSION This brings to a close our review of the evidence bearing upon the nature of God's covenant with men. From the beginning of God's disclosures to men in terms of covenant we find a unity of conception which is to the effect that a divine covenant is a sovereign administration of grace and of promise. It is not compact or contract or agreement that provides the constitutive or governing idea but that of dispensation in the sense of disposition. This central and basic concept is applied, however, to a variety of situations and the precise character of the grace bestowed and of the promise given differs in the differing covenant administrations. The differentiation does not reside in any deviation from this basic conception but simply consists in the differing degrees of richness and fulness of the grace bestowed and of the promise given. Preponderantly in the usage of Scripture covenant refers to grace and promise specifically redemptive. The successive covenants are coeval with the successive epochs in the unfolding and accomplishment of God's redemptive will. Not only are they coeval, they are correlative with these epochs. And not only are they correlative, they are themselves constitutive of these epochs so that redemptive revelation and accomplishment become identical with covenant revelation and accomplishment. When we appreciate this fact we come to perceive that the epochal strides in the unfolding of redemptive revelation are at the same time epochal advances in the disclosure of the riches of covenant grace. This progressive enrichment of the covenant grace bestowed is not, however, a retraction

of or deviation from the concept which is constitutive from the beginning but, as we should expect, an expansion and intensification of it. Hence, when we come to the climax and apex of covenant administration in the New Testament epoch, we have sovereign grace and promise dispensed on the highest level because it is grace bestowed and promise given in regard to the attainment of the highest end conceivable for men. It is no wonder then that the new covenant is called the everlasting covenant. As covenant revelation has progressed throughout the ages it has reached its consummation in the new covenant, and the new covenant is not wholly diverse in principle and character from the covenants which have preceded it and prepared for it, but it is itself the complete realization and embodiment of that sovereign grace which was the constitutive principle of all the covenants. And when we remember that covenant is not only bestowment of grace, not only oath-bound promise, but also relationship with God in that which is the crown and goal of the whole process of religion, namely, union and communion with God, we discover again that the new covenant brings this relationship also to the highest level of achievement. At the centre of covenant revelation as its constant refrain is the assurance 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people'. The new covenant does not differ from the earlier covenants because it inaugurates this peculiar intimacy. It differs simply because it brings to the ripest and richest fruition the relationship epitomized in that promise. In this respect also the new covenant is an everlasting covenant — there is no further expansion or enrichment. 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 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, and it is in terms of the new covenant that it will be said, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them' (Revelation 21:3).

S. The Free Offer of the Gospel

THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL By

John Murray

Introduction

It would appear that the real point in dispute in connection with the free offer of the gospel is whether it can properly be said that God desires the salvation of all men. The Committee elected by the Twelfth General Assembly in its report to the Thirteenth General Assembly said "God not only delights in the penitent but is also moved by the riches of his goodness and mercy to desire the repentance and salvation of the impenitent and reprobate" (Minutes, p. 67). It should have been apparent that the aforesaid Committee, in predicating such "desire" of God, was not dealing with the decretive will of God; it was dealing with the free offer of the gospel to all without distinction and that surely respects, not the decretive or secret will of God, but the revealed will. There is no ground for the supposition that the expression was intended to refer to God's decretive will.

It must be admitted that if the expression were intended to apply to the decretive will of God then there would be, at least, implicit contradiction. For to say that God desires the salvation of the reprobate and also that God wills the damnation of the reprobate and apply the former to the same thing as the latter, namely, the decretive will, would be contradiction; it would amount to averring of the same thing, viewed from the same aspect, God wills and God does not will. The question then is: what is implicit in, or lies back of; the full and free offer of the gospel to all without distinction? The word "desire" has come to be used in the debate, not because it is necessarily the most accurate or felicitous word but because it serves to set forth quite sharply a certain implication of the full and free offer of the gospel to all. This implication is that in the free offer there is expressed not simply the bare preceptive will of God but the disposition of lovingkindness on the part of God pointing to the salvation to be gained through compliance with the overtures of gospel grace. In other words, the gospel is not simply an offer or invitation but also implies that God delights that those to whom the offer comes would enjoy what is offered in all its fullness. And the word "desire" has been used in order to express the thought epitomized in Ezekiel 33:11, which is to the effect that God has pleasure that the wicked turn from his evil way and live. It might as well have been said, "It pleases God that the wicked repent and be saved."

Again, the expression "God desires," in the formula that crystallizes the crux of the question, is intended to notify not at all the "seeming" attitude of God but a real attitude, a real disposition of lovingkindness inherent in the free offer to all, in other words, a pleasure or delight in God, contemplating the blessed result to be achieved by compliance with the overture proffered and the invitation given.

Still further, it is necessary to point out that such "desire" on the part of God for the salvation of all must never be conceived of as desire to such an end apart from the means to that end. It is not

desire of their salvation irrespective of repentance and faith. Such would be inconceivable. For it would mean, as Calvin says, "to renounce the difference between good and evil." If it is proper to say that God desires the salvation of the reprobate, then he desires such by their repentance. And so it amounts to the same thing to say "God desires their salvation" as to say "He desires their repentance." This is the same as saying that he desires them to comply with the indispensable conditions of salvation. It would be impossible to say the one without implying the other.

Scriptural Basis The Committee would now respectfully submit some exegetical material bearing upon this question and with a view to the resolution of it.

Matthew 5:44-48. This passage does not indeed deal with the overtures of grace in the gospel. But it does tell us something regarding God's benevolence that has bearing upon all manifestations of divine grace. The particular aspect of God's grace reflected upon here is the common gifts of providence, the making of the sun to rise upon evil and good and the sending of rain upon just and unjust. There can be no question but all without distinction reprobate as well as elect, are the beneficiaries of this favour, and it is that fact that is distinctly stated in verse 45. The significant feature of this text is that this bestowal of favour by God on all alike is adduced as the reason why the disciples are to love their enemies and do them good. There is, of course, a question as to the proper text of verse 44. If we follow the Aleph-B text and omit the clauses, "bless them who curse you, do good to them who hate you" as well as the verb "despitefully use," the sense is not affected. And besides, these clauses, though they may not belong to the genuine text of Matthew, appear in Luke 6:27, Luke 6:28 in practically the same form. Hence the teaching of our Lord undoubtedly was that the disciples were to love their enemies, do good to those who hated them, bless those who cursed them, and pray for those who despitefully used them and persecuted them. And the reason provided is that God himself bestows his favours upon his enemies. The particular reason mentioned why the disciples are to be guided and animated by the divine example is that they, the disciples, are sons of the Father. The obligation and urge to the love of their enemies and the bestowal of good upon them are here grounded in the filial relation that they sustain to God. Since they are sons of God they must be like their heavenly Father. There can be no doubt but that the main point is the necessity of imitating the divine example and this necessity is peculiarly enforced by the consideration of the filial relation they sustain to God as their heavenly Father.

It is just here, however, that it becomes necessary to note the implications of the similarity established and enforced as the reason for such attitude and conduct with reference to their enemies. The disciples are to love their enemies in order that they may be the sons of their Father; they must imitate their Father. Clearly implied is the thought that God, the Father, loves his enemies and that it is because he loves his enemies that he makes his sun rise upon them and sends them rain. This is just saying that the kindness bestowed in sunshine and rain is the expression of divine love, that back of the bestowal there is an attitude on the part of God, called love, which constrains him to bestow these tokens of his lovingkindness. This informs us that the gifts bestowed by God are not simply gifts which have the effect of good and blessing to those who are the recipients but that they are also a manifestation or expression of lovingkindness and goodness in the heart or will of God with reference to those who are the recipients. The enjoyment on the part of the recipients has its ground as well as its source in this lovingkindness of which the gifts enjoyed are the expression. In other words, these are gifts and are enjoyed because there is

in a true and high sense benevolence in the heart of God.

These conclusions are reinforced by Matthew 5:48. There can be no question regarding the immediate relevance of Matthew 5:48 to the exhortation of Matthew 5:44-47, even though it may have a more comprehensive reference. And Matthew 5:48 means that what has been adduced by way of divine example in the preceding verses is set forth as epitomizing the divine perfection and as providing the great exemplar by which the believer's attitude and conduct are to be governed and the goal to which thought and life are to be oriented. The love and beneficence of God to the evil and unjust epitomize the norm of human perfection. It is obvious that this love and beneficence on the part of God are regarded by our Lord himself as not something incidental in God but as that which constitutes an element in the sum of divine perfection. This is made very specific in the parallel passage in Luke 6:35, Luke 6:36 where we read, "And ye shall be sons of the Most High, because he is kind towards the unthankful and evil. Ye shall be merciful, as your Father is merciful." This word translated "merciful" is redolent of the pity and compassion in the heart of God that overflow in the bestowments of kindness. The sum of this study of these passages in Matthew and Luke is simply this, that presupposed in God's gifts bestowed upon the ungodly there is in God a disposition of love, kindness, mercifulness, and that the actual gifts and the blessing accruing therefrom for the ungodly must not be abstracted from the lovingkindness of which they are the expression. And, of course, we must not think of this lovingkindness as conditioned upon a penitent attitude in the recipients. The lovingkindness rather is exercised towards them in their ungodly state and is expressed in the favours they enjoy. What bearing this may have upon the grace of God manifested in the free offer of the gospel to all without distinction remains to be seen. But we are hereby given a disclosure of goodness in the heart of God and of the relation there is between gifts bestowed and the lovingkindness from which they flow. And there is indicated to us something respecting God's love or benevolence that we might not or could not entertain if we concentrated our thought simply on the divine decree of reprobation. Furthermore we must remember that there are many gifts enjoyed by the ungodly who are within the pale of the gospel administration which are not enjoyed by those outside, and we shall have to conclude that in respect of these specific favours, enjoyed by such ungodly persons in distinction from others, the same principle of divine benevolence and lovingkindness must obtain, a lovingkindness, too, which must correspond to the character of the specific gifts enjoyed.

Acts 14:17. This text does not express as much as those considered already. But it does witness to the same truth that God gave testimony to his own perfection when he did good to those whom he left to walk in their own ways. God did them good, he sent them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness. We must infer on the basis of what we found already, that behind this doing of good and bestowal of blessing, as well as behind the gladness of heart which followed, there was the divine goodness and lovingkindness.

Deuteronomy 5:29 (26 in Hebrew); Deuteronomy 32:29; Psalms 81:13 ff. (81:14ff. in Hebrew); Isaiah 48:18. The purpose of adducing these texts is to note the optative force of that which is expressed. There can be no reasonable question as to the optative force of Deuteronomy 5:29 (26). It is introduced by the idiom *mi yitten* which literally means "who will give?" but is really a strong optative expression meaning "Oh that there were!" Consequently the text reads, "Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!" It is the Lord who is speaking and

we shall have to conclude that here we have the expression of earnest desire or wish or will that the people of Israel were of a heart to fear him and keep all his commandments always. It is apparent from the book of Deuteronomy itself (cf. Deuteronomy 31:24-29) and from the whole history of Israel that they did not have a heart to fear God and to keep all his commandments always. Since they did not fulfil that which was optatively expressed in Deuteronomy 5:29 (26), we must conclude that God had not decreed that they should have such a heart. If God had decreed it, it would have been so. Here therefore we have an instance of desire on the part of God for the fulfilment of that which he had not decreed. in other words, a will on the part of God to that which he had not decretively willed. In Deuteronomy 32:29 the construction is somewhat different. In our English versions it is translated, "Oh that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end." This rendering is distinctly optative and has the same effect as Deuteronomy 5:29 (26), considered above. It must be admitted that this is - a perfectly legitimate rendering and interpretation. The conjunction *lu* with which the verse begins has undoubtedly this optative force. It has such force unquestionably in Genesis 17:18; Numbers 14:2, Numbers 14:20; Numbers 22:29; Joshua 7:7; Isaiah 63:19, and possibly, if not probably, in Genesis 23:13, Genesis 30:34. When *lu* has this optative force it means "Oh that" or "if only" and expresses strong desire. In view of what we found in Deuteronomy 5:26 there is no reason why the optative force of *lu* should not be adopted here. We may not however, insist that *lu* must have optative force here because *lu* is also used with conditional force, as in Judges 8:19; Judges 13:23; 2 Samuel 18:12 and elsewhere. If *lu* is understood conditionally, Deuteronomy 32:29 would be rendered as follows: "If they were wise they would understand this, they would consider their latter end." This however, is not the most natural rendering. The optative interpretation is smoother and more meaningful in the context. If this more natural construction is followed it shows the same thing as we found in Deuteronomy 5:26 that earnest desire is expressed for what is contrary to fact (cf.. Deuteronomy 5:28) In Psalms 81:14 it may readily be detected that the conditional force of the conjunction *lu* cannot reasonably be adopted. The thought is rather distinctly optative, "Oh that my people were hearkening unto me, that Israel would walk in my ways."

Isaiah 48:18 could readily be rendered conditionally thus: "If thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, thy peace had been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." It can also be rendered optatively as in our English versions.

It should be noted that even when the conjunction *lu* is given very distinct conditional force, the optative idea is sometimes rather noticeably in the background. This would very likely be the case in Isaiah 48:18 even if the optative rendering gives way to the conditional. The desirableness of that which is expressed in the condition and its corresponding consequence cannot be suppressed. This can be expressed in our English idiom very well when we render, "If only thou hadst hearkened to my commandments, then had thy peace been as a river" etc. Both the conditional and optative appear here, and there is much to be said in favour of the conclusion that whether we render Isaiah 48:18 optatively or conditionally the optative notion still persists, in the former case, of course, directly and in the latter case indirectly. Should we make full allowance for doubt as to the exact force of the construction in the case of Deuteronomy 32:29 and Isaiah 48:18, there can be no room for question but that the Lord represents himself in some of these passages as earnestly desiring the fulfilment of something which he had not in the exercise of his sovereign will actually decreed to come to pass. This bears very directly upon the point at issue.

Matthew 23:37; Luke 13:34. In this passage there should be no dispute that the will of Christ in the direction of a certain benign result is set in contrast with the will of those who are contemplated as the subjects of such blessing. These two stand in opposition to each other—I have willed (or wished), ye have not willed (or wished). Not only so. The will of Christ to a certain end is opposed to that which actually occurred. Jesus says he often wished the occurrence of something which did not come to pass and therefore willed (or wished) the occurrence of that which God had not secretly or decretively willed. That which Jesus willed is stated to be the gathering together of the children of Jerusalem, as a hen gathers together her chickens under her wings. This surely means the gathering together of the people of Jerusalem under his saving and protecting grace. So we have the most emphatic declaration on the part of Christ of his having yearned for the conversion and salvation of the people of Jerusalem

It might be said that Jesus is here giving expression simply to his human desire and that this would not indicate, therefore, the desire or will of God. In other words, it might be said that we are not justified in transferring this expression of his human desire to the divine desire or will, either in respect of Jesus' own divine consciousness or the divine consciousness of the other persons of the Godhead.

Christ was indeed truly human and his human mind and will operated within the limitations inseparable from human nature. His human nature was not omniscient and could not in the nature of the case be cognisant of the whole decretive will of God. In his human nature he wrought within limits that could not apply to the specifically divine knowledge, desire and will. Hence it might be argued that on this occasion he gave expression to the yearnings of his truly human will and therefore to a will that could not be aware of the whole secret purpose of God. Furthermore, it might be said that Jesus was speaking of what he willed in the past before he was aware, in his human consciousness, of the judgment that was to befall Jerusalem, stated in Matthew 13:38-39. A great deal more might be said along this line that would lend plausibility to such an interpretation.

We are not able to regard such an interpretation of our Lord's statement as tenable. It is true our Lord was human. It is true he spoke as human. And it is true he spoke these words or gave utterance to this lament through the medium of his human nature. The will he spoke of on this occasion was certainly one that engaged the total exercise of his human desire and will. But there is much more that needs to be considered if we are properly to assess the significance of this incident and of Jesus' utterance. Jesus is speaking here in his capacity as the Messiah and Saviour. He is speaking therefore as the God-man. He is speaking of the will on his part as the Messiah and Saviour to embrace the people of Jerusalem in the arms of his saving grace and covenant love. The majesty that belongs to his person in this unique capacity shines through the whole episode and it is quite improper to abstract the divine aspect of his person from the capacity in which he gives utterance to this will and from the prerogative in virtue of which he could give expression to the utterance. What needs to be appreciated is that the embrace of which Jesus here speaks is that which he exercises in that unique office and prerogative that belong to him as the God-man Messiah and Saviour. In view of the transcendent, divine function which he says he wished to perform, it would be illegitimate for us to say that here we have simply an example of his human desire or will. It is surely, therefore, a revelation to us of the divine will as well as of the human. Our Lord in the exercise of his most specific and unique function as the God-man gives

expression to a yearning will on his part that responsiveness on the part of the people of Jerusalem would have provided the necessary condition for the bestowal of his saving and protecting love, a responsiveness, nevertheless, which it was not the decretive will of God to create in their hearts. In this connection we must not fail to keep in mind the principle borne out by Jesus' own repeated declarations, especially as recorded in the Gospel of John, namely, the perfect harmony and coalescence of will on the part of the Father and of the Son (cf. John 12:49, John 12:50; John 14:10, John 14:24; John 17:8). To aver that Jesus in the expressed will of Matthew 23:37 is not disclosing the divine will but simply his own human will would tend towards very grave prejudice to this principle. And, viewing the matter from the standpoint of revelation, how would it affect our conception of Jesus as the supreme revelation of the Father if in this case we were not to regard his words as a transcript of the Father's will as well as of his own? We can readily see the difficulties that face us if we do not grant the truly revelatory significance of our Lord's statement. In this lament over Jerusalem, furthermore, there is surely disclosed to us something of the will of our Lord as the Son of God and divine Son of man that lies back of, and is expressed in, such an invitation as Matthew 11:28. Here we have declared, if we may use the thought of Matthew 23:37, his will to embrace the labouring and heavy laden in the arms of his saving and loving protection. And it is an invitation to all such to take advantage of that will of his. The fulness and freeness of the invitation need not now be argued. Its character as such is patent. It is important, however, to note that the basis and background of this invitation are supplied by the uniqueness of the relation that he sustains to the Father as the Son, the transcendent commission that is given to him as the Son, and the sovereignty, coordinate with that of the Father, which he exercises because of that unique relationship and in that unique capacity. We should not fail to perceive the interrelations of these two passages (Matthew 23:37; Matthew 11:28) and to recognize that the former is redolent of his divine prerogative and revelatory of his divine will. Matthew 23:38-39 confirm the high prerogative in terms of which he is speaking, for there he pronounces the divine judgment. And in this connection we cannot forget John 5:26, John 5:27, "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. And he hath given to him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man."

Ezekiel 18:23, Ezekiel 18:32; Ezekiel 33:11. It does not appear to us in the least justifiable to limit the reference of these passages to any one class of wicked persons. Suffice it now to mention one or two considerations in support of this conclusion. In Ezekiel 33:4-9 the wicked who actually die in their iniquity are contemplated. It is without warrant to exclude such wicked persons from the scope of the wicked spoken of in Ezekiel 33:11. While it is true that a new paragraph may be regarded as introduced at Ezekiel 33:10, yet the new thought of Ezekiel 33:10 is simply the despairing argument or objection on the part of the house of Israel and does not have the effect of qualifying the denotation or connotation of the wicked mentioned in Ezekiel 33:11, a denotation and a connotation determined by the preceding verses. Again, the emphatic negative of the first part of Ezekiel 33:11 —"I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked"—admits of no limitation or qualification; it applies to the wicked who actually die in their iniquity. Why then should there be the least disposition to limit those spoken of in the text to any class of wicked persons? In Ezekiel 18:23 the construction is not without significance. This verse is introduced by the interrogative and then we have the emphatic construction of duplication well known in Hebrew. It might be rendered, "Taking pleasure in, do I take pleasure in?" The question implies, of course, an emphatic negative. It should also be noted that the verb in this case takes a direct object, namely, "the death

of the wicked" (moth rasha without any article). In this case we do not have the preposition be as in Ezekiel 33:11. It should be noted that the verb chaphez with such a construction can very properly be rendered by our English word, "desire," as frequently elsewhere in the Old Testament. Consequently this verse may well be rendered, "Do I at all desire the death of the wicked?" The force of this is obviously the emphatic negative, "I do not by any means desire the death of the wicked," or to be very literal, "I do not by any means desire the death of a wicked person. The interrogative construction is continued in the latter part of the verse. Here, however, it is negative in form, implying an affirmative answer to the question just as in the former part the affirmative form implied a negative answer. It reads, "Is it not rather in his turning from his way (the Massorettes read "his ways") and live?" The clear import is an emphatic asseveration to the effect that the Lord Jehovah delights rather in the turning of the wicked from his evil way than he may live. The adversative form of the sentence may well be rendered thus: "Do I at all desire the death of the wicked, saith the Lord Jehovah, and not rather that he turn from his way and live. The sum of the matter may be stated in the following propositions. It is absolutely and universally true that God does not delight in or desire the death of a wicked person. It is likewise absolutely and universally true that he delights in the repentance and life of that wicked person. It would surely be quite unwarranted to apply the latter proposition less universally or more restrictively than the former. The adversative construction and the emphatic form by which the protestation is introduced are surely not compatible with any other conclusion. And if we carry over the perfectly proper rendering of the first clause, the thought can be expressed thus, "God does not desire the death of the wicked but rather their repentance and life." In Ezekiel 33:11 the construction is somewhat different. The statement is introduced by the oath, "As I live saith the Lord Jehovah." Then we have the construction with the Hebrew im, which has the force of an emphatic negative and must be rendered, "I have no delight (or pleasure) ... in the death of the wicked" (bemoth harasha; in this case the article is used). It should be noted that the preposition be is used in this case, as also in the second part of Ezekiel 18:23 as observed below. This is a very frequent construction in Hebrew with reference to delight in persons or things. Interesting examples are 2 Samuel 24:3; Esther 6:6, Esther 6:7, Esther 6:9, Esther 6:11; Psalms 147:10; Proverbs 18:2, Isaiah 65:12; Malachi 2:17. On certain occasions the Hebrew word could well be translated "desire" in English and the word that follows the preposition taken as the direct object (e.g. 2 Samuel 24:3).

It has been argued that the preposition be in Ezekiel 33:11 b has the force of "when" so that the verse would run, "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but when the wicked turns from his way and lives." And so it has been claimed that all that is said in this verse is that God is pleased when the wicked turns and cannot be made to support the proposition that God is pleased that the wicked should repent whether they repent or not. On this view it would be maintained that this verse says nothing more than that God is pleased when a wicked man repents but says nothing respecting the pleasure of God in reference to the repentance of those who do not actually repent. In dealing with this question a few things need be said. (1) A study of the instances where this construction of the verb chaphez with the preposition be occurs would not suggest this interpretation of the force of the preposition be. The usage rather indicates that the preposition points to that upon which pleasure is placed, that to which desire gravitates, that in which delight is taken. That object of pleasure, desire, delight may be conceived of as existing, or as something not actually existent, or as something desirable, that is to say, desired to be. When the object is contemplated as desirable but not actually realized, the thought

of chaphez does not at all appear to be simply that delight or pleasure will be derived from the object when it is realized or possessed. That thought is, of course, implied. But there is much more. There is the delight or pleasure or desire that it should come to be, even if the actual occurrence should never take place. Consequently it appears that the notion that Ezekiel 33:1-33 simply says that God is pleased when a wicked man repents robs the concept expressed by chaphez be of some of its most characteristic and necessary meaning. It is not in any way denied that this kind of delight is embraced in the expression. But to limit the concept to this notion is without warrant and is not borne out by the usage.

(2) The adversative construction of the verse would not by any means suggest the interpretation that Ezekiel 33:11 b says simply that God is pleased when a man repents. In the same clause it is denied that God has pleasure in the death of the wicked. In accordance with Ezekiel 18:23 this means that it is true absolutely and universally that God does not delight in the death of the wicked. This does not mean simply that God does not delight in the death of the wicked when he dies. The denial is much more embracive. In like manner, it would be unnatural for us to suppose that the affirmation of that in which God does take delight is simply the turning of the wicked from his way when it occurs. This is just saying that it is natural to give to the preposition be in the second clause the same force as it has in the first. Rendered literally then the two clauses would read, "I do not have pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather in his turning from his way and that he live." Paraphrased the thought would be, "It is not pleasing to me that the wicked die but that the wicked turn from his way and live." And the same kind of absoluteness and universality denied in the one case must be regarded as affirmed in the other.

(3) Confirmation of this interpretation may be derived from the concluding clauses of Ezekiel 33:11, "'turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, and why will ye die, oh house of Israel." The thought of the last clause is that there is no reason why they should die. 'There is no reason because of the grace so emphatically declared in the earlier part of the verse and, by implication, so fully and freely proffered. There will not be any dispute regarding the universality of the exhortation and command in the clause, "turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways." This is a command that applies to all men without any discrimination or exception. It expresses therefore the will of God to repentance. He wills that all should repent. Nothing less than that is expressed in the universal command. To state the matter more fully, he wills that all should repent and live or be saved. When this is related to the last clause, "why will ye die?" it means that the reason why no one need die, why there is no reason why any should die, is, that God does not will that any should die. He wills rather that they repent and live. This declaration of the will of God to the repentance and life of all, so clearly implied in the two concluding clauses, rests, however, upon the declarations of the two preceding clauses, the clauses with which we are now more particularly concerned. We should conclude, therefore, that the will to universal repentance and life, so unmistakably expressed in the concluding clauses, is also declared or, at least, implied in the words, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way and live." This is just saying that the import of the hortatory and interrogative clauses at the end require or presuppose a will of God to repentance and life, a will to which the bare notion that God is pleased when men repent is not by any means equal. The only adequate way of expressing the will implied in the exhortation is the will that all should repent and it is surely that truth that is declared in the oath supported statement, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked turn from his way and live.

It is not to be forgotten that when it is said that God absolutely and universally takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, we are not here speaking of God's decretive will. In terms of his decretive will it must be said that God absolutely decrees the eternal death of some wicked and, in that sense, is absolutely pleased so to decree. But in the text it is the will of God's benevolence (*voluntas euarestiss*) that is stated, not the will of God's decree (*voluntas eudokiss*.) It is, in our judgment, quite unjustifiable to think that in this passage there is any reflection upon the decretive will of God in the word *chaphez*. And neither is there evidence to show that in the word *chaphez* there is here any comparative notion to the effect that God takes greater pleasure in saving men than he does in damning them.

It is indeed true that in a few passages in the Old Testament the word *chaphez* is used with reference to the decretive will of God (cl. Psalms 115:3, Psalms 135:6, the substantive *chephez*, also, in Isaiah 44:28; Isaiah 46:10; Isaiah 48:14). But in this passage everything points to the conclusion that the good pleasure or delight of God spoken of is viewed entirely from the aspect of benevolent lovingkindness. And it is in terms of that aspect of the divine will that the words "absolutely" and "universally" have been used above.

Isaiah 45:22. There can be no question but the salvation mentioned in this text is salvation in the highest sense. It cannot be weakened to mean temporary or temporal security. The salvation must be of the same character as that referred to in Isaiah 45:17 and implied in the title appropriated by God himself in Isaiah 45:21. The text is also an invitation and command to all to turn to God and to be saved. The universalism of this command should be apparent from the expression, "all the ends of the earth." This is a characteristic Old Testament phrase to designate all nations and peoples. The universal scope is, however, confirmed by the context. There are several intimations of this. In the preceding context the Lord asserts his

Creatorhood (Isaiah 45:12, Isaiah 45:18). This appeal to his Creatorhood has the effect of bringing to the forefront a relationship which he sustains to all men alike. Likewise the Lord protests that he is the only God, that there is none else besides him (Isaiah 45:14, Isaiah 45:18, Isaiah 45:21). The emphasis on this becomes more specific in the repeated assertion that he alone is the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15, Isaiah 45:20-21). Furthermore, that all men are contemplated is borne out by Isaiah 45:23, that unto him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Finally, this note is implied in the scorn that is poured out upon the heathen in Isaiah 45:20—"They have not knowledge that carry the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save." All these considerations bear directly upon the universal reference of the appeal in Isaiah 45:22. It is because God alone is God and because he alone can save that the exhortation is extended to all, "turn ye to me and be ye saved." We could not place any kind of limitation upon the exhortation without interfering with the universality of the prerogatives claimed by God himself in the context. It is necessary to stress this because it might be thought that the universalism of the command in Isaiah 45:22 is not distributive universalism but simply ethnical universalism, all nations without distinction but not all people without exception. The considerations of the context would show that there is no exception to the command any more than there is to the sole Creatorhood sole Godhood and sole Saviourhood of the God who extends the appeal. This text expresses then the will of God in the matter of the call, invitation, appeal, and command of the gospel, namely, the will that all should turn to him and be saved. What God wills in this sense he certainly is pleased to will. If it is his pleasure to will that all repent and be saved, it is surely his pleasure that all repent

and be saved. Obviously, however, it is not his decretive will that all repent and be saved. While, on the one hand, he has not decretively willed that all be saved, yet he declares unequivocally that it is his will and, impliedly, his pleasure that all turn and be saved. We are again faced with the mystery and adorable richness of the divine will. It might seem to us that the one rules out the other. But it is not so. There is a multiformity to the divine will that is consonant with the fulness and richness of his divine character, and it is no wonder that we are constrained to how in humble yet exultant amazement before his ineffable greatness and unsearchable judgments. To deny the reality of the divine pleasure directed to the repentance and salvation of all is to fail to accept the witness borne by such a text as this to the manifoldness of God's will and the riches of his grace.

2 Peter 3:9. In view of what we have found already there is no reason in the analogy of Scripture why we should not regard this passage as teaching that God in the exercise of his benevolent longsuffering and lovingkindness wills that none should perish but that all should come to repentance. An a priori assumption that this text cannot teach that God wills the repentance and salvation of all is a gravely unsound assumption, for it is not an assumption derived from the analogy of Scripture. In approaching this text there should be no such prejudice. What this text does actually teach will have to be determined, however, by grammatico-historical exegesis of the text and context. The choice of the verb "is longsuffering" (makrothumei) will be considered first. In Luke 18:7, the only other instance in the New Testament where it refers to the action of God, it probably relates to the elect. But in that case it is employed in the somewhat distinctive sense of "delay" in avenging them. The "longsuffering" (makrothumia) of God, is spoken of several times, and its usage is illuminating. Romans 9:22 presents a clear instance where it has in view an attitude of God towards the reprobate; he "endured with much longsuffering vessels of wrath." In Romans 2:4, it is associated with the goodness and forbearance of God, and subsumed under his goodness, as that which is despised by the impenitent who treasures up for himself wrath in the day of wrath, who does not know that the goodness of God "leadeth him to repentance" (eis metanoian se agei). The choice of the verb agein is to be noted. Since the impenitent are in view, it cannot refer to efficacious grace. Nevertheless, it is a strong verb as its use in Romans 8:14 shows: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God" (cf. Galatians 5:18). It must be understood as a constraining influence flowing from the goodness of God which is calculated to bring men to repentance. The construction in Romans 2:4 is remarkably similar to that in 2 Peter 3:9. On the background of these passages, the usage by Peter may be considered to advantage. In the last days, Peter says, mockers will mock because the parousia has not come. The day of judgment will nevertheless come. The apparent delay in its coming some count slackness. What is counted as slackness by some should, however, really be recognized as longsuffering (2 Peter 3:3-9). The longsuffering should not be counted as slackness, but as salvation (2 Peter 3:15). The longsuffering is, then, a positive favor of God towards sinners which is directed to their salvation.

Up to this point, accordingly, the thought is similar to that of Romans 2:4. Men may despise God's goodness, forbearance and longsuffering towards them, not knowing that that goodness has in view their turning from their sins to God. Men may count the longsuffering as slackness on God's part, when actually they ought to account it as designed to extend salvation to them. But this tentative judgment on the basis of the use of makrothumia must be related to the rest of Romans 2:9. This aspect of the question is considerably complicated by the divergence in the textual

tradition at this point. The situation is reflected in part in the divergence between AV and ARV: "to us-ward" and "to you-ward." But there is a further complication due to the fact that there is significant testimony for the preposition *dia*, resulting in the possibilities: "on your account" or "on our account." The reading *dia* has come to be preferred by Mayor, Moffatt, Greijdanus, RSVmg. The difference between "you" and "us" or "your" and "our" is not especially significant, since in either case the readers of the Epistle would be primarily in view. The actual line-up of authorities does not, however, leave solid external support for the combination "on our account," though Mayor supports it. The reading "to us-ward" is clearly the weakest reading, judged by external evidence; and it is not commended particularly by other considerations. Hence the choice falls between "to you-ward" and "on your account." While perhaps it is not possible to decide finally between these two readings, we may judge that the reading "on your account" has a very strong claim. The external evidence for it appears to be at least as strong as for the other competing reading, and transcriptionally it may be preferred as being somewhat more unusual and difficult. The question now arises as to the specific reference of "you," whether with the preposition *dia* or *eis*. Does the use of this pronoun indicate that reprobate men are out of consideration here? So it has been argued. However, if the reprobate are out of consideration here, the "true believers" would have to be identified with the elect, and the longsuffering of God would have to be understood as the special, saving grace of God manifested to the elect alone. We do not believe that the restriction of the reference to the elect is well-established. The Epistle does not make this restriction. Moreover, since on this view, the believers addressed here are characterized as "living lax Christian lives," are viewed as requiring repentance, and even as about to "perish" unless they repent, it cannot be argued plausibly that the apostle would not have allowed for the presence of some reprobate among the members of his audience. Even if the "you" is restricted to professing Christians, one cannot exclude the possibility that reprobate men were also in view. The "you" of this passage can hardly be restricted to the elect. Can it even be restricted to "believers"? Can it be restricted to believers who urgently stand in need of repentance? The determination of this question is bound up with the evaluation of the subordinate clauses. It may be acknowledged that the decision made with regard to "you" will bear upon the meaning of the language that follows. But the reverse is also true. The language of the clauses may be such as to reflect decisively upon the persons referred to in connection with the manifestations of longsuffering. Does not, as a matter of fact, the language "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" set before us a basic antithesis between the death or destruction that awaits impenitent sinners and, by implication, the life eternal which men may enter upon through repentance? God does not wish that any men should perish. His wish is rather that all should enter upon life eternal by coming to repentance. The language in this part of the verse is so absolute that it is highly unnatural to envisage Peter as meaning merely that God does not wish that any believers should perish, but that he rather wishes that all believers who live laxly should repent of their sins. If they are believers, they have already come to repentance, entered upon life, and escaped destruction, even though the struggle against sin and turning from it must continue. The language of the clauses, then, most naturally refers to mankind as a whole as men are faced with the issues of death or life before the day of judgment comes. It does not view men either as elect or reprobate, and so allows that both elect and reprobate make up the totality in view. The most satisfactory view of 2 Peter 3:9 is:

1) Peter teaches that the delay of the coming of judgment should be acknowledged as a manifestation of the longsuffering or patience of God with sinners.

2) Peter says that God is longsuffering on your account. It is not because of any slackness in God himself, but because of the consideration of the well-being of men. The pronoun "you" cannot be restricted to the elect. It would certainly include the members of the Christian community as possible benefactors of the longsuffering of God, but in view of considerations adduced above may not fairly be restricted to believers.

3) If the reading "to you-ward" is adopted, the thrust of the passage is not essentially altered. The delay is not due to slackness in God, but is to be regarded as an expression of longsuffering towards men, including very specifically those addressed in the Epistle.

4) The reason or ground for the longsuffering of God until the day of judgment is given in what is said concerning his "willing." He is longsuffering in that, or because, he does not wish that any men should perish, but rather because he wills or wishes that all should come to repentance. Repentance is the condition of life, without repentance men must perish. But the will of God that men be saved expressed here is not conditional. It is not: I will your salvation if you repent, but: I will that you repent and thus be saved. The two clauses then go far beyond defining the longsuffering of God, for they intimate what is back of his longsuffering. This favour is grounded in God himself; it is an expression of his will with regard to sinners, his will being nothing short of their salvation. The argument that the longsuffering of God that delays judgment could not concern the reprobate, "for they will never repent" is to be met exactly as Calvin met similar arguments. Following his exegesis of 2 Peter 3:9, Calvin says: "But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many perish? To this my answer is, that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own I ruin, but only of his will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches out his hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them unto himself, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world."

Conclusions

(1) We have found that the grace of God bestowed in his ordinary providence expresses the love of God, and that this love of God is the source of the gifts bestowed upon and enjoyed by the ungodly as well as the godly. We should expect that herein is disclosed to us a principle that applies to all manifestations of divine grace, namely, that the grace bestowed expresses the lovingkindness in the heart of God and that the gifts bestowed are in their respective variety tokens of a correspondent richness or manifoldness in the divine lovingkindness of which they are the expression.

(2) We have found that God himself expresses an ardent desire for the fulfilment of certain things which he has not decreed in his inscrutable counsel to come to pass. This means that there is a will to the realization of what he has not decretively willed, a pleasure towards that which he has not been pleased to decree. This is indeed mysterious, and why he has not brought to pass, in the exercise of his omnipotent power and grace, what is his ardent pleasure lies hid in the sovereign counsel of his will. We should not entertain, however, any prejudice against the notion that God desires or has pleasure in the accomplishment of what he does not decretively will.

(3) Our Lord himself in the exercise of his messianic prerogative provides us with an example of the foregoing as it applies to the matter of salvation. He says expressly that he willed the bestowal of his saving and protecting grace upon those whom neither the Father nor he decreed thus to save and protect.

(4) We found that God reveals himself as not taking pleasure in or desiring the death of those who die but rather as taking pleasure in or desiring the repentance and life of the wicked. This will of God to repentance and salvation is universalized and reveals to us, therefore, that there is in God a benevolent lovingkindness towards the repentance and salvation of even those whom he has not decreed to save. This pleasure, will, desire is expressed in the universal call to repentance.

(5) We must conclude, therefore, that our provisional inference on the basis of Matthew 5:44-48 is borne out by the other passages. The full and free offer of the gospel is a grace bestowed upon all. Such grace is necessarily a manifestation of love or lovingkindness in the heart of God. And this lovingkindness is revealed to be of a character or kind that is correspondent with the grace bestowed. The grace offered is nothing less than salvation in its richness and fullness. The love or lovingkindness that lies back of that offer is not anything less; it is the will to that salvation. In other words, it is Christ in all the glory of his person and in all the perfection of his finished work whom God offers in the gospel. The loving and benevolent will that is the source of that offer and that grounds its veracity and reality is the will to the possession of Christ and the enjoyment of the salvation that resides in him.

Endnotes

1 Kittel says that 20 manuscripts read *bemoth* as in verse 32. If this reading is correct then, of course, what is said respecting the omission of the preposition *be* does not hold.

2 The only instances we have been able to find in the Old Testament of *chapez be*, followed by the infinitive construct, are Ezekiel 18:23 b and Ezekiel 33:11 b. *chapez* without the preposition *be* is followed by the infinitive construct in other cases cf. Isaiah 53:10.

S. The Order of Application

The Order of Application by John Murray [from Part II "Redemption Applied" in *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*] THE provision which God has made in his providence for the sustenance and comfort of man and beast is not sparing or niggardly. He has made the earth to teem with good things to satisfy the needs of man and beast and to meet their varied tastes and appetites. Psalms 104:1-35 is the inspired lyric of praise and admiration. "These wait all upon thee;. that thou mayest give them their meat in due season . . . thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good" (Psalms 104:27-28). "Wine that maketh glad the heart of man, oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart" (Psalms 104:15). And the psalmist exclaims: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Psalms 104:24). The provision which God has made for the salvation of men is even more strikingly manifold. For this provision has in view the manifoldness of man's need and exhibits the overflowing abundance of God's goodness, wisdom, grace, and love. This superabundance appears in the eternal counsel of God respecting salvation; it appears in the historic accomplishment of redemption by the work of Christ once for all; and it appears in the application of redemption continuously and progressively till it reaches its consummation in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. When we think of the application of redemption we must not think of it as one simple and indivisible act. It comprises a series of acts and processes. To mention some, we have calling, regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, glorification. These are all distinct, and not one of these can be defined in terms of the other. Each has its own distinct meaning, function, and purpose in the action and grace of God.

God is not the author of confusion and therefore he is the author of order. There are good and conclusive reasons for thinking that the various actions of the application of redemption, some of which have been mentioned, take place in a certain order, and that order has been established by divine appointment, wisdom, and grace. It is quite apparent to every one that it would be impossible to start off with glorification, for glorification is at the far end of the process as its completion and consummation, and it is scarcely less apparent that regeneration would have to precede sanctification. A man must surely be born again before he can be progressively sanctified. Regeneration is the inception of being made holy and sanctification is the continuance. Hence it requires no more than the most elementary knowledge of these various terms to see that we cannot turn them around and mix them up in any way we please. But we may also look at a few passages of Scripture to show that there is clearly implied an order or arrangement in the various steps of the application of redemption.

If we take, first of all, such well-known texts as John 3:3, John 3:5, our Lord told Nicodemus that except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God and except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Obviously, seeing and entering into the kingdom of God belong to the application of redemption, and our Lord indicates that apart from the new birth, regeneration, there cannot be this seeing or entering into the kingdom of God. It follows that regeneration is prior and it would plainly be impossible to reverse the order and say

that a man is regenerated by seeing or entering into the kingdom of God. No, a man enters the kingdom of God by regeneration. As Jesus says again (John 3:6), "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

We may also examine a closely related text, 1 John 3:9: "Every one who is born of God does not do sin, because his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." John is dealing here, no doubt, with deliverance from the reigning power of sin. Such deliverance is part of the application of redemption. But the text demonstrates that the reason why a person is delivered from the reigning power of sin is that he is born of God, and the reason he continues in this freedom from the ruling and directing power of sin is that the seed of God abides in him. Here we have clearly the order of causation and explanation. The new birth causes and explains the state of freedom from the domination of sin and is therefore prior to such freedom. The regenerated person does not commit the sin which is unto death (1 John 5:16) and the reason is that he is born of God and God's seed is always in him to keep him from that grievous and irreparable sin.

Still further, let us look at John 1:12. We may focus our attention on two subjects with which this text deals, namely, the reception of Christ and the bestowment of authority to become the sons of God. We may properly call them faith and adoption. The text says distinctly that "as many as received him, to them gave he authority to become children of God." The bestowment of this authority, which we may for, our present purposes equate with adoption, presupposes the reception of Christ, namely, faith in his name. This is to the effect of saying that adoption presupposes faith, and therefore faith is prior to adoption. So we should have to follow the order, faith and adoption.

Finally, we may glance at one passage in Paul, Ephesians 1:13 : "In whom ye also, having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also having believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." The sealing with the Holy Spirit is that which follows upon the hearing of the word of truth and believing. Hearing and believing are therefore prior in order and cannot be made to follow the sealing of the Spirit.

These few texts have been appealed to simply for the purpose of showing that there is order which must be maintained and cannot be reversed without violating the plain import of these texts. These texts prove the fact of order and show that it is not empty logic to affirm divine order in the application of redemption. There is a divine logic in this matter and the order which we insist upon should be nothing more or less than what the Scriptures disclose to be the divine arrangement.

These texts, however, have not brought us very far in discovering what the order of arrangement is in connection with a good many of the actions which are comprised in the application of redemption. They have established a few things, indeed, but only a few. When we give a fuller enumeration of the several steps or aspects-calling, regeneration, conversion, faith, repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification-we can see that several questions remain undetermined. Which is prior, calling or justification? Is faith prior to justification or vice versa? Does regeneration come before calling?

There is one passage of Scripture which affords us a great deal of light on this question. It is Romans 8:30 : "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here we have three acts of

the application of redemption - calling, justification, and glorification. They appear in this text in that order. And the question arises: is this order intended to be the order of application and occurrence? Or is the order in the text simply one of convenience so that Paul could just as well have adopted another order?

One thing must be said by way of preface; it is that even if the order had been different, justification first and calling second, the main thought of the passage would not be disturbed. The main thought is the invariable conjunction and sequence of these divine acts and their indissoluble connection with God's eternal purpose of foreknowledge and predestination. For here we have a chain of unbreakable links beginning with foreknowledge and ending with glorification. But there are overwhelming reasons for thinking that the order Paul follows in Romans 8:30 - calling, justification, glorification - is the order of sequence according to the divine arrangement. These reasons are not far to seek. There are so many intimations of order in this passage as a whole that we cannot but conclude that order of logical sequence is intended throughout.

1. In Romans 8:28 there is the intimation of order in the expression, "called according to purpose." This means that purpose provides the pattern or plan according to which calling takes place. Therefore the purpose is prior to the calling, and, in this case, of course, eternally prior. The purpose is none other than that which is unfolded in Romans 8:29 as consisting in foreknowledge and predestination. Hence we have a clear indication of order in Romans 8:28.

2. We have the same in Romans 8:29. It is not our interest now to expound the meaning of the word "foreknow" nor its relation to the word "predestinate." All that is necessary to note now is that there is progression of thought from foreknowledge to predestination. Here again we have an indication of order which will not allow us to reverse the elements involved.

3. In Romans 9:29-30 we have a chain of events which find their spring in foreknowledge and their terminus in glorification. We cannot possibly reverse these two. There is not only priority and posteriority but a particular kind of such order, namely, foreknowledge as the ultimate fount and glorification as the ultimate end.

4. The same applies to both foreknowledge and predestination in reference to the three acts mentioned in Romans 8:30. Foreknowledge and predestination are prior to calling, justification, and glorification, and eternally prior at that. Reversal is inconceivable.

5. Even within the acts mentioned in Romans 8:30, acts which fall within the sphere of the application of redemption and which are therefore temporal as distinguished from those of God's eternal counsel mentioned in Romans 8:29, we are bound to discover an order of priority. Glorification could not be prior to calling and justification; it must be posterior to both. Hence, whatever may be true as regards the order of calling and justification in relation to each other, glorification must be after both. The only question that remains, therefore, is whether calling is prior to justification or the reverse.

We shall have to conclude that, since there are so many indications of intended order in this passage as a whole, the order which Paul follows in reference to calling and justification must be intended as the order of logical arrangement and progression. It would violate every relevant consideration to think otherwise. Consequently we must infer that Romans 8:30 provides us with a broad outline of the order in the application of redemption and that that order is: calling,

justification, glorification. So we have the answer to one question, which has not so far been determined, namely, that calling precedes justification in the order of the application of redemption. And we might not have thought so if we were to rely upon our own logical reasonings. The next question we may discuss is the relation of faith to justification. There is difference of judgment on this question among orthodox theologians, some holding that justification is prior, others the reverse. It must be understood that what we are dealing with now is not at all God's eternal decree to justify. That certainly is prior to faith, and, if we were to call that "eternal justification" (a misuse of terms), then such would be prior to faith just as God's purpose is always prior to every phase of the application of redemption. Furthermore, if we use the term justification as the virtual synonym of reconciliation (as it may be in Romans 5:9), then again such justification is prior to faith just as the accomplishment of redemption is always prior to the application of it. But we are not now dealing with the eternal decree to justify nor with the basis of justification in the work once for all accomplished by Christ but with actual justification, which falls within the orbit of the application of redemption. With reference to such justification the Scripture undoubtedly states that we are justified by faith, from faith, through faith, and upon faith (see Romans 1:17; Romans 3:22, Romans 3:26, Romans 3:28, Romans 3:30; Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:16; Galatians 3:24; Php 3:9). It would surely seem impossible to avoid the conclusion that justification is upon the event of faith or through the instrumentality of faith. God justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus, in a word, believers. And that is simply to say that faith is presupposed in justification, is the precondition of justification, not because we are justified on the ground of faith or for the reason that we are justified because of faith but only for the reason that faith is God's appointed instrument through which he dispenses this grace.

There is another reason why we should believe that faith is prior to justification. We found already that calling is prior to justification. And faith is connected with calling. It does not constitute calling. But it is the inevitable response of our heart and mind and will to the divine call. In this matter call and response coincide. For that reason we should expect that since calling is prior to justification so is faith. This inference is confirmed by the express statement that we are justified by faith.

We are now in a position to give the following, slightly enlarged outline of the order in the application of redemption - calling, faith, justification, glorification.

If we think in Scriptural terms it is not difficult to insert another step. It is that of regeneration. It, in turn, must be prior to faith. Much controversy turns on this question and into all the angles of that controversy we need not enter. Still further, it will not be possible in this chapter to give all the evidence establishing the priority of regeneration. A good deal of that evidence will be presented later. Suffice it at present to be reminded that as sinners we are dead in trespasses and sins. Faith is a whole-souled act of loving trust and self-commitment. Of that we are incapable until renewed by the Holy Spirit. It was to this our Lord testified when he said that no one could come unto him except it were given unto him of the Father and except the Father draw him (John 6:44, John 6:65). And, again, we must remember John 3:3 : "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Surely seeing the kingdom of God is the act of faith and, if so, such faith is impossible without regeneration. Hence regeneration must be prior to faith. We can affirm then on these grounds that the order is regeneration, faith, justification. This does not settle the question as to the order in connection with calling and regeneration. Is regeneration prior to effectual calling or is the reverse the case? There are arguments which could be pleaded in favour

of the priority of regeneration. No great issue would be at stake in adopting that order, that is to say, the order, regeneration, calling, faith, justification, glorification. There is, however, one weighty consideration (a consideration that will be developed later on), namely, that in the teaching of Scripture it is calling that is given distinct emphasis and prominence as that act of God whereby sinners are translated from darkness to light and ushered into the fellowship of Christ. This feature of New Testament teaching creates the distinct impression that salvation in actual possession takes its start from an efficacious summons on the part of God and that this summons, since it is God's summons, carries in its bosom all of the operative efficacy by which it is made effective. It is calling and not regeneration that possesses that character. Hence there is more to be said for the priority of calling.

If then we have the following elements and in the following order: calling, regeneration, faith, justification, and glorification, we have really settled all that is of basic importance to the question. The other steps can be readily filled in and put in their proper place. Repentance is the twin sister of faith - we cannot think of the one without the other, and so repentance would be conjoined with faith. Conversion is simply another name for repentance and faith conjoined and would therefore be inclosed in repentance and faith. Adoption would obviously come after justification - we could not think of one being adopted into the family of God without first of all being accepted by God and made an heir of eternal life. Sanctification is a process that begins, we might say, in regeneration, finds its basis in justification, and derives its energizing grace from the union with Christ which is effected in effectual calling. Being a continuous process rather than a momentary act like calling, regeneration, justification and adoption, it is proper that it should be placed after adoption in the order of application. Perseverance is the concomitant and complement of the sanctifying process and might conveniently be placed either before or after sanctification. With all these considerations in view, the order in the application of redemption is found to be, calling, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification. When this order is carefully weighed we find that there is a logic which evinces and brings into clear focus the governing principle of salvation in all of its aspects, the grace of God in its sovereignty and efficacy. Salvation is of the Lord in its application as well as in its conception and accomplishment.

S. The Reformed Faith and Arminianism

The Reformed Faith and Arminianism

John Murray From a series which appeared in The Presbyterian Guardian in 1935-1936.

Arminianism derives its name from James Arminius, a minister of the Reformed Church in Holland who lived from 1560 to 1609. He became Professor of Divinity in the University of Leyden, in 1603. It was particularly during the period of his professorial activity at Leyden that he gave expression to the departures from the Reformed Faith that have ever since been associated with his name. Arminius died in 1609, but he left behind him disciples who continued to teach and develop his tenets. In 1610 a document known as the "Remonstrance" and frequently spoken of as "The Five Arminian Articles" was signed by forty-six ministers and presented to the civil authorities of the United Provinces. These articles set forth the doctrine of the "Remonstrants" or Arminians, as they came to be called, on the subjects of predestination, the extent of the atonement, the cause of saving grace, and perseverance. These articles were both negative and positive - they denied one doctrine and affirmed another. In the early stages of the controversy the precise hearings and implications of some of the points had not become explicit, but, as the conflict precipitated by the Remonstrants developed, it became evident that the five points of the Reformed Faith which the Arminians were particularly insistent upon denying were unconditional predestination, limited atonement, total depravity, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These Calvinists affirmed, Arminians denied.

These five points do not define for us what the Reformed Faith or Calvinism is. The Reformed Faith is a system of truth and is much more comprehensive than any five points that might be enumerated, however important in it or essential to it these five points might be. In these five points attacked by the Arminians, however, the system of truth known as Calvinism may said to be crystallized. They express what this system is in opposition to the Arminian system or any other system that, in similar fashion, is opposed to it. They ever continue to be the decisive points at which conflict is joined with any system of thought that is moved by an Arminian bias and directed by the same underlying principles.

Neither are we to think that the error of Arminianism is confined to these five points. Arminianism is a theology and the difference between this theology and the theology of the Reformed Church comes to expression at many other points. The error of the Arminian theology is, however, summed up in these five points and so the greater part of the controversy in the past is quite justifiably found to concern the doctrines enunciated in them. What is true in reality has been demonstrated by history.

Unconditional Predestination The first article of the Remonstrance of 1610 concerned predestination. All of the early Reformers were substantially at one on the doctrine of predestination. It is in the Reformed Church alone, however, that the doctrine of absolute predestination held by Luther as well as by Calvin continued to hold sway and came to its rights.

What does it mean? In answering we cannot do better than quote the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter III:

"i. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

"iii. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

"iv. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"v. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or anything in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace." This statement of the doctrine was framed by the Westminster divines in 1645, but it is just the well-articulated creedal expression of the doctrine held by the early Reformers, conserved in the Reformed Church, and attacked by the Arminians. The import of the first section quoted is just this: that the whole sweep of universal history from the beginning to the end, in all its extent and minutest detail, is embraced in the plan and decree of God, that all that comes to pass, great or small, good or bad, God from eternity immutably determined would come to pass.

It is not, however, in connection with the all-comprehensive decree of God that the conflict with the Arminian in the first instance is joined. It is as this decree comes to bear upon the destinies of rational beings and more particularly upon the destinies of men, in other words, as the decree becomes operative in the predestination to life of some of mankind and the foreordination to death of others. But the doctrine of the general decree bears directly upon the question of the destinies of men. If God freely and unchangeably ordains whatsoever comes to pass, and if it comes to pass that some men are saved and some perish, then surely He has freely and unchangeably ordained these facts as well as others. If the Arminian denies the latter he must also deny the former.

Predestination to life and foreordination to death mean substantially that from all eternity God sovereignly, according to the counsel of His will, chose or elected a definite number of the human race to everlasting life, that He elected them as individuals, and that in making this election He was not conditioned by His foresight of faith or good works or perseverance in both, but that the election was determined by that sovereign good pleasure which finds its whole ground and explanation in Himself and in nothing else. In other words, God by an absolute, unconditional, and unchangeable decree determined the salvation of certain persons out of free grace and love, and that in accordance with that decree He executes the purpose of His grace and love. The others not elected, by the exercise of the same sovereign good pleasure He decreed to pass by and ordain to everlasting destruction as the reward of their sins.

It is this doctrine Arminianism denies. In the words of James Arminius, "God has not absolutely predestinated any men to salvation; but that he has in his decree considered them as believers." It is peculiarly important that this fact should be appreciated. The fundamental principle of Arminianism on this article of faith is denial of the doctrine set forth in Reformed Standards. Too often the significance and seriousness of this is obscured by appeal on the part of Arminians to the positive side of their teaching. We must not allow this obscuration. Arminianism starts with negation, the denial of the doctrine of sovereign unconditional election. However much truth the more positive elaboration of the Arminian position may embody, it in no way ceases to be Arminian as long as the denial of unconditional election remains, for this is the crux of the question. Everyone who denies unconditional election denies an aspect of truth that is of the essence of Reformed doctrine. The Arminian position involves, as we have already hinted, more than negation. The Remonstrance reads thus: "Article I. That God, by an eternal unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ His Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on this his Son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through his grace, even to the end." On superficial examination it might appear that there is no essential difference between this and the position set forth in the Reformed Standards. Does it not speak of an eternal and unchangeable purpose of God by which He determines to save all who believe on His Son and persevere to the end? It certainly does this, and no one in this controversy will deny that what is said is as such true. God does eternally and unchangeably determine to save all who believe and persevere in holiness to the end. But there is a chasm of difference between what the Arminian here affirms and what the Calvinist affirms. The difference is just this. The Calvinist affirms that God eternally and unchangeably decrees the salvation of certain persons whom He sovereignly distinguishes by this decree from those who are not appointed to salvation. In pursuance of this decree of salvation He decrees the ends towards its accomplishment, and so decrees to give faith and perseverance to all those predestinated to salvation. The Arminian denies any such decree bearing upon the salvation of individuals, and what he affirms in its place is that God decrees or purposes to save all who believe and persevere in faith and obedience to the end. In the former case there is the eternal destination to salvation of persons who are the objects of God's sovereign election; in the latter case there is the divine purpose to save the class characterized by faith and perseverance. In the ultimate analysis the former is the election of persons, the latter is the election of qualities with the provision that all who exhibit these qualities will be saved.

Some Arminians under the stress of the argument, and also on exegetical grounds, perceive the inadequacy of the foregoing position, and so they say that God not only decrees to save all who believe, but that He also elects all who believe. There is therefore, they say, an eternal unchangeable election of individuals whose number is certain, an election indeed of all who are to be ultimately saved. Some may be disposed to say that this is exactly the teaching of the Reformed Standards. A little investigation will expose the fallacy of this. The hallmark of Calvinism is unconditional election and that is exactly what this highest type of Arminianism vigorously denies. It professes indeed fixed and unchangeable election of individuals. But what is meant is, that, since God decrees to save all who believe and since He knows perfectly beforehand and from eternity who will believe, He on the basis of that foresight as ground and cause elects these individuals to eternal life. God elects all whom He foresees will believe and persevere to the end.

His election then is determined by His foresight of some difference that comes to exist among men, a difference which He Himself does not cause but which in the final analysis is due to sovereign choice on the part of the human will. The determining factor in this type of election then is not the sovereign unconditioned good pleasure of God but the decision of the human will which God from eternity foresees. Election is not the source of faith, but faith foreseen is made the source or condition of election. On close examination it should be evident that this is not divine election at all. The sovereign determination of God is ruled out at the vital point, for the ultimate determinant of the discrimination that exists among men is made to be something in men and not the sovereign good pleasure of God. Indeed this type of Arminianism that at first appears to approach so closely to the Reformed position only serves to show more clearly the total difference between the two systems. The election taught in the Reformed Church is election to salvation and eternal life and therefore also to faith and all other graces as the means ordained of God to the accomplishment of His sovereign decree. Election is not then conditioned upon faith, but faith is the fruit of election. God sovereignly works faith in men because He has in His eternal counsel appointed them to salvation. Faith is not the logical prius of election, but election is the eternal prius and source of faith. Arminianism at its best denies all of these propositions. The denial of unconditional election strikes at the heart of the doctrine of the grace of God. The grace of God is absolutely sovereign and every failure to recognize and appreciate the absolute sovereignty of God in His saving grace is an expression of the pride of the human heart. It rests upon the demand that God can deal differently with men in the matter of salvation only because they have made themselves to differ. In its ultimate elements it means that the determining factor in salvation is what man himself does, and that is just tantamount to saying that it is not God who determines the salvation of men, but men determine their own salvation; it is not God who saves but man saves himself. This is precisely the issue.

Limited Atonement The second article of the Arminian Remonstrance of 1610 concerned the question of the extent of the atonement. It reads as follows: "Article II. That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of John 3:16. . . . And in 1 John 2:2 John 2:2 . . ." This is an emphatic statement of what is known as the doctrine of universal atonement, and is in its essence that Christ died for all men alike and procured for them equally and without distinction redemption and forgiveness of sins. The atonement as such, it says in effect, has as its intention the provision of salvation for all, the making of the salvation of all men possible, the placing of all men and every man in a salvable state or condition. In opposition to this the Reformed Faith affirms the doctrine of what is known as limited atonement. What does it mean? Perhaps the best answer that can be given to this question is to set forth the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter VIII, section V.

Redemption Purchased for the Elect

"The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him." This definitely states that reconciliation and an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven is purchased for all those given to the Son by the Father. Who are they?

In section 1 of this same chapter we are told that they are the people given to Christ from all eternity to be His seed and "to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified." The people given to Christ are surely the same as the people chosen in Christ - the form of expression used in chapter III, section v - and they are simply those of mankind predestinated unto life, namely, the elect. With respect to them the Confession continues: "As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation." (III.vi.) It is for the elect, therefore, for the predestinated to life, for those given to Christ by the Father, for those chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, that reconciliation and an eternal inheritance in the kingdom of heaven is purchased. It is they who are redeemed by Christ. Thus teaches the Confession, and so the difference has already become apparent.

Purchase and Application Co-extensive

"To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually apply and communicate the same." (VIII.viii.) The import of this cannot be controverted. It is that the extent of the purchase of redemption is exactly the same as the extent of actual salvation. If Christ purchased redemption for all, then all will have that applied and communicated to them. If only a certain number of the human race are ultimately saved, then only for that number did Christ purchase redemption. So explicit is the above statement that it needs no confirmation. But in order to show that this is not a random statement but a determining principle of the Confessional teaching it can be shown by an entirely distinct line of argument. "Christ by his obedience and death did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." (XI.iii.) Those for whom Christ discharged the debt and made satisfaction to justice are then the justified. But all who are justified are also effectually called. "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth." (XI.i.) And effectual calling expounded in chapter X refers us back to predestination. "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ." (X.i.) And again: "God did from all eternity decree to justify all the elect; and Christ did, in the fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification." (XI.iv.) The upshot is plain - predestination to life, redemption, effectually calling, and justification have identical extent; they have in their embrace exactly the same persons. The Exclusiveness of Redemption That the non-elect, those who do not become the actual partakers of salvation and are therefore finally lost, are not included within the scope of the redemption purchased by Christ, we may and must even from that which we have already quoted infer to be the teaching of the Confession. But it is interesting to observe that not only does the Confession imply this; it also expressly states it. "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." (III.vi.) The Confession is using the phrases "redeemed by Christ" and "purchased redemption" synonymously. Here it is said that redemption by Christ or the purchase of redemption is for those who as a matter of fact are saved and for those only. It is exclusive of those who are not called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved. Redemption is defined not only extensively but

exclusively.

If we may recapitulate then, the teaching of the Confession can be summed up in these three propositions. (1) Redemption is purchased for the elect. (2) Redemption is applied to all for whom it is purchased. (3) Redemption is not purchased for those who finally perish, for the non-elect.

Atonement is defined therefore in the Confession in terms of sacrifice, reconciliation, redemption, satisfaction to divine justice, discharge of debt, and states clearly that atonement thus defined is for those whom God hath predestinated to life, namely the elect. They are saved because Christ by his redemptive work secured their salvation. The finally lost are not within the embrace of that salvation secured, and therefore they are not within the embrace of that which secures it, namely the redemption wrought by Christ. It is just here that the difference between Arminianism and Calvinism may be most plainly stated. Did Christ die and offer Himself a sacrifice to God to make the salvation of all men possible, or did He offer Himself a sacrifice to God to secure infallibly the salvation of His people? Arminians profess the former and deny the latter; our Standards in accordance, as we believe, with Holy Scripture teach the latter.

Objections Answered The term "limited" atonement has given much offense. It may not indeed be the most fortunate terminology. It is capable of misunderstanding and misrepresentation. Some for this reason may prefer the terms "definite" or "particular" atonement. But what we are particularly insistent upon defending is that which the term historically used connotes, and so if the disuse of the term "limited" is calculated to create the impression that we have renounced the doctrine of which the term is the symbol, if in other words the disuse is calculated to placate the enemies of our Reformed Faith, then we must resolutely refuse to refrain from its use. The atonement is limited, because in its precise intention and meaning and effect it is for those and for those only who are destined in the determinate purpose of God to eternal salvation. We may well bless God that this is not a meager company, but a multitude whom no man can number out of every nation and kindred and people and tongue.

Let it not be thought that the Arminian by his doctrine escapes limited atonement. The truth is that he professes a despicable doctrine of limited atonement. He professes an atonement that is tragically limited in its efficacy and power, an atonement that does not secure the salvation of any. He indeed eliminates from the atonement that which makes it supremely precious to the Christian heart. In B. B. Warfield's words, "the substance of the atonement is evaporated, that it may be given a universal reference." (The Plan of Salvation, p. 122.) What we mean is, that unless we resort to the position of universal restoration for all mankind - a position against which the witness of Scripture is decisive - an interpretation of the atonement in universal terms must nullify its properly substitutive and redemptive character. We must take our choice between a limited extent and a limited efficacy, or rather between a limited atonement and an atonement without efficacy. It either infallibly saves the elect or it actually saves none.

It is sometimes objected that the doctrine of limited atonement makes the preaching of a full and free salvation impossible. This is wholly untrue. The salvation accomplished by the death of Christ is infinitely sufficient and universally suitable, and it may be said that its infinite sufficiency and perfect suitability 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 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 absolutely true. Every sinner believing will infallibly be saved, for the veracity and purpose of God cannot be violated. The criticism that the doctrine of limited atonement prevents the free offer of the gospel rests upon a profound misapprehension as to what the warrant for preaching the gospel and even of the primary act of faith itself really is. This warrant is not that Christ died for all men but the universal invitation, demand and promise of the gospel united with the perfect sufficiency and suitability of Christ as Savior and Redeemer. What the ambassador of the gospel demands in Christ's name is that the lost and helpless sinner commit himself to that all-sufficient Savior with the plea that in thus receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation he will certainly be saved. And what the lost sinner does on the basis of the warrant of faith is to commit himself to that Savior with the assurance that as he thus trusts he will be saved. What he believes, then, in the first instance is not that he has been saved, but that believing in Christ salvation becomes his. The conviction that Christ died for him, or in other words, that he is an object of God's redeeming love in Christ, is not the primary act of faith. It is often in the consciousness of the believer so closely bound up with the primary act of faith that he may not be able to be conscious of the logical and psychological distinction. But nevertheless the primary act of faith is self-committal to the all-sufficient and suitable Savior, and the only warrant for that trust is the indiscriminate, full and free offer of grace and salvation in Christ Jesus.

Total Depravity The third of the five points of Arminianism concerns the question of original sin or human depravity. In several of the formal statements of the Arminian position as it bears upon human depravity, the real import of that position is not readily detected. As William Cunningham points out, the controversy when it arose, especially as it was conducted on the Arminian side, did not give the prominence to this aspect of the debate. Yet, as he proceeds to show, "it really lies at the root of the whole difference, as was made more palpably manifest in the progress of the discussion, when the followers of Arminius developed their views upon this subject more fully, and deviated further and further from the doctrine of the Bible and the Reformation on the subject of the natural state and character of men." (Historical Theology, 2:392.)

Arminians do in general terms assert the depravity of fallen human nature. But a merely general statement of the fact does not touch the heart of the question. The real question is the seriousness with which the general statement of the fact is taken and the willingness there is to appreciate all the implications of it. In a word, it is the question of the totality or entirety of this corruption. Our Confession of Faith says with respect to our first parents and their sin in eating the forbidden fruit: "By this sin they fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

"They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation.

"From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." (VI.2 - Numbers)

"Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." (IX.3.)

These are highly compressed and succinct statements of total depravity, and their meaning and consequences ought to be carefully weighed. They are peculiarly offensive to every view that hangs on to any vestige of optimism with respect to the qualities or potencies inherent in human nature as fallen. Indeed they must arouse the opposition and emphatic protest of every view that suspends any hope on the autonomy of the human will. It is just because the Arminian does in the last analysis place the determining factor in the individual's salvation in the free choice of the human will, that he has taken such unrelenting issue with the doctrine of the Reformed Churches. The Confession does not, of course, deny to men what we may call natural virtue or civil righteousness. It affirms that works done by unregenerate men may, as regards the matter of them, be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others. Neither does it say that all men are equally depraved, or to put it more accurately it does not say that this corruption "whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" receives the same degree of development and expression in all. What the Confession does is to set forth the teaching of Scripture with respect to the moral and spiritual condition of men as they stand in the pure light of the divine standard and judgment. Judged by that norm they are dead in sin and wholly defiled.

Irresistible Grace As is apparent from the foregoing discussion it is in connection with the operations of God in His saving grace that the implications of the affirmation or denial of the doctrine of total depravity come to light. The question here is: What is the mode of the divine operation of the Spirit of God in bringing men to faith and repentance? All are agreed that men are saved through faith. But the difference arises when we come to explain the fact that, of those who indiscriminately receive the overtures of grace in the gospel, some believe and some do not. The question is not in general terms that of grace. Arminians concede that men cannot be saved apart from the gracious operations of the Spirit of God in the heart. The question is: What is the nature of that grace? What is the cause of faith? Why is it that some believe to the saving of their souls and some do not? Is that grace of God given to all indiscriminately, or is it a grace given only to those who believe? Is it a grace that may be resisted, or is it always efficacious to the end in view, and therefore incapable of being frustrated?

Arminians though exhibiting certain differences among themselves are agreed that sufficient grace, whether it be regarded as a natural possession or a gracious bestowal, resides in all, and therefore that all men have the ability to believe. The explanation of the fact that some believe and some do not rests wholly in a difference of response on the part of men. This difference of response may be stated in terms of co-operation with, or improvement of, the grace of God. But in any case the explanation of the difference lies exclusively in the free will of man. For the difference of response on the part of the believer as over against the unbeliever he is not only wholly responsible but he, in the exercise of the autonomy that belongs to his will, is the sole determining factor. God does not make men to differ. He operates no more savingly and efficaciously in the

man who believes than He does in the man who does not believe. For this indiscriminateness in the saving operations of God, the Arminian is exceedingly jealous; he demands that what God does for and in one He does for and in all equally. In the ultimate, then, the issue of salvation rests with the sovereign determination of the human will. Men make themselves to differ.

Now it is easy to see that , if man is thus able to co-operate with or improve the grace that is common to all, there must remain in man some vestige of good. Indeed, so decisive an element of ability to good survives that it determines the exercise of the most important event or series of events in the history of the individual. And this is exactly where the Arminian position impinges not only upon the sovereignty and efficacy of God's saving grace but upon the total depravity of sinful man. In magnificent contrast with this denial of the sovereignty and efficacy of the saving grace of God is the teaching of our Confession. It reads: "All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it." (X.1 - Exodus) In these sections the faith that embraces Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul is referred to the sovereign predestination of God as its source, and to the regenerative operation of God in the heart as its cause. God is sovereignly pleased to impart His efficacious grace, and it is the enablement that comes from this sovereign bestowal of the grace of the Holy Spirit that leads to faith. The person effectually called is altogether passive therein until renewed by the Holy Spirit. A new heart has been given him and a right spirit created within him by the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit; and because he has a new heart and a right spirit his response to the call of the gospel cannot but be one of loving reception and trust. Just as the reaction of the carnal mind cannot but be one of enmity against God, so the reaction of the mind of the Spirit cannot but be one of faith and trust. It is the very nature of the new heart to trust God as He is revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

We have here in our Confession a rather neat statement of the relation of faith to regeneration. In this realm of theological debate our position can very readily be tested by our answer to the questions: Does God regenerate us because we believe, or do we believe because God has regenerated us? In other words what has the causal priority, regeneration or faith? There are many evangelicals who will say that faith is the means of regeneration, that God regenerates those who believe and because they believe. They thereby, whether wittingly or unwittingly, place themselves in the Arminian camp and in the most decided opposition to Reformed doctrine. Logically they place themselves - perhaps with good intentions - in a position that leads to the wreck and ruin of true evangelicalism.

We are, of course, using the term "regeneration" in the restricted sense of the new birth, and in this sense the very hallmark of Calvinism as of Augustinianism is that faith is the gift of God, because it

proceeds from the regenerative operation of the Holy Spirit as its only cause and explanation. God has elected His people to salvation. He has ordained that this salvation become theirs through faith. But because of the total depravity of their hearts and minds they cannot exercise faith; they are dead in trespasses and sins. In order to bring them to faith God implants by the agency of the Holy Spirit a new heart and a right spirit within them, and thus effectually and irresistibly draws them to Christ. They are made willing in the day of God's power. By grace they have been saved through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God. The Perseverance of the Saints In the closest relation to the foregoing doctrine of efficacious or irresistible grace is the doctrine of the eternal security of the believer. This doctrine the Arminian bluntly rejects. A true believer, he says, may be in grace and then fall from grace and finally perish. Such a position is in logical coherence with his doctrine of the nature of saving grace. If the determining factor in the matter of an individual's salvation is the autonomy of his own free will, then consistency would seem to be all in favor of regarding salvation as a very insecure and mutable possession. Salvation in this case cannot be any more stable than that which in the final analysis determines it. But it is just here that the harmony of efficacious grace with the 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." (XVII.1 - - Exodus)

S. The Sanctity of Truth

The Sanctity of Truth

John Murray

'WHAT is truth?' said Pilate. The irony of his question is that truth, 'the truth', stood before him. The tragedy of Pilate's bewilderment was the complete absence of comprehension regarding the stupendous character of the Person whom he had delivered to be crucified. Pilate's vacillation and his readiness to be directed by expediency rather than by justice show that he was not 'of the truth'. 'Everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice', said Jesus (John 18:37). There was tension in Pilate's mind because he had some sense of justice. But 'the truth' he did not know, and truth did not command his judgment

Pilate's question is inescapable and none is more basic. If the question is to be oriented properly it must, first of all, take the form, 'What is the truth?' Our Lord's answer to Thomas, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (John 14:6) points the direction in which we are to find the answer. We should bear in mind that 'the true' in the usage of John is not so much the true in contrast with the false, or the real in contrast with the fictitious. It is the absolute as contrasted with the relative, the ultimate as contrasted with the derived, the eternal as contrasted with the temporal, the permanent as contrasted with the temporary, the complete in contrast with the partial, the substantial in contrast with the shadowy. Early in the Gospel John advises us of this. 'The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ' (John 1:17). It is to miss the thought entirely to suppose that truth is here contrasted with the false or the untrue. The law was not false or untrue. What John is contrasting here is the partial, incomplete character of the Mosaic dispensation with the completeness and fulness of the revelation of grace and truth in Jesus Christ. John had said this in the preceding context: 'We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). The Mosaic revelation was not destitute of grace or truth. But grace and truth in full plenitude came by Jesus Christ. The ultimate reality of which Moses was the shadow, the archetype of which Moses was the ectype, now appeared. The true light (John 1:9), the true grace were now manifested.'

It is in this sense that we are to understand our Lord when he said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'. He is enunciating the astounding fact that he belongs to the ultimate, the eternal, the absolute, the underived, the complete. The predications made with reference to him are those than which nothing is more ultimate. Jesus' own witness is not less than the profound and simple propositions with which John opens his Gospel: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1). The predications are these indubitably—the eternity of the Word, his eternal coordination with God, his eternal identity with God. He is distinguished from God and yet identified with him. He is all that God is and yet he is not the only one who is God. When our Lord in his high-priestly prayer says, 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3), he is predicating of the Father the most ultimate and absolute in respect of deity that biblical language provides. No higher

predication is possible than this, 'the only true God'. Jesus says and means that the Father is ultimate, self-existent, self-subsistent, eternal being, that he is such as God, and that as God he is such. The Father is 'truth' in the ultimate and highest conceivable sense. But it is an inescapable fact that John makes this same predication with reference to Jesus Christ himself. It is implied in John 1:1, 'the Word was God'; and it is expressly affirmed by John in his first Epistle: 'And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given to us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life' (1 John 5:20). That the person designated 'the true God' is Jesus Christ the exegetical considerations converge to establish. Hence all the ultimacy, reality, eternity belonging to 'the true' in terms of Johannine usage is predicable not only of the Father, as Jesus himself expressly said, but also of the Son himself; he also is 'the true God'. It is this alone that could warrant the word of Jesus to his disciples, 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father is in me: the words which I say to you I speak not of myself; but the Father dwelling in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me' (John 14:10, John 14:11).

We are thus getting to the basis and heart of the question of 'truth'. God is 'the truth', truth absolute, ultimate, eternal, in contradistinction from all that is relative, derived, partial, and temporal. And when we say this, the foregoing data show that it is of the triune God in the mystery of unity in trinity and trinity in unity that we make this predication. Only trinity in unity can explain such terms as 'the Word was with God, and the Word was God', together with the correlative teaching of Scripture respecting the Holy Spirit. The Spirit also is the truth (1 John 5:6; cf John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13). When we speak, therefore, of the sanctity of truth, we must recognize that what underlies this concept is the sanctity of the being of God as the living and true God. He is the God of truth and all truth derives its sanctity from him. This is why all untruth or falsehood is wrong; it is a contradiction of that which God is. And this is why God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; cf Romans 3:4).¹ To lie would contradict himself and he cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13). It is his perfection to be consistent with himself, and all his ways are truth. 'The works of his hands are truth and judgment; all his precepts are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness' (Psalms 3:7, Psalms 3:8; cf Deuteronomy 32:4; Isaiah 25:1). This attribute of God is often expressed as his 'faithfulness' and is exemplified in the certainty and immutability of his promises and threatenings. God's covenant is one of faithfulness to such an extent that promise and fulfilment are essential features of the covenant concept (cf Genesis 9:16; Genesis 15:18). And there can be little doubt that the specifically redemptive name of God, 'I am that I am', in terms of which we are to interpret the tetragram, points distinctly to the immutability of his covenant grace and promise (cf Malachi 3:6).² In God's address to man the first express allusion to God's truthfulness and to the necessity on man's part of crediting God's word is in connection with the forbidden tree. 'In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die' (Genesis 2:17). It was by this prohibition that man's faithfulness was to be tested; and his faithfulness would have required as an essential ingredient unrelenting trust in the faithfulness of God. It is here that the craft of the tempter appears, as also his malignity. The temptation to which Eve was subjected was directed in two stages, first by a question of fact and then by flat denial. It is this latter stage that interests us now. 'Ye shall not surely die' said the tempter. The form of the denial is to be noted. It is not that God would be unsuccessful in fulfilling his threat, that he would not be able to carry it into effect. The allegation carried with it that implication. But that is not the pivot of the denial; it is not simply a denial of God's power. It is much more diabolical. Nor is it an

impeachment of God's knowledge. The serpent is not saying that God is ignorant and that he knows more than God does. Such an allegation would have been blasphemous enough, but not for the serpent. He credits God with knowledge, indeed with full knowledge of what the outcome would be, and on that assumption makes the thrust which is the genius of his attack. He directly assails God's veracity. 'God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes will be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:5). He accuses God of deliberate falsehood and deception. God has perpetrated a lie, he avers, because he is jealous of his own selfish and exclusive possession of the knowledge of good and evil! 'Ye shall not surely die.' The denial is not then an attack upon God's knowledge, nor merely upon his power. The tempter openly assails the integrity and veracity of God. In a word, it is the truthfulness of God that is impugned. And this was directed to the end of securing assent on the woman's part to the monstrous allegation. In this the tempter was successful, and disobedience to the divine command was the sequel. It was the strategy of skilfully framed and designed attack upon man's integrity by eliciting distrust in the integrity of God. Man's integrity is dissolved when God's veracity is questioned. The way of integrity for man is unreserved commitment to God, totality trust in his truthfulness. God's truth is his glory. The epitome of malignity is to assail this glory. That was the tempter's strategy, and by acquiescence our first parents fell. Sin entered into the world, and death by sin. When we speak of the sanctity of truth in relation to ethics, we have particularly in view 'truthfulness' on our part in our dealings with God, ourselves, and our fellowmen. The necessity of truthfulness in us rests upon God's truthfulness. As we are to be holy because God is holy, so we are to be truthful because God is truthful. The glory of God is that he is the God of truth; the glory of man is that he is the image of God and therefore 'of the truth' (cf John 18:37). It is not without significance that the arch-enemy of God and his kingdom is the father of lies; 'he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, because he is a liar and the father of it' (John 8:44). All untruth has its affinity with that lie by which Eve was seduced, and nothing exemplifies the contradiction of God and of man's integrity more than the lie. It is the acme of reprobation when God sends upon men 'a working of error to the end that they may believe the lie' (2 Thessalonians 2:11) and gives them over to a reprobate mind (cf Romans 1:28-32). The foundations of all equity are destroyed when truth has fallen. It was the lament of the prophet that 'none pleadeth in truth', that 'truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey' (Isaiah 59:4, Isaiah 59:14, Isaiah 59:15). And Jeremiah's lamentation is to the same effect: 'This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth' (Jeremiah 7:28). 'And they bend their tongue like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth' (Jeremiah 9:3). Hosea has the same complaint: 'Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land' (Hosea 4:1). When our Lord himself was made manifest to Israel, one of his severest indictments was this: 'Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will to do' (John 8:44). And why such a charge? 'But because I say the truth, ye do not believe me' (John 8:45). An apostle can describe the deeds of the old man and of the manner of life by which the old man is characterized as those of lying and falsehood (cf. Ephesians 4:22-25; Colossians 3:9, Colossians 3:10). That untruth is the hallmark of impiety is borne out by numerous examples of Scripture. The envy of Joseph's brethren by which they sold him into Egypt is matched by the deception perpetrated to conceal the

vile deed from their father (Genesis 37:31-35). Joseph's piety is proven by his chastity: 'how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?' (Genesis 39:9). The lust of Potiphar's wife is paralleled by the malicious lie by which she sought either to conceal her own wickedness or, more probably, to wreak vengeance on Joseph for his refusal to gratify her lewd designs (Genesis 39:13-18). The perfidy of Pharaoh is but an index to the hardness of his heart (cf Exodus 9:28). Judas played the part of the father of lies, who had entered into him (Luke 22:3; John 13:27), when he acted a lie and betrayed the Son of man with a kiss (Matthew 26:49; Mark 14:45; Luke 22:48). Ananias and Sapphira lied by an act of pretension. Again it is eloquent of affinity with the father of lies and with the deception by which sin entered the world that Peter said, 'Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?' (Acts 5:3). Lying is of the devil; it is the work of darkness. And when the consummated order of righteousness is portrayed for us it is, as we should expect, an order also of truth: 'And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that is unclean, or he that worketh abomination and a lie' (Revelation 21:27). 'Without are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie' (Revelation 22:15). Liars, like murderers, fornicators sorcerers, and idolaters, have their part 'in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death' (Revelation 21:8). Such a result is inevitable. The new Jerusalem is the holy city and 'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it'. His servants 'shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there' (Revelation 22:3-5). The Lord God who 'is light and in whom is no darkness at all' (1 John 1:5) will be their everlasting light, and the holy will be holy still. As untruth is the hallmark of impiety, so truth is the insigne of godliness. This is true, first of all, in respect of knowledge. No words of Scripture are more relevant than those of our Lord himself. 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent' (John 17:3). 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father but by me' (John 14:6). 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free' (John 8:31, John 8:32). To know God is to know the truth; to be established in the faith and obedience of Christ is to know the truth. To know the Holy Spirit and to be indwelt by him is to be guided into all truth; the Spirit is 'the Spirit of truth' (John 16:13). In all of this we have a rich and complex coordination of aspects or elements. We must not set up those false antitheses which are too frequently the coinage of dialectic scepticism. If we know God, we know the truth; but we know God only through his revelation and specifically through his Word. The Word of God is the truth; and, if we know God, we know his Word as the truth. If we abide in Christ as 'the truth', we abide in his Word, and there is no abiding in him apart from continuance in his Word (cf. John 8:31, John 8:32; John 5:38; John 15:7, John 15:10). So our Lord, in like manner, could say in his address to the Father: 'Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth' (John 17:17). And Paul could say of the Thessalonians that the gospel he preached came unto them 'not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and much assurance' (1 Thessalonians 1:5), and they received the word of the message 'not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God', which works effectually in them that believe (1 Thessalonians 2:13). To speak of knowing God and the truth that he is apart from the word of revelation which is incorporated for us in the Scripture is for us men an abstraction which has no meaning or relevance. When we are of the truth and know the truth we discern in the inscripturated word of truth the living voice of him who is the truth and there is no tension between our acceptance of the living God as 'the only true God' and of his Word as the

truth. 'I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth' (1 John 2:21). It is the certitude which is the only appropriate response to confrontation with God himself that his Word, the Word of Scripture, must elicit. God's Word is truth because he is truth. The second respect in which truth is the hallmark of godliness is the necessity of 'truthfulness', truth in practice in thought, word, and action. It is apparent that this second aspect depends upon the first. In reality, truthfulness cannot guide our life unless 'the truth' is formed in us. We must know the truth if we are to live the truth. The lie is the element of our depraved state. A biblical ethic of truth must not ignore or discount the witness of Scripture that every imagination of the thoughts of our hearts is only evil (Genesis 6:5; Genesis 8:21), that we go astray from the womb speaking lies (Psalms 58:3), that we change the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25), that with our tongues we have used deceit and the poison of asps is under our lips (Romans 3:13), that the god of this world, the father of lies, has blinded our minds (2 Corinthians 4:4), that we receive not the things of the Spirit of truth (1 Corinthians 2:14), that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God (Romans 8:7), and that there is no fear of God before our eyes (Romans 3:18). Hence the life of truth and truthfulness can emerge only as there is the transformation of the new creation in righteousness and holiness of the truth and God shines in our hearts 'to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6). John with his usual incisiveness and decisiveness brushes aside all camouflage when he says, 'Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?' Where this central tenet of the truth of the gospel is disbelieved, there the lie is enthroned. The life of truth takes its genesis from the faith of Jesus, that the Son of God is come in the flesh. 'He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also' (1 John 2:23), and in this confession we discern the Spirit of God (1 John 4:2) as the Spirit of truth.

If faith is constituted by, and terminates upon, the truth of Jesus, the life of faith continues in obedience to the truth. It was the truth of the gospel (Galatians 2:5) that was at stake in the churches of Galatia when Paul penned his Epistle. His reproofs and exhortations take many forms, and one of them is this: 'Ye were running well: who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?' (Galatians 5:7). In writing to Timothy, Paul makes plain that if men like Hymenaeus and Philetus were over-throwing the faith of some it was because they erred concerning the truth (2 Timothy 2:18); and that men of corrupt mind and reprobate concerning the faith were those who, though ever learning, were not able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Timothy 3:7, 2 Timothy 3:8). Those reprobated to damnation are those who did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; cf Romans 2:8). On the positive and favourable side the witness is equally explicit. Paul gives thanks that God had chosen some 'unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth' (2 Thessalonians 2:13), the brethren beloved of the Lord. The love that abides, the love that is greatest of all, without which nothing else profits, is the love that 'rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth' (1 Corinthians 13:6). The fruit of the light in all who are the children of light is in all truth as well as in all goodness and righteousness (Ephesians 5:9). And John has no greater joy than to hear that his children were walking in the truth (3 John 1:4; cf 3 John 1:3 and 2 John 1:4). In a word, it is the truth of the gospel, dwelling richly in us in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that insures the truthfulness of our practical life; sincerity, honesty, integrity are formed in us by the truth.

What is truthfulness? It is not a simple question. Moralists have written extensively on this theme and much disagreement has perplexed the solution of the problems involved.³ It is easy to affirm that to speak, or signify, or live a lie is wrong, that to bear false witness is to violate the core of integrity. The Bible throughout requires veracity; we may never lie. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour' (Exodus 20:16). 'Thou shalt not take up a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness' (Exodus 23:1). 'Keep thee far from a false matter' (Exodus 23:7). 'Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord' (Zechariah 8:16, Zechariah 8:17). 'Wherefore, having put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another' (Ephesians 4:25). It needs to be borne in mind that all falsehood, error, misapprehension, every deviation from what is true in thought, feeling, word, or action is the result of sin. There would be no misunderstanding and no misrepresentation if there were 'no sin. We may not forget that sin began in this world with the acquiescence of the woman in the misrepresentation respecting God, averred by the tempter. In the last analysis, all misunderstanding and misrepresentation are misunderstanding and misrepresentation of God; all truth is derived from him and only in relation to him is anything true. Quite apart from sin there would have been ignorance and lack of full understanding on the part of all created rational beings. But limited knowledge is one thing, falsehood in understanding or representation is another.

It is true, of course, that misunderstanding and misrepresentation often arise when the persons involved in either or both are not directly or deliberately intending to create misunderstanding or misrepresentation. A person receives information that is erroneous, for example; he believes the report and passes it on to another. He is acting, as we say, in good faith. And we do not call such a person a liar because, though mistaken as to the facts, he utters what he believes to be true and is not motivated by malice or any evil intent. We are all involved to some extent in such reporting. It appears to be a necessity of the credit we must accord to others and of the limitations that encompass life in this world. We should be doing grave injustice if everyone involved in erroneous representations were charged with lying and esteemed accordingly. Ordinarily, at least, the person who is to be branded as a liar is the person who affirms to be true what he knows or believes to be false or affirms to be false what he knows or believes to be true.⁴ But we think very superficially and naïvely if we suppose that no wrong is entailed in purveying misrepresentation of fact. Even when the conditions aforementioned exist and persons are, as we say, the innocent victims of misinformation, we are not to suppose that they are relieved of all wrong. What we need to appreciate is that the representation is false; it does not accord with truth. Such a representation ought not to be; it is a violation of truth and, in the final analysis, a misrepresentation of God's truth. It has its affinities with the original lie. Consequently to be the agent of passing on that misrepresentation, however noble may be our motives and designs, and however deeply unaware of its untruth, must entail for us in some way or other involvement in the intrinsic wrong of the untruth. What we ought to discern and assess more carefully than we are wont is the involvements in sin arising from our communal and corporate relationships as members of the race. The misrepresentation or untruth of which we are now speaking is a wrong that ought not to be. It is not simply an evil consequent upon sin which is not itself sinful, such as disease. It is intrinsically wrong because it is false. It does not cease to be false as it continues to be communicated. How we are to measure the wrong of the apparently innocent purveyor is beyond our power of analysis

and beyond our province. But to dismiss the entail of wrong is to fail in an analysis which the nature of the misrepresentation and our involvements require us to make. This consideration that all falsehood, as a deviation from truth, is per se wrong should arouse us to the gravity of our situation in relation to the prevalence of falsehood and to our responsibility in guarding, maintaining, and promoting truth. Moralists have devoted a great deal of attention to the question of what is overtly a lie and of what constitutes a person a liar. It is all-important to define and foster sincerity and honesty of heart and expression. But we must not overlook more basic questions pertinent to the sanctity of truth. This sanctity requires that we not only avoid and hate all deliberate lying, but also that thought and conviction be in accordance with truth, that not only must we refrain from uttering or signifying what we believe to be false but that belief itself be framed in accordance with truth.⁵ In entertaining belief or conviction it is necessary that our minds be so informed and our judgment so disciplined that we shall not allow conviction to be induced, judgment registered, or representation made until adequate evidence is discovered and evaluated to ground conviction, judgment, and representation. No warning or plea is more germane to the question of truth than that we cultivate the reserve and exercise the caution whereby we shall be preserved from rash and precipitate judgments and from the vice of peddling reports that are not authenticated by the proper evidence. And we must also strive to be blinded by no prejudice, nor impeded by the remissness of sloth and indifference, which render us impervious to the force of the compelling evidence with which we are confronted. Jealousy for truth and for the conviction that is correspondent will make us alert to evidence when it is presented and to the absence of evidence when it is not sufficient. The man of truth is the man of resolute, decisive conviction; he is also the man of scrupulous reserve. 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people' (Leviticus 19:16). The injunctions of Scripture which bear directly on the demand for truthfulness have reference to speech or utterance. 'Speak every man truth with his neighbour' (Ephesians 4:25). 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour' (Exodus 20:16). 'Lie not one to another' (Colossians 3:9). It will have to be understood that this covers other forms of signification as well as the spoken word. Words spoken are simply signs by which thought and meaning are conveyed, and there are numerous other means of communication by which truth can be conveyed or lying perpetrated. There are particularly the signs of gesture and action, sometimes closely associated with the spoken word and sometimes wholly intelligible without words. But as the Scripture itself deals with the question in terms of speech, and since that is the most common means of communication, we may do likewise.⁶ What does the Scripture mean by 'lying' as the prohibited thing and by 'speaking truth' as that required? May we under any circumstances utter what we know to be untrue, what we believe to be false? Are we always under obligation to declare what we know or believe to be true?⁷ May we affirm part of the truth and conceal the rest? These are the questions that inescapably arise, not only in the exigencies of life but in the interpretation of Scripture. We are compelled to come to terms with such questions because the biblical record supplies us with instances in which untruth was blatantly spoken and in which truth was concealed. Does the Scripture approve such conduct under certain circumstances? In Old Testament history there are notable instances of obvious untruth. Without determining the precise category of Abraham's action both in Egypt and in the land of Abimelech in averring that Sarah was his sister, there is the indubitable untruth of Jacob and of Rebekah as his instigator when he went to Isaac his father to secure the covenant blessing. That Jacob pretended to be Esau and stated a deliberate falsehood cannot be denied. 'Who art thou, my son?'

said Isaac. 'I am Esau thy firstborn,' said Jacob. And Isaac said, 'Art thou my very son Esau? and he said, I am' (Genesis 27:18, Genesis 27:19, Genesis 27:24). It might appear utterly impossible to condemn Rebekah and Jacob for the deception and untruth of act and word since it was the very occasion upon which divine blessing was administered to Jacob. Could the Lord countenance such a stratagem if it were a lie of act and word? And, furthermore, we may discover in Rebekah's action jealousy for the fulfilment of the divine promise she had received, 'The elder shall serve the younger'. There was undoubted faith in Rebekah's action, indeed the urgent impulsion of faith. And there must have been faith in Jacob, too. If he were indifferent to the blessing he would not have acted as he did. And, no doubt, much more could be said of the resolute faith which lay behind the whole episode as devised and arranged by Rebekah. But it is poor theology and worse theodicy that will seek to derive from God's action in the bestowal of the blessing upon Jacob, or in the faith of Rebekah which lay back of her design, a vindication of the method devised by Rebekah and enacted by Jacob. We know little of biblical theology if we do not recognize that God fulfils his determinate purpose of grace and promise notwithstanding the unworthy actions of those who are the beneficiaries of that grace. He fulfils his determinate purpose in spite of the actions which are alien to the integrity of character which his will demands. And surely we have here a signal example of the sovereign grace as well as of the determinate purpose of God. He even fulfils his holy and sovereign will in connection with the unholy means adopted by Rebekah and Jacob. And if we think of Rebekah's faith we can readily discern the insistent impulsion of faith conjoined with an action that was not of faith. Are we to say that faith is never mixed with the devices of unbelief? Or, to put it otherwise, are we to say that strong faith cannot coexist with the infirmities of unbelief? There is no ground upon which we may seek to justify the deception and untruth of Rebekah and Jacob.⁸ Jacob spoke and acted a lie, and this fact only enhances our astonishment at the sovereignty of God's grace and the faithfulness of his promise. In this instance we find no justification of the falsehood perpetrated. The vindication of deliberate untruth under certain circumstances receives more plausible support from the case of Rahab the harlot. That Rahab uttered an explicit falsehood is apparent. She hid the spies upon tile roof. The king of Jericho sent to Rahab and asked her to bring forth the men who had come to her. Her reply is not one of evasion; it is plain contradiction of known fact. "Yea, the men came unto me, but I knew not whence they were: and it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them' (Joshua 2:4, Joshua 2:5). Rahab was a woman of faith. She is included in the great cloud of witnesses. 'By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with them that had been disobedient, having received the spies with peace' (Hebrews 11:31). Again we read, 'Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, in that she received the messengers and sent them out another way?' (James 2:25). How could her conduct in reference to the spies be so commended, we might say, if the untruth by which she shielded them were itself wrong?

It should not go unnoticed that the New Testament Scriptures which commend Rahab for her faith and works make allusion solely to the fact that she received the spies and sent them out another way. No question can be raised as to the propriety of these actions or of hiding the spies from the emissaries of the king of Jericho. And the approval of these actions does not logically, or in terms of the analogy provided by Scripture, carry with it the approval of the specific untruth spoken to the king of Jericho. It is strange theology that will insist that the approval of her faith and works in receiving the spies and helping them to escape must embrace the approval of all the actions

associated with her praiseworthy conduct. And if it is objected that the preservation of the spies and the sequel of sending them out another way could not have been accomplished apart from the untruth uttered and that the untruth is integral to the successful outcome of her action, there are three things to be borne in mind. (1) We are presuming too much in reference to the providence of God when we say that the untruth was indispensable to the successful outcome of her believing action. (2) Granting that, in the defacto providence of God, the untruth was one of the means through which the spies escaped, it does not follow that Rahab was morally justified in using this method. God fulfils his holy, decretive will through our unholy acts. (3) The kind of argumentation that seeks to justify the untruth because it is so closely bound up with the total result would be akin to the justification of Jacob's lie in connection with the blessing of Isaac; Jacob's deception in deed and word is integral to the defacto outcome of the episode, and yet we need not and may not justify his lie.

We see, therefore, that neither Scripture itself nor the theological inferences derived from Scripture provide us with any warrant for the vindication of Rahab's untruth⁹ and this instance, consequently, does not support the position that under certain circumstances we may justifiably utter an untruth.

One of the most pertinent incidents in the Scripture is the instruction received by Samuel from the Lord himself on the occasion of the anointing of David as king. 'Fill thy horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons' (1 Samuel 16:1). Samuel feared the consequences if Saul heard of this. 'How can I go? if Saul hear it he will kill me. And the Lord said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord' (1 Samuel 16:1). Without question here is divine authorization for concealment by means of a statement other than that which would have disclosed the main purpose of Samuel's visit to Jesse. We may call this evasion, if we will. But, in any case, there is suppression of the most important facts relevant to Samuel's mission. We do not know if direct speech to Saul himself was intended or necessary, but, if so, there was the divine sanction for the concealment. The question is: Was untruth involved? There are three considerations that must be borne in mind.

(1) Samuel carried into effect what the Lord asked him to say and do. 'And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Beth-lehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice' (1 Samuel 16:4-5). Hence Samuel was authorized to say nothing more than what he actually did say and perform. He did not speak what was contrary to fact. There was no untruth in what the Lord authorized. If it is objected that this is a fine-spun distinction akin to sophistry and quibbling, we must take note that these are precisely the facts which the Scripture itself is meticulously, almost repetitiously, careful to set before us. It is an indisputable fact that what Samuel was told to say was strictly in accord with the facts which followed and there is surely purpose in the explicitness of the narrative to this effect. We are compelled to take account of the agreement between statement and fact. It is looseness to ignore this consideration. (2) This incident makes clear that it is proper under certain circumstances to conceal or withhold part of the truth. Saul had no right to know the whole purpose of Samuel's mission to Jesse nor was Samuel under obligation to disclose it. Concealment was not lying. (3) This instance gives us no warrant whatsoever for maintaining that in concealing the truth we may affirm untruth. It is the eloquent

lesson of this incident, borne out by the plain facts referred to above, that what was affirmed was itself strictly true. This passage is perhaps unique in the Scripture because there is the explicit authorization of the Lord as to the method of concealment. It is just for that reason that the precise conditions are to be observed; there is no untruth involved. It is necessary to guard jealously the distinction between partial truth and untruth. If we are not hospitable to this distinction it may well be that we are not sensitive to the ethic of Scripture and the demands of truth. After all, this is not a fine distinction; it is a rather broad distinction. But if we wish to call it a fine distinction, we must remember that the biblical ethic is built upon fine distinctions. At the point of divergence the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, is not a chasm but a razor's edge. And if we do not appreciate this fact then certainly we are not sensitive to the biblical ethic.¹⁰ The apparent prevarication of the midwives in Egypt has been appealed to as warrant for untruth under proper conditions. 'And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them. And God dealt well with the midwives' (Exodus 1:19, Exodus 1:20). The juxtaposition here might seem to carry the endorsement of the reply to Pharaoh.

We need not suppose that the midwives' reply to Pharaoh was altogether void of truth. There is good reason to believe that the Hebrew women often bore their children without the aid of the midwives. We may therefore have an instance of partial truth and not total untruth, and partial truth relevant to the circumstances. And since the midwives feared God and therefore disobeyed Pharaoh's command, it was not an obligation to tell Pharaoh the whole truth. Hence it is possible that the midwives' answer shows not falsehood but concealment through the means of part truth.¹¹ But that the reason they gave was not the whole truth is apparent—the midwives 'saved the men children alive' (Exodus 1:17).

Let us grant, however, that the midwives did speak an untruth and that their reply was really false. There is still no warrant to conclude that the untruth is endorsed, far less that it is the untruth that is in view when we read, 'And God dealt well with the midwives' (Exodus 1:20). The midwives feared God in disobeying the king and it is because they feared God that the Lord blessed them (cf Exodus 1:17, Exodus 1:21). It is not at all strange that their fear of God should have coexisted with moral infirmity. The case is simply that no warrant for untruth can be elicited from this instance any more than in the cases of Jacob and Rahab.¹² The statement of Elisha the prophet of Israel to the host of the king of Syria when they encompassed the city of Dothan, evidently for the purpose of apprehending him, is one that appears untruthful. 'And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. And he led them to Samaria' (2 Kings 6:19). If we say that this is a case of untruth spoken in order to deceive the host of Syrians, it would be difficult to take the position that Elisha had done wrong. The total circumstance of signal protection on the part of God, and of both justice and mercy on Elisha's own part, especially the latter, would make it precarious to infer that Elisha had done wrong in leading the host to Samaria. And so, if untruth is involved, this instance would provide an example of untruth justifiably uttered in order to fulfil a worthy end. Perhaps more than any other incident in Scripture this would be the justification of the untruth of exigency or necessity (*mendacium officiosum*). As we study Elisha's statement, however, it is just as difficult to find untruth in what Elisha said. Let it be granted that the Syrians understood Elisha's words in a way entirely different from Elisha's intent, does it follow that Elisha spoke untruth? Elisha was under no obligation to

inform them that he was the man whom they sought. The Lord had miraculously intervened to guard him from their intent, and to disclose himself to them would have been counter to the miraculous providence by which he was shielded. Furthermore, when Elisha said, 'This is not the city', how are we to know precisely what he intended? He may have meant, 'This is not the city in which you will find the man whom ye seek'. Apparently he was outside the city when he addressed them and he did not intend to re-enter the city. Of what purpose would it have been for Elisha to say, 'This is the city'? If there was deception in what Elisha said, it would have been more of deception to have said 'This is the city'. Was he to encourage them to wander aimlessly in Dothan to find their man when he would not have been there and especially since their eyes had been blinded? Again, when he said, 'Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek', he carried this into effect, though not with the result which the Syrians envisaged or might have envisaged. In the light of the providence by which their eyes had been blinded and of the sequel of mercy and justice meted out to these Syrians at Elisha's demand, how can we say that Elisha had spoken an untruth? Elisha did bring them to the city in which they found the man whom they sought. He did this in a way that they could not have anticipated, but he did it with such a merciful outcome for both the Syrians and for Israel that the Syrians themselves could not have accused Elisha of falsehood. If they had any capacity for intelligent reflection, they would have said, 'How true it was, "This is not the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek"', though strangely and wonderfully true. Hence when we view Elisha's statement in the light of all the facts, unseen indeed to the Syrians at the time but envisaged by Elisha, facts which Elisha had a right to take into account when he made the statement in question, we can see how true, after all, Elisha's statement was. And we have no right to insist that the understanding of the Syrians at the time of its having been made should have dictated the sense of Elisha's statement. The meaning of Elisha's words are to be understood in the light of all the facts and not in terms of the temporary blindness and bewilderment which had over-taken the Syrians. Is this not oftentimes the way of truth? We make statements or promises which are very imperfectly understood by others and have, even for them, a far more real and beneficent meaning than they could have anticipated. The meaning is dictated by the facts which come within the purview of the person making the statement or promise and not by the limited or erroneous conception of these facts entertained by others. In a word, the utterance is determined by the relevant facts which come within the horizon of the person speaking; it is dictated by what is true. If another person is temporarily deceived by inadequate understanding or foresight, this is not deception springing from untruth on the part of the speaker. And this is the question with which we are now concerned. Elisha's statement was not untrue to the facts which in due time were disclosed.

What may we infer to be the biblical ethic regarding the stratagems of war? It is understood, of course, that truthfulness is concerned not only with words, but also with other forms of signification. What we are concerned with now is action intended to deceive the enemy as to the strategy of the opposing forces. When something is pretended, is there not untruth of action, though not necessarily of words? We have a concrete example in the stratagem by which Joshua conquered the city of Ai (Joshua 8:3-29). In this incident it is not the setting of the ambush nor the action of the men who took part that raises the question of untruth. The ambush was an action of concealment as such. It is the retreat on the part of the other division of Joshua's army that poses the question (verse 15); they fled the way of the wilderness. That this was designed and feigned retreat is made plain by the narrative (see Joshua 8:5-6). So Joshua and Israel feigned an action

which did not itself reflect the intent but was designed to lead the people of Ai to think that Israel was fleeing before them. It was simulated defeat. And the question is: May we simulate contrary to actual fact? In this instance it would surely be futile to try to categorize this action on Joshua's part as wrong. The Lord himself was party to the stratagem (cf Joshua 8:18), and it would be sophistry indeed to attempt to abstract this element of the strategy from that which the Lord himself authorized. Is there not here, therefore, the divine sanction upon untruth? When we ask ourselves the question, Was there untruth? or, Wherein did the untruth reside?, we find ourselves in real difficulty, and the untruth we may have assumed is not as obvious as it at first appeared to be. Israel did what they intended to do; there was no action on Israel's part contrary to fact or intent. There was indeed retreat when, in the ordinary sense, there was no need for retreat. In other words, it was a strategic retreat. But Israel did retreat and there was no unreality to that action of withdrawal. Israel was under no obligation to inform the people of Ai what the meaning or intent of this retreat was. Joshua suspected or knew beforehand that the men of Ai would have interpreted it in a way that was contrary to fact and to Joshua's intent. Joshua was taking advantage of Ai's unwariness and lack of proper reconnaissance, that is to say, of Ai's failure to interpret the action of retreat for what it truly was. But are we to say that Joshua was under obligation to act on the basis of their misapprehension of the meaning of his movements rather than on the basis of his own interpretation which had been dictated by all of the facts? The men of Ai were deceived as to the meaning of the retreat of Israel, but that deception arose from their failure to discover its real purpose. So when we view the action concerned in terms of truth, that is, in terms of consonance with all the facts which the agents of that action were not only justified but obliged to take into account, we are at a loss to find wherein untruth resided. That is to say, we are at a loss to find untruth. The case is somewhat similar in the sphere of action to what we found in Elisha's case in the sphere of utterance. When Elisha spoke to the Syrians he spoke, as we found, in accordance with the facts which he knew and envisaged, and any misapprehension on their part arose from their ignorance of the facts which came within Elisha's purview and which he rightly took into account. When Joshua acted in retreating he acted in accordance with all the facts which his strategy embraced and the misapprehension on the part of the men of Ai arose from their ignorance of the facts which Joshua rightly took into account. The allegation that Joshua acted an untruth or a lie rests upon the fallacious assumption that to be truthful we must 'under all circumstances speak and act in terms of the data which come within the purview of others who may be concerned with or affected by our speaking or acting. This is not the criterion of truthfulness. It would oftentimes be incompatible with justice, right, and truth to apply this criterion. When we speak or act we do so in terms of all the relevant facts and considerations which come within our purview, and if we are misunderstood or misrepresented we are not to be charged with falsehood. When mutual understanding is one of the relevant or requisite considerations, then we are under obligation to do our utmost to insure that we speak or act in terms of the understanding of others. But this is not the indispensable criterion of truthfulness. And it could not be imposed as the criterion of truth and truthfulness in making a moral assessment of the actions of an opposing force in time of war and in the exigencies of battle.

'The sustained emphasis of Scripture is upon the condemnation of untruth and falsehood and upon the necessity of speaking the truth.¹³ 'Wherefore having put away lying speak truth each one with his neighbour' (Ephesians 4:25). It is fully admitted that Scripture confronts us with difficulties. In this study an attempt has been made to deal with these difficulties as they appear at

various points in the biblical record. In some instances it might appear that Scripture condones or approves untruth when untruth promotes a higher end. Hence many interpreters have taken the position that the Scripture recognizes the legitimacy of the lie of utility, exigency, necessity (*mendacium officiosum* as distinguished from *mendacium perniciosum*). It has not been difficult to show how unwarranted such an inference is in some of the instances which might appear to lend it support. Other instances give more plausible support to the inference. But the upshot of our examination has been that no instance demonstrates the propriety of untruthfulness under any exigency. We would require far more than the Scripture provides to be able to take the position that under certain exigencies we may speak untruth with our neighbour. In other words, the evidence is not available whereby we may justify deviation from the sustained requirement of the biblical witness that we put away falsehood and speak truth. We would need the most explicit evidence to warrant such deviation and it is that evidence that is wanting. How then could we justify it?

It is quite true that the Scripture warrants concealment of truth from those who have no claim upon it. We immediately recognize the justice of this. How intolerable life would be if we were under obligation to disclose all the truth. And concealment is often an obligation which truth itself requires. 'He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth a matter' (Proverbs 11:13). It is also true that men often forfeit their right to know the truth and we are under no obligation to convey it to them. But these facts of the right and duty of concealment and of forfeiture of certain rights are not to be equated with our right to speak untruth. Forfeiture of right to know the truth and the right of concealment in such cases do not mean that our obligation to speak truth is ever forfeited. There is a chasm of difference between the forfeiture of right to know the truth, which belongs to one man, and the right to speak untruth on the part of another. The latter is not an inference to be drawn from the former. Those who argue for the right to speak untruth on the basis that others have forfeited their right to know or be told the truth have committed an egregious logical error and have sought to justify a deviation from truthfulness which the Scripture does not support. No claim is more basic or ultimate than that of truth. We cannot regard any other sanction as higher on the altar of which truth may be sacrificed. By what warrant may we plead, as many have done,¹⁴ that love is a higher end out of consideration for which untruth is sometimes justifiable and dutiful? Is life itself more sacred than truth? God is love (1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16). But God is truth also (cf John 1:5; John 1:9; John 17:3; 1 John 5:20; John 14:6; 1 John 5:6). Love and truth do not conflict in him and his truth is never curtailed or prejudiced in maintaining and promoting the interests of his love. God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son and sent him into this world of sin and misery and death. This was love. But nothing could be more significant than this that when the Son came and was embarking upon the climactic commitment of his mission he said: 'For this end am I born and for this purpose am I come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth' (John 18:37).

Truthfulness in us is derived from, and is patterned after, 'the truth', and 'no lie is of the truth' (1 John 2:21). It is because untruth is the contradiction of the nature of God that it is wrong.¹⁵ Truth and untruth are antithetical because God is truth. And this is the reason why truthfulness and untruth do not cohere.

Notes 1. Cf. also Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29.

2. Cf. also Exodus 3:15; Exodus 6:5-8; Exodus 33:5-7, Exodus 33:19; Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalms 135:13; Isaiah 26:8; Hosea 12:5, Hosea 12:6 (Hebrews 10:6-7).

3. Cf. Augustine: *De Mendacio and Contra Mendacium* (Eng. Trans. *On Lying and Against Lying*, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (1887), Vol. III, pp. 457-500); Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologica* (Paris, 1880), Tom. V, QQ. CIX-CXIII, pp. 107-132 (Eng. Trans., London, 1922, Vol. 12, pp. 76-117); Richard Baxter: *'A Christian Directory: or, A Sum of Practical Theology and Cases of Conscience, Part I, Chap. IX, Titus 3:1-15* (Practical Works, London, 1838, Vol. I, pp. 353-361); William Paley: *Moral and Political Philosophy, Chaps. XV-XVII*; William Whewell: *The Elements of Morality, including Polity* (London, 1845), Vol. I, pp. 597-201, 242-265; Francis Wayland: *The Elements of Moral Science* (Boston, 1839), pp. 278-294; James Henley Thornwell: *Discourses on Truth* (New York, 1855), pp. 140-187 (also *Collected Writings*, Vol. II, pp. 519-542); Charles Hodge: *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, pp. 437-463; H. Martensen: *Christian Ethics. First Division: Individual Ethics* (Eng. Trans. Edinburgh, 1888), pp. 216ff.; Newman Smyth: *Christian Ethics* (Edinburgh, 1893), pp. 386ff.; Theodor von Haering: *The Ethics of the Christian Life* (Eng. Trans., New York, 1909), pp. 227ff.; Antony Koch: *A Handbook of Moral Theology* (St. Louis and London, 1933, ed. Arthur Preuss), Vol. V, pp. 52ff.; Kenneth E. Kirk: *Conscience and its Problems* (London, 1948), pp. 121-125, 182-195, 337-354, 392-395.

4. Moralists have various ways of distinguishing between the objective truth and subjective truthfulness, as, for example, the distinction between the material and formal, the physical and the moral, the speculative and the practical (cf. Augustine, Aquinas, Wayland, Thornwell in works as cited).

5. The necessity for this warning can well be illustrated by the perversity of those persons who have espoused the lie to such an extent that they actually believe the lies which they invent. Are we to say that such are not liars simply because their intellectual and moral perversity is so aggravated that they come to believe their own lies? This is a case of such aggravated perverseness that the ordinary criterion of lying no longer applies and we must therefore realize how complex the matter of lying is, and how deeply involved we may be in this vice even when we complacently consider ourselves innocent. Our prejudices and passions make us the ready victims of lies and insensitive to the claims of truth.

6. 'Language is not the only vehicle of thought. A greater prominence is given to it than to any other sign, because it is the most common and important instrument of social communication. But the same rule of sincerity which is to regulate the use of it, applies to all the media by which we consciously produce impressions upon the minds of others' (Thornwell: *op. cit.*, pp. 159ff.).

7. It is to be understood that we are to make full allowance for a variety of literary and rhetorical forms of speech. In irony, for example, the opposite of fact is formally expressed. But it is intended to be understood in that way and there is no intention to deceive. We have notable examples in Scripture (cf. 1 Kings 18:27; 1 Kings 22:15). Parables do not necessarily portray actual happenings, though they represent truth. They are understood as illustrative and not always as literally true (cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-6). Literature and language is full of parabolic, figurative, and fictitious forms of expression, and truth only requires that they be used and understood as such. In like manner truth is compatible with change of intention, behaviour, and action. The angels at Sodom said to Lot 'We will abide in the street all night' (Genesis 19:2), but when Lot urged them

greatly they entered into his house. In response to Lot's earnest entreaty they had a right to reverse the former resolution. When new circumstances arise which we may not have foreseen we have a right to alter what may have been our expressed intent. Truth often requires such a change of act and word. To behave truthfully is to behave in consonance with the facts as they are and not as they may have previously been or as they may be in the future. We have in the case of our Lord himself examples of this change of behaviour in response to the developments which had emerged (cf Matthew 8:7, Matthew 8:13; Matthew 15:23, Matthew 15:24, Matthew 15:26, Matthew 15:28; Luke 24:28, Luke 24:29). Truth demands that we act in accordance with relevant facts and conditions and when these facts and conditions change our action changes accordingly. It would be untruth to do otherwise. The same applies to words and significations (cf Ezekiel Hopkins: An Exposition of the Ten Commandments, New York, n.d., p. 403).

8. Calvin: Comm. ad Genesis 27:5 says: 'And surely the stratagem of Rebekah was not without fault; for although she could not guide her husband by salutary counsel, yet it was not a legitimate method of acting, to circumvent him by such deceit. For, as a lie is in itself culpable, she sinned more grievously still in this, that she desired to sport in a sacred matter with such wiles. She knew that the decree by which Jacob had been elected and adopted was immutable; why then does she not patiently wait till God shall confirm it in fact, and shall show that what he had once pronounced from heaven is certain?

Therefore, she darkens the celestial oracle by her lie, and abolishes, as far as she was able, the grace promised to her son. Now, if we consider farther, whence arose this great desire to bestir herself; her extraordinary faith will on the other hand appear. For, as she did not hesitate to provoke her husband against herself, to light up implacable enmity between the brothers, to expose her beloved son Jacob to the danger of immediate death, and to disturb the whole family, this certainly flowed from no other source than her faith.' (as translated by John King, C.T.S., Grand Rapids, 1948).

9. Calvin: Comm. ad Joshua 2:4-6 takes a position similar to that quoted above respecting Rebekah: 'As to the falsehood, we must admit that though it was done for a good purpose, it was not free from fault. For those who hold what is called a dutiful lie (*mendacium officiosum*) to be altogether excusable, do not sufficiently consider how precious truth is in the sight of God. Therefore, although our purpose be to assist our brethren, to consult for their safety and relieve them, it never can be lawful to lie, because that cannot be right which is contrary to the nature of God. And God is truth. And still the act of Rahab is not devoid of the praise of virtue, although it was not spotlessly pure. For it often happens that while the saints study to hold the right path they deviate into circuitous courses' (as translated by Henry Beveridge, C.T.S., Grand Rapids 1949).

10. Jeremiah 38:24-28 is similar to 1 Samuel 16:1-5 and need not be dealt with.

11. Cf. John Lightfoot: Works (ed. Pitman, London, 1822), Vol. II, pp. 357f; George Bush: Notes, Critical and Practical, on the Book of Exodus (New York, 1846), p. 20; Richard Baxter: op. cit., p. 360.

12. Cf. Calvin: Comm. ad Exodus 1:18; Aquinas: op. cit., p. 92.

13. It is scarcely necessary to show that Paul is not saying in 2 Corinthians 12:16 that 'being crafty he caught them with guile'. That was the charge brought against him by his detractors which he is

vigorously protesting and denying, as is apparent from the rhetorical questions of verses 17, 18. And with reference to Romans 3:7 : 'But if the truth of God hath abounded unto his glory by my lie, why am I also still judged as a sinner?', Paul is not justifying the sin which he here calls his 'lie'. He is doing the very opposite. What he is controverting is the pernicious logic that we may do evil that good may come '(cf verse 8), the argument that, since the grace and righteousness of God abound all the more where sin abounded, therefore we may sin in order that God may be all the more glorified. What Paul is saying is that such an inference from his doctrine of the grace of God is a slander and that the condemnation of those who use it is just. This passage is in reality one of the most pertinent to the position propounded above—we may never do evil that good may come.

14. Cf., e.g., Newman Smyth: *op. cit.*, pp. 395ff. Although the position taken by H. Martensen (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 217ff.) is subject to the same criticism, yet his final analysis shows sounder judgment. 'But while we thus find the ground of manifold collisions especially in the corruption of human society, we must with no less emphasis insist that their insolubility very often proceeds from the weakness and frailty of individuals. For the question ever still remains, whether the said collisions between the truth of the letter and that of the spirit could not be solved if these individuals only stood on a higher stage of moral and religious ripeness, possessed more faith and trust in God, more courage to leave the consequences of their words and actions in the hand of God, and likewise considered how much in the consequences of our actions is hidden from our view, and cannot be reckoned by us; if these individuals possessed more wisdom to tell the truth in the right way; in other words, whether the collision could not be solved if we were only, in a far higher degree than is the case, morally educated characters, Christian personalities?' (*op. cit.*, pp. 221f.).

15. Cf. Calvin: *Comm. ad Exodus 1:18; Zechariah 13:3.*

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Professor John Murray was born in Scotland and was at the time of this writing a British subject. He was a graduate of the University of Glasgow (1923) and of Princeton Theological Seminary (1927), and he studied at the University of Edinburgh during 1928 and 1929. In 1929-1930 he served on the faculty of the Princeton Theological Seminary. After that he taught at the Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia where he served as Professor of Systematic Theology.

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S. The Sovereignty of God

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD by John Murray

John Murray was professor of systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Professor Murray received his M.A. from the University of Glasgow and his Th.B and Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary. The sovereignty of God I take to be the absolute authority, rule, and government of God in the whole of that reality that exists distinct from Himself in the realms of nature and of grace. It is a concept that respects His relation to other beings and to all other being and existence. It is, therefore, a relative concept, or a concept of relation.

If God possesses and exercises this absolute authority, rule, and government, the necessary presupposition of it is the oneness, or unity, of God. It is a fact to which Scripture bears constant witness in a great variety of contexts because it is a truth that underlies and determines the whole superstructure of divine revelation. An examination of this witness will show that it is not mere uniqueness or supremacy or even transcendence in the realm of Deity. It is not as if there were a host of lesser deities over whom God is supreme and therefore demands from us supreme worship and devotion. It is rather that He alone is God. "The Lord he is God; there is none else besides him." "He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else" (Deuteronomy 4:35, Deuteronomy 4:39). "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me" (Deuteronomy 32:39). "Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth" (2 Kings 19:15).

It is significant that it is precisely this line of Old Testament witness that is appealed to by our Lord as the answer to the question, "What commandment is the first of all?" "The first...is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29). And the necessary consequence for us is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (Mark 12:30). "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). The pivotal character of the oneness of God appears, for example, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, when it is made the hinge upon which turns and hangs no less important a doctrine than that of justification by faith. "Or is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith" (Romans 3:29-31). And again in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the foundation that "to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:6) is the first principle regulative of worship. The concept of divine sovereignty presupposes also the fact of creation, that is, the origination of all other existence by the fiat of God. The moment we posit the existence of anything independent of God in its derivation of factual being, in that moment we have denied the divine sovereignty. For even should we grant that now or at some point God has assumed or gained absolute control over it, the moment we allow the existence of anything outside of His fiat as its principle or origination and outside of His

government as the principle of its continued existence, then we have eviscerated the absoluteness of the divine authority and rule. Scripture is paramountly conscious of this fact, and so its witness to the absolutely originitive activity of God is pervasive. It does not depend wholly upon a few well-known texts, however important these may be.

Perhaps no word expresses it more pointedly than that of the Psalm: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth" (Psalms 33:6). The import is that the word, or breath of God, breath being the symbol of His almighty, creative will, is the antecedent, or prior cause, of all that is. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:9). This mode of statement harks back to the first chapter of Genesis, where on some eight occasions the successive steps of the creative drama are introduced with the formula, "and God said."

God made heaven and earth; by His Spirit the havens were garnished; He laid the foundations of the earth; by wisdom He founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; His hands stretched out the heavens, and all their host He commanded; heaven and earth, His hand made, and so all those things came to be; He made the sea and the dry land; He is the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega; He is the beginning of creation; by His will, heaven and earth were, and were created (2 Kings 19:15; Job 26:13; Job 38:4; Proverbs 3:19; Isaiah 42:5; Isaiah 44:6; Isaiah 45:12; Isaiah 66:2; Jonah 1:9; Revelation 1:8; Revelation 3:14; Revelation 4:8). The piety on which the Scripture places its imprimatur is true piety; this, we find, rests upon, and is necessarily suffused with, the recognition of God's creatorhood. The address to God in adoration, prayer, and praise begins with it; the address to men in law and gospel rests upon it. The faith that is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," the faith through which the catalogue of saints had witness borne to them that they were righteous, is the faith through which "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3). And when Paul made his appeal to the idolatrous Athenians that God now commandeth men that they should all, everywhere repent, he began his address by saying, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24).

If the sovereignty of God rests upon the fact of His oneness and upon the fact of creation, it may be said to consist, first of all, in the right of dominion and rule over all and in the fact of universal possession. The Psalm sounds this note succinctly. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalms 24:1). The prophets do the same when they affirm that He is "the God of the whole earth" and as the "Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will" (Isaiah 54:5; Daniel 4:17, Daniel 4:25). In the formula of Melchizedek and of Abraham, He is the "possessor of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:19, Genesis 14:22), and in the words of Paul, "in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

But, secondly, sovereignty, as the right of dominion and the fact of possession, comes to its full all-pervasive and efficient exercise in government. As such it is (1) sovereignty exercised in accordance with antecedent decree. What God decrees is infallibly determined and accomplished. "Hast thou not heard," He protests, "long ago, how I have done it, and of ancient times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps" (2 Kings 19:25). "Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have

purposed, so shall it stand" (Isaiah 14:24) "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isaiah 26:10). In Job's words, "He is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him" (Job 23:13-14). "I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:1-2). It is that "the counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations," that He "worketh all things according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Psalms 33:11; Ephesians 1:11). This purposive decree is not only stated positively but also negatively. No purpose of His can be restrained, and every creature purpose that is contrary must be frustrated. "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Isaiah 14:27). "He maketh the devices of the people of none effect" (Psalms 33:10). "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35). As sovereignty coming to all-pervasive and efficient exercise in government, it is (2) sovereignty exercised with omnipotent and undefeatable efficiency. The mighty hand of God is the executor of His will. He is the great, the mighty, the terrible. He rideth upon the heavens and, in His excellency, on the skies. There is none who can deliver out of His hand, for He frustrateth the devices of the crafty, and the counsel of the cunning is carried headlong. He breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again. There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against Him. None can stay His hand nor say unto Him, "What doest thou?" for human might is of one sort with that of the Egyptians, and they are men and not God, and their horses flesh and not spirit (Deuteronomy 10:17; 13:26; Job 5:12-13; Job 12:14; Proverbs 21:30; Dan. 3:35; Isaiah 31:3).

It is (3) sovereignty that is all-pervasive. This all-pervasiveness rests upon His omnipresence. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalms 139:7-10).

We may illustrate this all-pervasiveness in three of the ways in which Scripture exhibits it:

(a) It respects the events of ordinary providence. It is God who gives rain upon the earth and sends water upon the fields. He makes His sun to shine upon the evil and the good: and sends rain on the just and the unjust. He clothes the grass of the field, causing the grass to grow for cattle and herb for the service of man. He feeds the birds of heaven. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge and will. He gives us our daily bread. He gives wine that makes glad the heart of man oil that makes his face to shine, and bread that strengthens man's heart. He crowns the years with goodness and the paths drop fatness. He even gives that which is abused and used in the service of another god. He gave grain and new wine, and the oil, and multiplied silver and gold, which they used for Baal. He makes the wind His messengers and flames of fire His ministers. The whole earth is filled with His glory. So that the pious contemplation of His working brings forth the exclamation of adoration: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches" (Job 5:10; Matthew 5:45; Psalms 104:4, Psalms 104:14-24; Psalms 63:11; Hosea 2:8).

(b) It respects the disposition of all earthly authority. He alone is God of all the kingdoms of the earth. He removes kings and sets up kings, for as the Most High, He rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whomsoever He will. He sets up over them even the lowest of men. It is He that gives even to ungodly men the kingdom, the power, the strength, and the glory. He overthrows the throne and strength of kingdoms (Deuteronomy 4:35, Deuteronomy 4:39; 2 Kings 5:15; 2 Kings 9:15; Isaiah 37:16; Daniel 4:11; Daniel 5:18, Daniel 5:21; Haggai 2:22). The very division of the kingdom of Israel fraught with dire consequences for the true worship of Jehovah was yet a thing brought about of the Lord that He might establish His word (1 Kings 12:1-33; 1 Kings 13:1-34; 1 Kings 14:1-31; 1 Kings 15:1-34). "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me" (1 Kings 12:24). For He ordains kings for judgment and establishes them for correction, so that Assyria is the rod of His anger and the staff of His hand the divine indignation to perform the divine judgment upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem (Habakkuk 1:12; Isaiah 10:5, Isaiah 10:12).

It is not simply, then, that the powers of civil government are ordained by God to be the ministers of equity and good and peace, for the punishment of evil doers and for the praise of them that do well (Romans 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14), but it is also true that usurped and corrupt government that violates the very principles of government itself is within the government of God and fulfils His sovereign purpose. In perpetration of iniquity, they fill up the cup of divine indignation. "Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks" (Isaiah 10:12).

(c) It respects good and evil, so that even the sins of men come within the scope of His rule and providence. "What," asks the oppressed and the afflicted Job, bereft of flocks and herds and smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto the crown, "shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). For "with God," he says again, "is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening" (Job 12:13-14). He forms the light and creates darkness; He makes peace and creates evil. He kills and He makes alive; He wounds and He heals (Isaiah 45:7; Deuteronomy 32:39). He "hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverbs 16:4). "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos 3:9).

I am not in the least forgetful of the very acute problems raised by such pronouncements of Scripture. It will be the task of other speakers at this conference to deal with these in more detail, and I have no doubt but they will be ably and judiciously handled. Nevertheless it does appear necessary to the topic assigned me to affirm that the teaching of Scripture on the divine sovereignty requires us to recognize with Calvin that all events are governed by the secret counsel and directed by the present hand of God and that God's omnipotence is not the vain, idle possession of potency but the most vigilant, efficacious, and operative, "a power constantly exerted on every distinct and particular movement" (Inst. I, xvi. 3). "Whence we assert, that not only the heaven and the earth, and inanimate creatures, but also the deliberations and volitions of men, are so governed by His providence, as to be directed to the end appointed by it" (Inst. I, xvi. 8). The problems raised come to their most acute expression in those instances where the agency of God is affirmed in connection with what is not only evil in the generic sense but evil in the

specific sense of sin and wrongdoing. It appears to me that Calvin again is right when he contends that “nothing can be desired more explicit than His frequent declarations, that He blinds the minds of men, strikes them with giddiness, inebriates them with the spirit of slumber, fills them with infatuation, and hardens their hearts. These passages also many persons refer to for permission, as though, in abandoning the reprobate, God permitted them to be blinded by Satan. But that solution is too frivolous, since the Holy Spirit expressly declares that their blindness and infatuation are inflicted by the righteous judgment of God. He is said to have caused the obduracy of Pharaoh’s heart, and also to have aggravated and confirmed it. Some elude the force of these expressions with a foolish cavil—that since Pharaoh himself is elsewhere said to have hardened his own heart, his own will is stated as the cause of his obduracy; as though these two things were at all incompatible with each other, that man should be actuated by God, and yet at the same time be active himself. But I retort on them their own objection; for if hardening denotes a bare permission, Pharaoh cannot properly be charged with being the cause of his own obstinacy. Now, how weak and insipid would be such an interpretation, as though Pharaoh only permitted himself to be hardened! Besides the Scripture cuts off all occasion of such cavils. God says, ‘I will harden his heart’” (Inst. I. xviii. 2). In this connection, it is noteworthy to observe that the prophet was commanded to go and tell the people, “Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed” (Isaiah 6:9-10). In the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, we have allusion to this part of Isaiah’s prophecy (see Matthew 13:14-15; John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27). In Matthew and Acts, the blinding of the eyes is represented as the blinding on the part of the people of their own eyes; in John it is represented as blinding on the part of God. This variation should serve to remind us that the positive infliction on the part of God must not be abstracted from the sinful condition of the heart, the moral perversity and responsible action of those who are the subjects of the divine retribution. Paul tells us that, because men will not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved, “for this cause God shall send them strong delusion [working of error], that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 cf; 1 Kings 22:19-23). But while we may not abstract the divine infliction from the moral situation in which those concerned find themselves, we must frankly acknowledge the reality of the divine action and the sovereignty of His agency. “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Romans 9:18).

Perhaps most familiar to us in the matter of the divine agency as it respects evil are Acts 2:23; Acts 4:28, where the arch-crime of human history is referred to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God and the treatment meted out to Jesus. In the conspiracy devised against Him by Herod and Pontius Pilate and the Gentiles and the people of Israel is that which the divine hand and counsel foreordained to come to pass.

We are now attempting, only very briefly, to show some of the ways in which the witness of Scripture establishes the all-pervasiveness of the sovereignty of God. When we find this sovereignty coming to expression in the most unequivocal way even in those acts of subordinate agents where their moral responsibility is most intensely active in the perpetration of wrong, we can hardly go any farther in demonstrating the all-inclusiveness of it. But just then we must ever remind ourselves that God contracts no defilement or criminality from such agency. He is just in all

His ways and holy in all His works. While everything that occurs in God's universe finds its account, as B. B. Warfield says, "in His positive ordering and active concurrence," yet "the moral quality of the deed, considered in itself, is rooted in the moral character of the subordinate agent, acting in the circumstances and under the motives operative in each instance" (Biblical Doctrines, p. 20). God is not the author of sin. Sin is embraced in His decretive foreordination; it is accomplished in His providence. But it is embraced in His decree and effected in His providence in such a way as to insure that blame and guilt attach to the perpetrators of wrong and to them alone. And again there comes to us with renewed force the significance and even preciousness of the truth that inscrutable mystery surrounds the divine working. "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all" (Ecclesiastes 11:5). We cannot rationalize it; we cannot lay it bare so as to comprehend it. We bow in humble and intelligent ignorance and reiterate, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven: what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job 11:7-9). His way is in the sea and His path in the great waters. His footsteps are not known (Psalms 77:19). Clouds and darkness are round about Him. Yet, in accordance with His holiness, Scripture never permits us to forget that justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne (Psalms 89:14). The sovereignty of God is in a unique and peculiar way exemplified in the election to saving grace. In the Old Testament one of the most significant episodes is the revelation of the redemptive name "Jehovah." There have been various attempts to interpret the precise meaning of the name. The older view that it expresses the self-determination, the independence, in the soteric sphere, the sovereignty of God, appears to be the most acceptable and tenable. It finds the key to its meaning in the formula, "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14). In all that God does for His people, He is determined from within Himself. Paraphrased, the formula would run, "What I am and what I shall be in relation to my people, I am and shall be in virtue of what I myself am. The rationale of my actions and relations, promises and purposes, is in myself, in my free self-determining will." The correlate of this sovereignty in the choice and salvation of His people is the faithfulness and unchangeableness of God. He consistently pursues the determinations that proceed from Himself, and so His self-consistency insures steadfastness and persistence in His covenant promises and purposes. "For I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Malachi 3:6).[1]

Perhaps the most plausible and subtle attempt to eliminate the sovereignty of God in the election to saving grace is the interpretation that posits foreknowledge in the diluted sense of foresight or prescience as the prius, in the order of divine thought, in predestination to life. The locus classicus in the argument is Romans 8:29. It is contended that the foreknowledge spoken of is the divine foresight of faith, or, more comprehensively, the divine foresight of the fulfilment on the part of men of the conditions of salvation. Those whom He foreknew, therefore, are those whom He foresaw as certain to fulfill the conditions of salvation.

It is thought that this removes the reason for the discrimination that exists among men in the matter of salvation from the sovereign discrimination and fore-ordination on the part of God to the sovereign volition on the part of man. Of the Pelagian or Arminian conception of the origin of faith, it must be understood that it makes no real difference that the matter concerns the eternal decree of God. The question really is, what is the crucial and determining factor in predestination to life? Is

it a sovereign act on the part of God or is it an activity or exercise of will on the part of man? Once the predestinating decree of God is made contingent upon the divine foresight of an autonomous action or decision on the part of man, then it is that action on the part of man that accounts for discriminating foreordination on the part of God. And so the sovereignty of God in the election to life is eliminated at the crucial point. Predestination is made to rest upon a condition resident in, or fulfilled by, man.

If, for the sake of argument, we were to adopt this diluted interpretation of the verb “foreknow” in Romans 8:29, we are not to readily conclude that what we call the particularistic exegesis would have to be abandoned and the absolute sovereignty of God in the matter of election to life be eliminated. If we say that the meaning of the verb “foreknow” in Romans 8:29 is “whom He foresaw as believing and persevering,” we are not to think that we have ended the matter, for we are compelled to ask the further question: Whence this faith which God foresees? The answer that Scripture itself affords is that faith itself is the gift of God, not of course gift in some mechanical sense, but gift in the sense of being graciously wrought in men by the operation and illumination of the Spirit (see e.g., John 3:3-8; John 6:44, John 6:45, John 6:65; Ephesians 2:8; Php 1:21). Since faith is thus given to some and not to others, and given to those who are equally unworthy with those to whom it is not given, the ultimate reason is that God is pleased thus to operate in some and not in others. The divine foresight of faith, therefore, would presuppose an antecedent decree on the part of God to work this faith in some and not in others. The foresight of faith would have as its logical prius the sovereign determination to give faith to them. And so even foresight would, on a Biblical conception of the origin of faith, throw us back on the sovereign determination of God. This exegesis, however, though really providing no escape from the sovereignty of God in the decree of salvation, is nevertheless not to be favored, and that for the following reasons: (1) It is extremely unlikely that Paul, in tracing our salvation to its source in the mind and will of God, would have omitted reference to the originative decree, namely, the decree to work faith.

(2) According to the teaching of Scripture in general and Paul in particular, faith is included in, or associated with, *klhsiV*, and *klhsiV* is in this very passage made the consequence of foreknowledge and predestination. It cannot be both the condition of predestination and the consequence of it. This consideration is confirmed by Romans 8:28 : “All things work together for good to them that love God, to those who are the called according to his purpose.” If called according to His purpose, the purpose is antecedent to the calling, and if faith is embodied in or associated with calling, the purpose itself cannot be conditioned upon faith.

(3) This exegesis is in conflict with what is said to be the end of predestination—conformity to the image of His Son. Conformity of this kind is surely meant to include every phase of likeness to Christ. Conformity to the image of the Son, no doubt, points to the ultimate perfection to which the elect will attain. If so, then the whole process by which that conformity is secured and realized must be in subordination to this end. In other words, the end is surely prior in the order of thought to the process by which it is to be achieved. But the process by which the end is to be achieved includes faith and perseverance. Faith cannot then be the logical antecedent of predestination; it is rather that predestination is the logical antecedent of faith, even if faith is foreseen by God in His eternal counsel. That is just saying that faith is consequent, in the order of divine thought, upon the destined end of conformity to the image of the Son. But the antecedent of predestination faith would have to be if foreknowledge is the foreknowledge of faith.

Faith, therefore, is two removes in the order of divine thought from foreknowledge, and two removes posterior, not prior, two removes in the order of consequence, not of causation.

(4) This line of interpretation is in accord with Paul's teaching elsewhere and particularly in that one passage which more than any other expands the very subject in debate. It is Ephesians 1:4.

(a) Paul there affirms that God chose us in Christ "before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." The elect are chosen to holiness; in the divine love, they are predestinated to adoption.

(b) This election and predestination are according to the good pleasure of His will and according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the purpose of His own will. Paul, it is to be noted, piles up expressions almost to the point of what might be, on superficial reading, considered redundancy, in order to emphasize the sovereign determination of the divine will and purpose: "προορισqenteV kata proqesin tou ta panta energountoV kata thn boulhn tou qelhmatoV autou" [Ephesians 1:11]. To find the determining factor in this predestination in a human decision would be to wreck the whole intent of Paul's eloquent multiplication of terms.

(c) The choice in Christ and the consequent union with Him is the antecedent or foundation of all the blessings bestowed. It is in the Beloved we were abundantly favored with grace (Ephesians 1:6); it is in Him we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:1); the making known of the mystery of His will was purposed in Christ (Ephesians 1:9); it is in Him that all things in heaven and earth will be summed up (Ephesians 1:10); it is in Him we are called (Ephesians 1:11); it is in Him that the Ephesians, when they had heard the word of truth and believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13-14). It is obvious that the very exercise of grace, believing and persevering grace, is grace exercised in the sphere and on the basis of union with Christ, and so the union with Christ which has its genesis in the choice of Christ before the foundation of the world, must be regarded as the prius and basis of that rather than, by way of prescience, its conditioning cause.

If this exegesis, which takes the verb "foreknow" in the diluted sense of prescience, is not acceptable, what then, we may ask, is the meaning of foreknowledge? The answer, given repeatedly by the ablest commentators, is not difficult to find. The words *yādhā* in Hebrew and *ginosko* in Greek are used quite frequently in a pregnant sense, that is, with a fuller meaning than that of merely perceiving or taking cognizance of a fact. It often means to "take note of," to "set regard upon," to "know with peculiar interest delight, affection, and even action." Indeed, it is the practical synonym of "to love" or "set affection upon." "The compound *proginosko*," as Sanday observes, "throws back this 'taking note' from the historic act in time to the eternal counsel which it expresses and executes" (Comm., in loco). So that we should paraphrase by saying, "Those whom He loved beforehand." This pregnant meaning of the word is in accord with contextual considerations. In every other link of this "golden chain of salvation," as it has been called, it is a divine activity that is spoken of. God is intensely active in every other step. It is God Who predestinates; it is God Who calls; it is God Who justifies; it is God Who glorifies. It would be out of accord with this emphasis, a weakening at the point that can least afford it, to make the originative act of God less active and determinative. The notion of foresight has distinctly less of the active and distinctly more of the passive than the divinely monergistic emphasis of the whole passage

appears to require. It is not a foresight of difference but a foreknowledge that makes difference to exist. It does not simply recognize existence; it determines existence. It expresses the volitional determinative counsel of God with reference to those who are the objects of it. It is sovereign distinguishing love.

If this is the meaning, the question may well be asked: What is the difference between foreknowledge and predestination in the text concerned? For, after all, some distinction there must be. The distinction is simple and significant. Foreknowledge is the setting of loving and knowing affection upon those concerned. It concentrates attention upon the love of God. But it does not of itself intimate the specific destiny to which the objects of love are appointed. That, in turn, predestination precisely does. It reveals to us the high and blessed destiny to which the objects of His distinguishing and peculiar love are assigned. And it reveals, in so doing, the greatness of His love. It is love of such a sort that it assigns them to conformity to the image of Him Who is the eternal and only-begotten Son. When we ask the reason for the love that foreknowledge intimates and the greatness and security of which predestination expresses, we are uniquely confronted with the grandeur of the divine sovereignty. It is love that is according to the counsel of the divine will. The reason is enveloped in the mystery of His good pleasure. We are face to face with an ultimate of divine revelation and, therefore, an ultimate of human thought. This love is not something that we can rationalize or analyze. We are in its presence, as nowhere else, overwhelmed with a sense of the divine sovereignty. We are struck with amazement. It is amazing, inexplicable love. But to faith it is a reality that constrains the deepest and highest adoration. It is love, the praise of which eternity will not exhaust. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10). "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33-36)

1. Cf. Oehler, *Old Testament Theology*, Eng. trans., vol. I, pp. 139 ff., Geerhardus Vos, *Lectures on the Theology of the Old Testament*, ch. VIII.

S. The Weak and the Strong

The Weak and the Strong by John Murray First printed in The Westminster Theological Journal, Vol. XII, 2, 1950. The term "Christian liberty" is one that has very rich and inclusive connotation. It designates the freedom with which Christ has made his people free. The Westminster Confession of Faith provides us with an admirable statement of what is comprised in this liberty. "The liberty which Christ hath purchased for believers under the Gospel consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law; and, in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin; from the evil of afflictions, the sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also, in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience unto Him, not out of slavish fear, but a child-like love and willing mind. All which were common also to believers under the law. But under the new testament, the liberty of Christians is further enlarged, in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Jewish Church was subjected; and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of" (Chapter XX, Section I). Nothing less than this high privilege and blessing should be accorded the title "Christian liberty". To define Christian liberty in more restricted terms would do prejudice to the richness of the concept.

Coordinate with Christian liberty is liberty of conscience. Again the Westminster Confession provides us with a statement which is unsurpassed in its precision. "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in any thing, contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship" (Chapter XX, Section II). A particular phase of liberty of conscience is the liberty which the believer enjoys in respect of the use of those things which are in and of themselves indifferent, that is to say, not wrong in themselves. Sometimes that liberty has been called Christian liberty. It is not without warrant from the Scripture itself that it should be called such (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Corinthians 10:29, 1 Corinthians 10:30). This aspect of Christian liberty is by no means unimportant: it brings into sharp focus the lines by which Scripture defines the sphere within which the believer may exercise the liberty that belongs to him as the freeman and bondsman of Christ Jesus. Yet when this kind of liberty is designated "Christian liberty" it should be understood that it is only a restricted aspect of Christian liberty that is in view.

It might appear that the question of the Christian's use of things not wrong in themselves is a very simple one. To assert and maintain the intrinsic rightness or goodness of things in themselves might seem to be all that is necessary. But this is not the only thing to be considered. The question is complicated by the fact that when we are thinking of the actual use of things not wrong in themselves we are thinking of use by persons. The moment we think of persons, particularly of imperfect persons, we have to take into account the subjective condition of the persons concerned. Oftentimes this practically amounts to saying that we have to take into account the conscience of the individuals in question. The problem becomes crystallized quite specifically in the consideration that Scripture itself takes into account the distinction between the weak and the

strong, between those who are weak in faith and those who are strong in faith, between those whose consciences are weak and those whose consciences are strong. In a word, it is the problem of the weak and the strong.

There are in the New Testament two passages, in particular, which deal with this question. It may help to remove misunderstanding and misapplication of these passages if we examine them with a view to determining their central import. The passages concerned are Romans 14:1-23 and 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. It is with the former that we shall be chiefly concerned. At the very outset Paul advises us that he is dealing in Romans 14:1-23 with the person who is weak in faith. And so we are required to ask the question: who is the weak person whom Paul has in mind when he says in Romans 14:1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye"?

It would be very natural for us to suppose that they were Jewish Christians who still entertained scruples regarding the use of the unclean meats of the Mosaic law. This view can be given a good deal of support by appeal to Romans 14:5 where the distinction of days alluded to can readily be understood of the Jewish festival days. It is very easy to understand such scrupulosity on the part of Jewish Christians who had not yet arrived at a full understanding of the implications of the Christian faith in reference to Old Testament ceremonial regulations. We meet with such scruples in other parts of the New Testament.

There are, however, difficulties that encompass this interpretation. The weak referred to in this chapter abstained from all flesh-meat (Romans 14:2) and from wine (Romans 14:21). The Mosaic law did not condemn the use of flesh-meat but only of certain kinds of flesh, and the Mosaic law did not prohibit the use of wine except for certain persons at certain times. We are not justified then in saying that the weak at Rome were simply Jewish Christians who still adhered to the Mosaic distinctions in reference to meats.

Another view that could plausibly be pleaded is that the weak were Gentile and Jewish Christians who abstained from all meat and wine lest they should be implicated in the eating of meat and the drinking of wine that had been offered to idols, and that the situation at Rome was similar to that at Corinth, a situation with which Paul deals in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. But there are objections to this view also. If this were the case we should expect Paul to specify, as he does in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13, that the meat concerned was meat offered to idols. This he does not do. Again, the weak in Rome appear to have abstained from all meat and wine, an abstinence that would not be necessary if the scruple respected merely meat and wine offered to idols. In a word, if the situations at Rome and Corinth were identical we should expect Paul to deal with the situation at Rome in terms more closely similar to those found in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. A third view is that the weakness of certain believers at Rome took its rise from an ascetic philosophy and tendency that led to abstinence from meat and wine. Godet thinks that the party took its position on the basis of the first eight chapters of Genesis, for it was only after the flood that animal flesh was instituted for man's use. And so these Christians took their inspiration from the original ordinance of God.

It is very likely, however, that Paul would not have dealt so gently with a party which based its practice, in these respects, upon a well-defined ascetic philosophy of life. In other epistles Paul is very severe in his condemnation of such an outlook and attitude and denounces it as a doctrine of demons.

It has also been proposed that the attitudes and practices reflected in the weak at Rome were derived from the Essenes. For us there is one great difficulty in carrying out such an interpretation of the situation: it is that we know so little about the Essenes, at least in any conclusive way.

It would appear to be impossible to determine with certainty what was the source of the weakness that manifested itself at Rome. It may well be that the weakness with which Paul had to deal was derived from various considerations. The situation may have been complex and differing kinds of weakness may have contributed to the total situation with which Paul deals. It may be that not all who showed weakness were characterized by the same kind of weakness. We often find this in our own situations, and it is not difficult to understand how a situation even more accentuated in its complexity could have arisen at Rome in the first century. It may well have been the case that Jewish prejudice against certain kinds of meats may have led Jewish converts to extremes of abstinence going far beyond the prohibitions of the Mosaic law. It may well have been that fear of involvement in meat or drinks offered to idols may have led Jewish and Gentile converts to abstinence from all such kinds of meat and drink. And we can readily imagine how various streams of prejudice could converge to create in the church at Rome a very disturbing and disrupting situation.

While we cannot be dogmatic as to the origin and precise character of the weakness dealt with by the apostle there are two things of which we can be quite certain. (1) There was at Rome a scrupulosity with respect to the use of certain meats and drinks. This scrupulosity the apostle characterizes as weakness of faith. It was a scrupulosity that strength of faith and depth of knowledge with respect to the Christian faith would have removed. It needs to be stressed that this was weakness, not strength; it was due to unbelieving doubt and not to faith. (2) It was a weakness that had its basis in religious conviction. The weak abstained from certain things because they considered that these things were wrong. This is just saying that their scruples had a religious root. Their abstinences were dictated by conscience towards God, by consciousness of devotion to the Lord. Nothing could be more obvious than this. "He who regards the day, regards it to the Lord. And he who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God. And he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

These two observations, with respect to which there can be no question, should be borne in mind. If they are not properly weighed the interpretation and application of this passage are necessarily distorted. The difficulty of determining the source and precise nature of the weakness present in the Roman church does not confront us in the passage concerned with the church at Corinth, 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. For in this passage the following conclusions are distinctly apparent.

(1) Paul is not dealing with the eating of certain kinds of food or the drinking of certain kinds of beverage. He is dealing with the question of eating meat that had been offered to idols, and not at all with the same kind of meat that had not been offered to idols. There is no evidence that the weak at Corinth would have scrupled to eat certain kinds of meat, but simply meat, of whatever sort, that had been involved in the ritual of pagan idolatry. Hence the weakness of the weak in faith did not respect the use of certain kinds of meat and drink but only the use of meat and drink offered to idols.

(2) The meat and drink and the eating and drinking concerned are such as entail this technical religious involvement, meat and drink involved in the ritual of pagan worship. It is therefore

unwarranted to apply the teaching of the apostle in this passage without taking into account this technical religious involvement. The sin in which the weak would be involved would not be the eating of meat against which, as such, they entertained a religious scruple, but the eating of meat offered to idols. And the reason why the weak would in such a case commit sin was not that they had eaten of a certain kind of meat against which they had scruples but that they had eaten of meat offered to idols when they were not yet able to divest themselves of some kind of religious regard for, or conscience of; the idol.

(3) The sin on the part of the strong was the inducement they offered to the weak to eat of such meat when they (the weak) had not yet attained to the knowledge and faith to understand that an idol was nothing in the world and that meat was not in the least contaminated or defiled by the mere circumstance that an idolater had devoted it to the worship of an idol.

We readily discern, therefore, that the scope of the teaching of 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 is more limited than that of Romans 14:1-23. In Romans 14:1-23 Paul is dealing with the case of those who abstained on religious grounds from certain kinds of food and drink; in 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 the question is not that of abstinence from certain kinds of food and drink, but simply that of abstinence from that which had been offered to an idol, quite irrespective of the kind of food or drink involved.

It is all-important to observe, however, that in both cases the weakness of the weak had respect to abstinence from certain things on religious grounds. The weak abstained from certain articles of food or drink because they considered that devotion to the Lord required such abstinence. In both situations, that of Rome and that of Corinth, it was true that he who did not eat, to the Lord he did not eat, and gave God thanks. These believers, though weak and not yet fully aware of the implications of the Christian faith, recognized that the guiding principle of the believer's life was to be well-pleasing to the Lord, the Lord Christ. At Rome it was because they considered that eating and drinking of certain things constituted a breach of devotion to Christ that they abstained, and their religious conviction dictated total abstinence. At Corinth they considered that eating and drinking of certain things which had been associated with idolatrous worship constituted a break of devotion to Christ, and their religious conviction dictated total abstinence from such things.

It is here that a grave distortion of the teaching of these passages must be exposed. In dealing with this distortion it is well to deal with it in relation to Romans 14:1-23 particularly. As pointed out above, Romans 14:1-23 is broader in its scope than 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 and offers, therefore, more plausibility to this widespread distortion. In our modern context this passage is often applied to the situation that arises from excess in the use of certain kinds of food or drink. It is particularly in connection with intemperance in the matter of fermented beverages that the application is made. The argument runs along the following lines. The person addicted to excess or intemperance is called the "weaker brother", and the temperate are urged to abstain from the use of that thing in deference to the weakness of the intemperate. This argument may be applied to a great variety of usable things but it is in connection with fermented liquors that the argument has received widest currency and has been made to appear very plausible.

It must be said quite plainly that this is a distortion and perversion of Paul's teaching in the passage concerned. This should be apparent for the following reasons.

(1) Paul is not dealing with the question of excess in the use of certain meats and drinks. That kind of abuse does not once enter into the purview of this passage. The weak of Romans 14:1-23 are not those given to excess. They are the very opposite. They are those given to complete abstinence from certain kinds of food or drink. The "weak" who are addicted to excess do not abstain; they take too much.

(2) The "weakness" of those who go to excess is in an entirely different category from the weakness of those with whom Paul is dealing. In fact the "weakness" of the former is not really weakness in the sense of Romans 14:1-23. The "weakness" of excess is downright transgression of the law of God, it is moral iniquity. With those who are guilty of this sin Paul deals in entirely different fashion. Drunkards, for example, shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:10). And Paul enjoins upon the church that if any one called a brother is a drunkard, with such an one believers are not to keep company or even eat (1 Corinthians 5:11). Drunkards are not to be regarded as brethren but as outside the kingdom of Christ and of God. How different is Paul's attitude to the weak of Romans 14:1-23! "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye" — take him without any restraint into the bosom of love and fellowship. The weak here are indeed weak in knowledge and faith but believers in the full communion of the saints. It does havoc to the basic principles of the Christian ethic and destroys the criteria by which the purity of the church is to be guarded and maintained to confuse the weak of Romans 14:1-23 with the so-called weakness of the person given to excess in any particular. Yet this is the very havoc which is wrought, at least implicitly, by those who are the peddlers of this distortion with which we are now dealing.

(3) Even when we consider the case of those who have been converted from a life of excess in some particular we do not have a situation that is similar to that of Romans 14:1-23. It does sometimes happen that a person who had been addicted to excess in his unconverted days still possesses a tendency to overstep the bounds of sobriety. This occurs sometimes with those who had been drunkards. It may well be that in some cases the cost of sobriety is total abstinence. The words of our Lord apply. It is better to enter into life with one eye than having two eyes to go into the hell of fire. True believers afflicted with such a temptation to excess must be dealt with very tenderly and sympathetically. Every proper measure ought to be used by their stronger brethren to support and fortify such against the weakness to which they are subjected. But again we must clearly distinguish between the weakness of those who have a tendency to overstep the bounds of sobriety and the weakness of those in Romans 14:1-23. The weakness of those plied with the temptation to excess is not the weakness of conscientious scruple. They need have no scruple against the use of these things; their case is rather that of a tendency to abuse what they have no scruple in using. There is no suggestion in Romans 14:1-23 that the weakness contemplated is the weakness of tendency to excess on the part of those who have been converted.

(4) We may envisage, however, another case that takes its origin from a past life of intemperance. It is the case of the man who has been converted from a life of excess in some particular, let us say, strong drink. It sometimes happens that such a person comes to entertain a scruple against the use of that thing because he thinks that what could have been the occasion of such debauchery is evil in itself. So on religious grounds he becomes a total abstainer. It goes without saying, of course, that he has made an erroneous judgment and has gravely failed to analyse properly the source of responsibility for his past wrongdoing. But the fact still remains that on religious grounds he regards the use of such a beverage as wrong. Such a person will have to be

considered as belonging to the category of the weak in Romans 14:1-23. Consequently the exhortations of Paul would apply all along the line in such a case.

It is most important, however, to observe that the consideration of excess enters into this case only as explaining the origin of the scruple of the person concerned and not at all as providing the reason why the strong are urged to abstain from the use of the drink concerned. In other words, it is not the tendency to excess on the part of the weak brother concerned that is the reason for abstinence on the part of the strong — the person concerned has no tendency to excess. The reason for abstinence on the part of the strong is simply the religious scruple of this weak brother, a scruple that derives its origin, in part at least, from the revulsion he has from his past excess.

We can see, therefore, that the widespread disposition to apply the teaching of this passage without these necessary distinctions is a serious distortion. It is apparent that scruple against the use of certain things, scruple arising from religious conviction, is the principle upon which the proper interpretation turns. And to apply the teaching of the apostle to cases where there is no such religious involvement is to extend the teaching beyond its reference and intent. Paul is dealing exclusively with the scruple of weak believers, and it is with reference to such, and out of deference to such, that he gives the exhortations contained in this chapter.

There remains, however, another question of crucial importance in connection with the interpretation of Romans 14:1-23. Granting that the weakness spoken of is the weakness arising from religious scruple and not by any means the "weakness" of being addicted to excess, the question still before us is: what is the stumblingblock of which Paul speaks, particularly in Romans 14:13? "Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, not to place a stumblingblock or an occasion of falling in the way of the brother." The question is really the interpretation of Romans 14:13 - Nehemiah

It would not be entirely impossible to regard Romans 14:13, just quoted, as directed to both weak and strong. In this event the weak would be regarded as placing a stumblingblock in the way of the strong as well as the strong in the way of the weak. The stumblingblock erected by the weak would be the argument and inducement which they would place before the strong to encourage the latter to adopt the same position and practice as the weak themselves. Such a notion is by no means pointless or meaningless. There is much need that the weak be urged to refrain from the attempt to bring down the strong to the level of the uninformed and confused state of mind in which the weak themselves are. It is the wicked thing which the weak are too prone to practise, and it is something that the apostle would very severely condemn. But although such an interpretation as would regard verse 13 as directed to the weak as well as to the strong is not impossible and though the force of it is undoubtedly implicit in Paul's teaching in this passage as a whole, yet it is not at all likely that in Romans 14:13 the weak are regarded as placing a stumblingblock in the way of the strong and exhorted accordingly. It would be very difficult to carry through such an interpretation in Romans 14:14-15. Hence we shall proceed on the assumption that Romans 14:13 is addressed to the strong and that they are exhorted not to place a stumblingblock before the weak. Since the strong are included in the address of Romans 14:13 we are placed under the necessity of discovering what the stumblingblock, which the strong are conceived of as placing in the way of the weak, precisely is.

It is not necessary to enter into the discussion of the question as to the distinction between the two words Paul uses, stumblingblock and occasion of falling. Whatever differing shades of meaning there may be, they refer to an obstacle in the path that causes one to stumble and fall. The question is: what is this?

It might appear that what the strong are urged to refrain from is the annoyance which they occasion for the weak by the exercise of their liberty, the displeasure which the weak entertain when they observe the strong partake of certain things with reference to which they (the weak) have conscientious scruples. It must be admitted that the weak at Rome did engage in censorious judgment of the strong, and such censorious judgment must have been accompanied by deep displeasure that the strong were freely doing things which the weak considered they had no right to do. In a word, the conduct of the strong must have been offensive to the weak. It would be to impugn the sincerity and depth of their conviction to think otherwise. The question is: are the strong here exhorted to avoid that which gives such offence to their weak brethren?

It need not be doubted that there is some point and force in such an interpretation. It goes without saying that Christian courtesy will often dictate abstinence from certain things out of deference to the wishes of others, especially of Christian brethren whom we love in the Lord. Considerateness is a virtue much to be coveted and practised. Considerateness for what is even petty and capricious on the part of others is oftentimes a virtue.

Furthermore, this interpretation might seem to gain a good deal of support from Romans 14:15, "For if on account of food thy brother is grieved, no longer dost thou walk according to love." It might seem that the grief spoken of is the grief caused in the mind of the weak when he sees the strong partake of food which he (the weak) thinks is wrong. And it might appear to gather support from Romans 15:1-3, "But we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each one of us please his neighbour for good unto edification. For even Christ did not please himself." So it might be said that the thought of Paul is, "Avoid what is displeasing to your fellowbeliever, defer to his scruples and wishes in these matters, lest you should give occasion for these disruptive censures and suspicions which disturb harmony and peace in the body of Christ". There are, however, compelling reasons for rejecting this interpretation. It will not satisfy the requirements of the context.

(1) Paul in this context is condemning the censorious judgment of the strong, on the part of the weak. "Let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God hath received him" (Romans 15:3). It would be very difficult to believe that Paul would proceed to ask the strong to defer to such censorious and unjust judgment, that he would exhort the strong to indulge it by removing every occasion for the exercise of it.

(2) The interpretation proposed will not do justice to the words Paul uses in Romans 14:13 — stumblingblock and occasion of falling. These words refer to that which occasions a fall. If what is contemplated is simply the displeasure in the minds of the weak, how could such be construed as a fall? It is true enough that the unjust judgment that underlies the displeasure is sinful and ought to be removed, but it could not properly be said that it is the exercise of liberty on the part of the strong which causes this unjust judgment to be. The unjust judgment springs from an erroneous estimate of certain things and from failure to understand the implications of the Christian faith. And though the exercise of liberty by the strong is the occasion for bringing that unjust judgment to

expression, yet this registering of judgment would hardly measure up to what is implied in the notion of a fall.

(3) Romans 14:14 explains what is meant by the stumbling and falling envisioned in this passage. "But to him that reckoneth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." This indicates that the fall in view in Romans 14:13 is the partaking of something which the person partaking considers to be unclean. While it is an inviolable principle that nothing is unclean of itself and while Paul propounds that principle with the strongest emphasis when he says, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus", nevertheless it does not at all follow that everything is clean to every one. It is still true that if one reckons something to be unclean to him it is unclean. And so for any person to do something which he considers wrong is a grievous fault and entails a fall. We are thus pointed in the direction in which we are to seek the meaning of the stumbling and falling referred to in Romans 14:13.

(4) Romans 14:15, when duly examined, makes it clear that the grief mentioned is not the mere displeasure entertained by the weak when he witnesses the use of liberty on the part of the strong. It must be, rather, the vexation of conscience that befalls the weak when he exercises a liberty which he does not yet have the faith or strength to exercise. This is borne out particularly by the exhortation, "Do not destroy by thy food that one on account of whom Christ died." The word, "destroy" here is a strong word. It means destruction and ruin of soul, and the thought is that inherent in the kind of sin contemplated — the sin committed by the weak — is a soul-destroying tendency. This sin, Paul says, leads to destruction. Of course, Paul is not here viewing the sin from the standpoint of the purpose of God with reference to the believer. He is viewing the sin from the standpoint of its inherent character and consequence, from the standpoint of human responsibility and interests. Sin tends to destruction and the strong believer must consider this consequence for the weak rather than take refuge behind the predestinating purpose of God. To take refuge in Romans 8:28-30 in order to evade the practical issues at stake and to escape from responsibility is to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness and pervert the high mystery of predestination.

It is the sin of violating conviction and conscience, therefore, which is the destructive sin of which Paul speaks, and the grief is the vexation of conscience which befalls the person guilty of this sin. It is the serious consequence for the whole body of Christ that Paul has in mind when he says, "Destroy not by thy food that one on account of whom Christ died." And the same thought with variation of language is expressed in Romans 14:20, "On account of food do not break down the work of God."

(5) Romans 14:20-23 supply confirmation that the fall contemplated in this case is the fall involved in action contrary to conscience and conviction. In Romans 14:23 the weak are undoubtedly in mind and the damnatory action is that of eating in doubt and without faith. "But he who doubts is condemned if he eat, because it is not of faith. And everything that is not of faith is sin." It is such sin Paul must have in mind in Romans 14:20-21 where he speaks again of stumblingblock and stumbling.

We shall have to conclude, therefore, that the stumblingblock which the strong in faith are exhorted not to place in the way of the weak is the emboldenment which the use of liberty on the part of the strong affords to the weak to do what is contrary to the conviction and conscience of the

latter. And the stumbling and falling implied refer to the doing on the part of the weak of what is contrary to their conviction. The weak are induced to do what they are not yet able to do in faith and with a good conscience. Thus they wound their weak conscience and sin against Christ. This is a grievous evil for the weak. But the evil also reacts upon the strong themselves. For in the body of Christ, if one member suffers all the other members suffer with it. The plea that is urged upon the strong is, therefore: "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine nor anything by which thy brother stumbles" (Romans 14:21); "If on account of food thy brother is grieved, no longer dost thou walk according to love. Destroy not by thy food that one on whose behalf Christ died" (Romans 14:15); "On account of food destroy not the work of God" (Romans 14:20). The self-pleasing that is to be shunned and the pleasing of one's neighbour that is commended in Romans 15:1-2 have in view the avoidance, on the part of those strong in faith, of that which will become the occasion of soul-destroying violation of conviction and of that distress of conscience attendant upon such violation which inevitably result when the weak do what is contrary to their conscientious scruples. By way of expansion and application of what has been elicited from these passages we may set forth the following principles and observations.

(1) It is a Biblical principle that there is nothing unclean of itself. The sanction by which Paul confirms this principle is most impressive. He says, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself" (Romans 14:14). A great deal of the so-called temperance propaganda of today and yesterday is based on the principle that there are certain things, edible, potable, or usable, that are intrinsically evil or have inherent in them some degrading or demoralizing element. It is alleged that the way of temperance is total abstinence from such things. This is directly contrary to Scripture teaching and we may be certain that any such conviction or propaganda based on such conviction is not after Christ. It is not in the Lord Jesus that such a conviction is entertained. It is by inspiration of the Spirit that Paul says, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean of itself." And his word to Timothy is that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified through the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:4, 1 Timothy 4:5). Paul warns us that it is a sign of apostasy from the faith and embrace of the doctrines of demons to command to abstain from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. Certain types of temperance propaganda have adopted total abstinence as their motto and have urged that the witness of those who believe and know the truth is to be borne by total abstinence. The contradiction is blatant. Temperance propagandists say certain things are to be refused and scrupulously avoided. Paul says nothing is to be refused. Temperance propagandists say the Christian witness is prejudiced when believers partake of certain things. Paul says that it is by those who believe and know the truth they are to be received with thanksgiving and that it was for that purpose God created them. Temperance propagandists imply that God's blessing cannot be invoked on the use of certain things. Paul says that it is by prayer they are sanctified. Temperance propagandists say the Word of God forbids the use of certain things. Paul says it is by the Word of God they are sanctified.

Consequently every temperance movement of whatever sort that is based upon the supposition or contention that any material thing is evil or contains within itself a tendency to evil and that therefore the use of it incites to sin is an assault upon the integrity of the Creator, and an attempt to remove the basis of responsibility for wrong from our hearts and wills to the ordinance of God.

All such temperance propaganda is based upon a principle that undermines the very foundations of sobriety and of true temperance. The Biblical conception of temperance is that of moderation and self-control. Against such temperance there is no law.

(2) While it is true that there is nothing unclean of itself; it does not follow that all have the knowledge and faith and strength to use all things. In this matter of conduct we have not only to consider the intrinsic rightness of these usable things but also the subjective condition or state of mind of the person using them. There is not in every person the requisite knowledge or faith. Until understanding and faith have attained to the level of what is actually true, it is morally perilous for the person concerned to exercise the right and liberty which belong to that person in Christ Jesus. The way of edification is not that conduct should overstep the limits of knowledge and faith or to violate the dictates of conscience, but for conscience to observe the dictates of understanding and faith. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." The believer must always act out of consciousness of devotion to Christ and when he cannot do that in a certain particular he must refrain from the action concerned. We must remember that although nothing is unclean of itself; yet to him that reckoneth it to be unclean to him it is unclean. To use other terms, we must remember that though things are indifferent in themselves the person is never in a situation that is indifferent. Things are indifferent but persons never. The relevance and significance of Romans 14:7 need to be appreciated in this connection. "For no one of us lives to himself; and no one dies to himself." As too often supposed in the easy quotation of this text this does not mean that a man is not sufficient to himself in the social and economic orders. It is not a protest against selfish or self-assertive independence in the order of society. Truly enough such selfishness and the failure to recognize the solidarity that exists in our human relationships are wrong. In this chapter as a whole such an attitude is condemned and the obligations of mutual considerateness are inculcated. But in this verse what Paul asserts is that a man lives to the Lord and dies to the Lord. That is made conclusively plain by Romans 14:8. "For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lord's." Romans 14:7-8 enunciate the guiding principle and aim of the believer's life — to be well-pleasing unto the Lord, the Lord Christ. The Lordship of Christ is never suspended. The believer is never in a situation that is neutral or indifferent and so he must ever live in the recognition of Christ's lordship and act in the intelligent and fully-persuaded consciousness of devotion to him.

(3) Those who, through lack of knowledge and weakness of faith, have not attained to the mature understanding that nothing is unclean of itself and that every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused must not be allowed to erect their own ignorance and weakness as the standard of morality and piety. Too frequently the weak have presumed to regard as faith what in reality is doubt. And, sadly enough, those strong in faith and mature in knowledge have succumbed to the presumptuous claims and pretensions of the weak. How tragic! Those strong in faith and mature in their understanding must not despise or set at nought the weak. But they must never allow the weak to drag them down to the lower level on which the faith and understanding of the weak operate. If the strong allow this to happen then they not only bring themselves into bondage but they also allow the truth of God to be compromised and the integrity of the Creator to be maligned.

(4) The weak must ever be reminded that their censorious judgment with respect to the exercise of liberty on the part of the strong is a sin which the Scripture condemns. "Let him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him." "Who art thou that judgest the servant of

another? To his own Lord he stands or falls. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:3, Romans 14:4). The censorious judgment in which the weak are so liable to indulge is just as unequivocally condemned as is the contempt to which the strong are too prone. And with such condemnation there is the condemnation of the self-righteousness that so frequently accompanies such censoriousness.

(5) The strong must exercise all due forbearance towards the weak. "Let not him that eats set at nought him who eats not. The way by which advancement in understanding and faith is to secured is not by contempt or ostracism but by fellowship, esteem, forbearance, considerateness, instruction; not by provoking vexatious questionings and disputings but by edification in the bosom of Christian love and fellowship. The strong must not indulge the weak in their mistaken judgments, yet they must exercise all due considerateness for the weakness of their faith and seek to make them stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. Such considerateness will induce them to refrain from the use of certain rights and liberties when it appears that the exercise of such liberties would constrain the weak to do that which they are not yet able to do with a clear conscience.

(6) The progress of knowledge, of faith, of edification, and of fellowship within the body of Christ is not to be secured by legislation that prohibits the strong from the exercise of their God-given privileges and liberties, whether this legislation be civil or ecclesiastical. Legislation can never be based upon the conscience of the weak or motivated by consideration for the conscience of the weak. If we once allow such considerations to dictate law enactment or enforcement, then we have removed the ground of law from the sphere of right and wrong to the sphere of erring human judgment. God has given us a norm of right and wrong, and by that norm laws are to be made and enforced. When we in the interests of apparent expediency erect laws or barriers which God has not erected, then we presume to act the role of law-givers. There is one lawgiver. When we observe the hard and fast lines of distinction which God has established for us and refuse to legislate on those matters that in themselves are not wrong, then we promote the interests of Christian ethics. When we violate these lines of distinction we confuse and perplex the whole question of ethics and jeopardize the cause of truth and righteousness. We dare not attempt to be holier than God's law, and we dare not impose upon the Christian's conscience what does not have the authority of divine institution.

S. The Westminster Standards

The Westminster Standards

John Murray The Westminster Assembly was wholly British in its composition. It should not, however, be thought that these British divines of the seventeenth century pursued their task and framed the standards of which they were the authors in aloof indifference to the Reformed churches on the continent of Europe. The very task assigned to the Assembly by ordinance of the English Parliament was in terms of the resolution on the part of the Lords and Commons that a government should "be settled in the Church as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland, and other Reformed Churches abroad." Dr. S. W. Carruthers in his recent book, *The Everyday Work of the Westminster Assembly*, informs us that as early as November 15, 1643, Alexander Henderson, one of the Scottish commissioners, reminded the divines that the "Continental churches were interestedly watching them, and that it was desirable that they should try to avoid giving offence or prejudice to them" (p. 36). Much evidence might be adduced to show the extent to which the divines at Westminster were acquainted with the best product of Reformed thought in churches outside the British Isles. It can be said in the words of B. B. Warfield that "it belonged to the historical situation of the Westminster Divines that their doctrinal work should take much the form of a consensus of the Reformed theology" (*The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, p. 159). The theology of the Westminster Standards then is the Reformed theology. This rather obvious though necessary characterization of the theology of Westminster is no adequate assessment of the unsurpassed formulation of that theology embodied in these Standards, especially in the Confession and Catechisms. The Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was peculiarly prolific in the production of Confessions of Faith, as also of Catechisms. It was an age of ardent and polemic faith and the framing of creeds was the natural result. Nearly all of these creeds are notable and valuable exhibitions of Christian truth, and not a few of them are of priceless value. But the Westminster Confession and Catechisms are the last in the series of these great Reformation creeds. The rich repertory of Protestant confessional statement, covering more than a hundred years, was the heritage of the Westminster divines. It not only fell to their lot to compare, to sift and to evaluate in the light of more than a century of faithful and devoted labour on the part of others, but it was also their disposition and determination to do so. Of even greater significance is the fact that no other Protestant or Reformed confession had brought to bear upon its composition such a combination of devotion, care, patience and erudition as was exhibited in the work of the Westminster Assembly. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms, therefore, are the mature fruit of the whole movement of creed formation throughout fifteen centuries of Christian history. In particular, they are the crown of the greatest age of confessional exposition, the Protestant Reformation. No other similar documents have concentrated in them, and formulated with such precision, so much of the truth deposited in the Christian revelation. A necessary feature of any adequate creedal exhibition of the Christian Faith is coherent and systematic presentation. The attempt to set forth the truth systematically does not imply that the

human mind can comprehend the whole counsel of God revealed in the Scriptures nor that all the truth revealed in Scripture can be brought within the compass of any creed framed by men. Such pretension has never been the presupposition of creed formation either Catholic, Protestant or Reformed. But the great Protestant creeds and especially the Reformed do rest upon the principle that the Scripture revelation is not a series of unrelated and disjointed disclosures of the divine mind and will but an organism characterized by unity and harmony, that the Scripture contains a corpus of truth revealed by God to man that does not alter its character with the changes of human history nor depend for its validity upon the votes of fluctuating human judgment. The divines sitting at Westminster regarded it as their business to elicit from the Scripture the system of truth set forth therein, and this is just saying that they 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.

It is of prime importance that a Reformed creed should guard liberty of interpretation on those questions that are ostensibly matters of dispute among the most orthodox of Reformed thinkers. It is of even greater importance that a Reformed creed should be consistently biblical. The faith God has given to His church cannot receive too accurate and consistent exhibition in the forms of confession and catechism so that they may serve as the symbols of wholehearted devotion to the Word of God, as the means of instruction and edification and its bulwarks against error. Both of these requirements have been admirably fulfilled by the Westminster standards. It is for these reasons that they have performed such signal service in the history of the Reformed church as the instruments of unity and the guardians of orthodoxy. To discard the heritage of the past is the mark of both ignorance and conceit. The way of humility before God and of gratitude to Him is to recognize that other men laboured and we have entered into their labours. From The Calvin Forum, volume 9 (1944)

S. The Work of the Westminster Assembly

The Work of the Westminster Assembly

John Murray From The Presbyterian Guardian, volume 11 (1942) The Westminster Assembly first convened on July 1, 1643. For the first three months the Assembly was largely occupied with the revision of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. Perhaps the two most important events during the course of these three months were the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant and the arrival in the Assembly of three of the Scottish commissioners. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met in August. It was on August 19th that the General Assembly, in answer to the request of both Houses of Parliament in England, nominated and elected Alexander Henderson, Robert Douglas, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, and George Gillespie, ministers, and John Earl of Casils, John Lord Maitland, and Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston, ruling elders, with commission and power to them, or any three of them, whereof two should be ministers, to repair to the Assembly of Divines, sitting at Westminster. On or about September 14th three of these arrived in Westminster. On September 15th they were admitted to the Assembly. They were Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, and John Lord Maitland. The Solemn League and Covenant was drafted by Alexander Henderson in Scotland and was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on August 17, 1643. It was then taken to England and after some slight changes it was adopted by the House of Commons and the Westminster Assembly on September 25th. It was then sent back to Scotland and on October 13th it was adopted, signed, and sworn to by the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and the Committee of the Convention of Estates of the Scottish Parliament and sent throughout the country to be subscribed to by the people. On October 12, 1643, while the Westminster Assembly was working on the sixteenth article of the Thirty-Nine Articles there came an order from both Houses of Parliament that the divines should forthwith "confer and treat among themselves of such a discipline and government as may be most agreeable to God's holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad." They were also instructed at the same time to prepare a Directory of Worship or Liturgy for use in the church.

It was in pursuance of this order that the Assembly entered upon prolonged debates on the question of church government, debates that engaged so much of the time of the Assembly during the remainder of 1643 and throughout 1644. These labours on the part of the divines gave us what is known as "The Directory for the Publick Worship of God" and "The Form of Presbyterial Church-Government," both agreed upon by the Assembly. They were also approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in February 1645.

These two documents form two of the four parts of uniformity in which it was so ardently desired that the whole island should be united. In the Directory for Public Worship we have one of the finest fruits of the work of the Assembly, a document not so well known as the Confession and Catechisms yet one that lies on a plane of excellence not a whit lower than that of the Confession

and Catechisms. Nothing in human literature will afford us better instruction in the dignity and decorum that ought to characterize the public worship of God. On August 20, 1644, a committee was appointed by the Assembly to prepare matter for a Confession of Faith. The subsequent history of the preparation of the Confession is rather complicated. This history, however, witnesses to the marvelous care and patience with which the divines accomplished the task committed to them.

It was not until September 24, 1646, that the first nineteen chapters of the Confession of Faith were completed and sent to the House of Commons. On October 1st a duplicate was sent to the House of Lords. On October 9th the House of Commons ordered that five hundred copies of these nineteen chapters be printed.

It was on December 4, 1646, that the remaining fourteen chapters of the Confession were completed and it was resolved that the whole Assembly present the whole Confession to both Houses of Parliament. This was done, and on December 10th an order was brought from the House of Commons for the printing of six hundred copies of the Confession. This was the first edition of the whole Confession. This edition, the first of the whole Confession, did not, however, contain the proof texts. It is of interest to know that the Assembly was quite reluctant to add proof texts. The reason for this was not in the least fear of being unable to support the propositions of the Confession by Scripture but rather that a complete presentation of Scripture proof would have required a volume. However, at the insistence of the House of Commons the Assembly undertook to add proof texts in the margin. Not until January 7, 1647, do we find the Assembly entering upon the debate of proof texts. For the next four months a large part of the Assembly's time was occupied with the consideration of these proof texts. On April 29th this work was completed and on that date the Confession of Faith with Scripture proofs cited on the margin was presented to both Houses of Parliament. The House of Commons instructed that six hundred copies of the Confession with proofs be printed. This was the first edition of the Confession with Scripture proofs added. The Confession of Faith was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on August 27, 1647. In the records of the Westminster Assembly we find a great deal of debate regarding "Catechism" prior to the date upon which the Assembly entered upon the composition of the two Catechisms with which we are familiar, namely, the Larger and Shorter. This lengthy consideration of "Catechism" fitted the Assembly in very admirable fashion for the framing of the Catechisms that were finally adopted and which we know as the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly.

It was on April 15, 1647, that the Assembly entered upon the debate of the Larger Catechism. Much work had, however, been done for months prior to this by a committee that had been appointed to prepare a draft of both Catechisms. From April 15th the attention of the Assembly was largely devoted to the debate on the Larger Catechism. It is important to note that George Gillespie, one of the ablest of the Scottish Commissioners, left for Scotland on July 16th. When he left, the Assembly had advanced as far as the question that is Question 94 in the completed Catechism. On August 9th, when the Assembly was working on the third commandment in the Larger Catechism, the Assembly called for the report on the Shorter Catechism and not until October 25th do we have the first mention of debate upon it. George Gillespie had therefore taken his final departure from the Assembly before the latter entered upon the debate of the Shorter Catechism. On October 15th the Larger Catechism was completed and it was ordered to be

transcribed. On this date an interesting minute occurs in the records of the Assembly. Upon motion by Samuel Rutherford, another of the Scottish Commissioners, it was ordered to be recorded in the Scribes' books that "The Assembly hath enjoyed the assistance of the Honorable Reverend and learned Commissioners from the Church of Scotland in the work of the Assembly; during all the time of the debating and perfecting of the 4 things mentioned in the Covenant, viz. the Directory for Worship, the Confession of Faith, Form of Church Government, and Catechism, some of the Reverend and learned Divines Commissioners from the Church of Scotland have been present in and assisting to this Assembly". This shows the jealousy with which the Scottish Commissioners regarded the sanctity of the Covenant and the fidelity with which they discharged their commission. Rutherford took his leave of the Assembly on November 9th. On October 22nd the Larger Catechism was ordered to be sent to both Houses of Parliament. Not later than November 25th the Shorter Catechism was completed, for on that day it was delivered to the House of Commons. Both Catechisms were approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in July 1648. To sum up therefore, the period over which the Westminster Assembly completed its work on the five important documents for which it is held in perpetual remembrance extended from October 12, 1643, to November 25, 1647. This is a period of more than four years. The five documents to which allusion is here made are the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, the Shorter Catechism, the Directory for Public Worship, and the Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, and they constitute the four heads of uniformity mentioned in the Solemn League and Covenant, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms being both included under the one head of Catechism. The last of the sessions of the Assembly that is numbered is that of February 22, 1649. This is session 1163. The work produced by the Westminster Assembly has lived and will permanently live. The reason is obvious. The work was wrought with superb care, patience, precision, and above all with earnest and intelligent devotion to the Word of God and zeal for His glory. Sanctified theological learning has never been brought to bear with greater effect upon the formulation of the Christian Faith. While it would be dishonoring to the Holy Spirit to accord to these documents a place in any way equal to the Word of God either in principle or in practical effect, yet it would also be dishonoring to the Holy Spirit, who has promised to be with His church to the end, to undervalue or neglect what is the product of His illumination and direction in the hearts and minds of His faithful servants. Other men laboured and we have entered into their labours.

S. Union with Christ

Union with Christ By John Murray

Election. The foundation of salvation itself in the eternal election of the Father is "in Christ." Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:3-4). The Father elected from all eternity, but He elected in Christ. . . there was no election of the Father in eternity apart from Christ. And that means that those who will be saved were not even contemplated by the Father in the ultimate counsel of His predestinating love apart from union with Christ--they were chosen in Christ. As far back as we can go in tracing salvation to its foundation we find "union with Christ"; it is not something tacked on; it is there from the outset.

Redemption.

It is also because the people of God were in Christ when He gave His life a ransom and redeemed them by His blood that salvation has been secured for them; they are represented as united to Christ in His death, resurrection, and exaltation to heaven (Romans 6:2-11; Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 3:3-4). . . . Hence we may never think of the work of redemption wrought once for all by Christ apart from the union with His people which was effected in the election of the Father before the foundation of the world.

Regeneration.

It is in Christ that the people of God are created anew. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). . . . the beginning of salvation in actual possession should be in union with Christ because we have found already that it is in Christ that salvation had its origin in the eternal election of the Father and that it is in Christ salvation was once for all secured by Jesus' ransom blood. We could not think of such union with Christ as suspended when the people of God become the actual partakers of redemption--they are created anew in Christ.

Glorification.

Finally, it is in Christ that the people of God will be resurrected and glorified. It is in Christ that they will be made alive when the last trumpet will sound and the dead will be raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:22) (Redemption Accomplished and Applied, pp. 162-64).

S. Why We Baptize Infants

Why We Baptize Infants by John Murray From The Presbyterian Guardian, volume 5 (1938)

Baptism is one of the two ordinances of the New Testament that we call sacraments. Baptism is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Baptism "in the name of" means "into union with" or "into the discipleship of." Baptism in the one name of the triune God means baptism into subjection and devotion to the one living and true God. It means that the mark of the triune God is placed upon the recipients of it. The placing of the mark of God upon us in baptism does not, however, mean that it is the authentication or seal of an ownership on the part of God or of discipleship on our part that is naturally and natively a fact. It is true that there is a natural ownership on the part of God and an inalienable devotion that we as His creatures owe to Him. But baptism is not the mark of an ownership that is natively and properly God's nor of the devotion on our part that we naturally owe to Him. It is the mark of an ownership that is constituted, and of a devotion that is created, by redemptive action and relation. In other words, it is the mark of the Covenant of Grace. In it, and bearing it, we profess to renounce every other lordship but that of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in all the manifold relations that we come to sustain to each Person in the terms of the Covenant of Grace.

More specifically, baptism signifies washing or purification, washing from the defilement or pollution of sin by regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and washing from the guilt of sin by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Manifestly, it is only in and through Christ and His work that these blessings can be enjoyed. Union with Christ, therefore, is the bond that unites us to the participation of these blessings. Our Shorter Catechism gives a rather succinct and comprehensive definition when it says that "Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our engrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's."

We believe that Scripture warrants the dispensing of this ordinance of baptism to infants. Just as infants were circumcised under the Old Testament - and circumcision meant fundamentally the same thing as baptism, namely, the removal of the filth of sin and the imputation of the righteousness which is by faith - so children who stand in a similar covenant relation with God should be baptized under the New Testament. What, we may ask, does this precisely mean?

It means that children, even newly-born infants, stand in need of cleansing from sin both in its defilement and in its guilt. Children do not become sinful after they grow up or in the process of growing up. They are sinful from the very outset. They are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity. They go astray from the very womb. No one who is truly convinced of sin remembers when he became sinful. He knows that it was not by some deliberate decision or act on his part that he became sinful. He knows that he was always sinful. Truly he recognizes that that innate and inherent sinfulness has been aggravated, and has repeatedly come to expression, in his voluntary acts of sin. But it was sinfulness already inherent that was aggravated, and came to

expression, in his voluntary acts of sin. Furthermore, no one who is truly observant of the growth and development of others from infancy to adulthood remembers any point when sin first began to take possession of their heart and interest and purpose. The disposition is always with us, and is at the present time particularly prevalent, to minimize the seriousness of this fact. There is the tendency to think and act in terms of the innocency of little children. The consequences of such an attitude are disastrous to all true nurture and instruction. For to eliminate from our attitude and conduct so basic and far-reaching a fact as the innate pollution of fallen human nature is to eliminate a fact without which nurture and direction must lead on to a perversion and falsehood manifoldly more desperate than that with which it began. Infant baptism is a perpetual reminder that infants need what baptism represents and there can be no escape from, or amelioration of, that awful fact. But baptism is after all a sacrament of grace. And therefore it means more than the fact of need. It means that by the grace of God infants may enjoy precisely and fully what baptism represents. They may be regenerated by the Spirit and justified in the blood of Christ. They may be united to Christ in all the perfection of His mediatorial offices and in all the efficacy of His finished work.

We should pause to consider the preciousness of these truths. Truly we shall have no appreciation of their preciousness unless we are persuaded of that awful fact to which we have already made reference, namely, that of original sin. But if we sincerely face the fact of the dismal pollution of human nature in its present state, no human words can adequately express the joy we experience in the contemplation of that which baptism means for infants. We may briefly reflect on the preciousness of these truths for two considerations.

First, children may and often do die at a very early age. If they should die without regeneration and justification, they would be lost just as surely as others dying in an unregenerate state are finally lost. The baptism of children, then, means that the grace of God takes hold of children at a very early age, even from the very womb. That is to say, in other words, we must not exclude the operations of God's efficacious and saving grace from the sphere or realm of earliest infancy. It is to this truth our Lord gave His most insistent and emphatic testimony when He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

We would not, of course, be misunderstood when we assert this principle. We do not say that the operations of God's saving grace are present in the heart of every infant. The fact is only too apparent that multitudes grow up to years of discretion and intelligence and show that the saving grace of God did not take hold of their hearts and minds in the days of their infancy. Neither are we taking the position necessarily that all who die in infancy are the recipients of the saving grace of God. For ourselves we must leave that question in the realm to which it belongs, namely, the unrevealed counsel of God. But it is nevertheless true - and that is the point we are now interested in stressing - that the grace of God is operative in the realm of the infant heart and mind. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." What a blessed thought and hope and confidence is extended to believing parents when in baptism they commit their children to the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit and to the purging efficacy of the blood of Christ, so that, if perchance the Lord is pleased to remove them in infancy, they - believing parents - can plead and rest upon the promises of the Covenant of Grace on their behalf. It can surely be said of them that they have no need to mourn as those that have no hope. But secondly we should appreciate the preciousness of these truths for the reason that children do not need to grow up to

the years of discretion and intelligence before they become the Lord's. Just as children are sinful before they come to the years of discretion and understanding, so by the sovereign grace of God they do not need to grow up before they become partakers of saving grace. They may grow up not only in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but also in His favor and sanctifying grace. They may in their tenderest years be introduced into the family and household of the heavenly father. When believing parents present their children for baptism they are confessing that their children are innately sinful, they are confessing their need of regeneration and justification, but they are also pleading on the behalf of their children the regenerating and justifying grace of God. In reliance upon the promise that "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them," they are entertaining the encouragement and the hope that "those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright; he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him."

Baptism is the ordinance that initiates into the fellowship of the visible church. The visible church is a divine institution. It is the house and family of God. It is a divine sanctuary where God's glory is made known. It is the channel along which normally the current of God's saving grace flows. What a privilege it is for parents by divine authority in the reception of the ordinance of baptism to introduce their children into this blessed fellowship.

If infant baptism has the divine warrant, then what dishonor is offered to Christ and what irretrievable damage is done to the church and to the souls of children by refusing to introduce children into this glorious fellowship. No argument from apparent expediency, no seeming evangelistic fervor will counteract that dishonor to our Lord and that damage done to the souls of men. In concluding this brief study of the meaning and privilege of infant baptism, there are two warnings that must be given. The first is that against the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. We must not look upon baptism as having some semi-magical effect. Baptism derives all its efficacy from the sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit. We do well to remind ourselves of the words of our Shorter Catechism, "The Sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them." We must never take for granted that the infant who is baptized is by that mere fact assured of eternal life. Baptism is certainly a means of grace which God has, in accordance with His appointment, abundantly honored and blessed throughout the whole history of the Christian church. But we must ever preserve the true evangelicalism of our Christian faith that, in the last analysis, we are not saved by any external rite or ordinance, but by the sovereign grace of God that works mysteriously, directly and efficaciously in the heart and soul of each individual whom He has appointed to salvation. The second is that infant baptism does not relieve parents or guardians, as the case may be, of that solemn responsibility to instruct, warn, exhort, direct and protect the infant members of the Christian church committed to their care. We must repeat again the text we have already quoted, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant and to those that remember his commandments to do them." The encouragement derived from a divine promise must never be divorced from the discharge of the obligations involved. It is only in the atmosphere of obligation discharged, in a word, in the

atmosphere of obedience to divine commandments, that faith in the divine promise can live and grow. Faith divorced from obedience is mockery and presumption.

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