

***‘GREAT &
GLORIOUS
GRACE’***

PASTORS’ SCHOOL 1992

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Study One

The Grace of Salvation History

(by Geoffrey Bingham)

Introduction: Creation Not Directly of Grace

Study 2 speaks of ‘The Grace of Covenant and Creation’ but not ‘The Grace of Creation and Covenant’. This is because creation was the expression of God as Creator, not as Redeemer. Ephesians 1:3–14 (cf. Eph. 2:7; I Cor. 2:6ff.; II Tim. 1:9–10; etc.) undoubtedly tells us God planned his grace-action prior to creation, so that we may say ‘creation was *with a view to* grace’ and so in that sense say it was of grace, but in the absolute sense we ought not to say ‘Creation is of grace’. This fact becomes clear when we see the nature of grace.

The Nature of Grace

The Words for Grace in the Old Testament

The Septuagint translates two words—*chen* and *chesed*—into the Greek word for grace in the New Testament—*charis*. In Exodus 33:13 *chen* is used in the AV as ‘grace’ and in the RSV as ‘favour’. See Genesis 6:8 where ‘Noah found favour (AV, ‘grace’) in the eyes of the Lord’. *Chen* is also used in human relationships where Jacob appeals to Esau, Ruth to Boaz, and Hannah to Eli (Gen. 32:5; Ruth 2:2, 10, 13; I Sam. 1:18). The second word—*chesed*—in the LXX, the word *eleos* (‘mercy’) is often substituted, but many English translations of the Old Testament use ‘loving kindness’ or ‘steadfast love’. The Hebrew word for love is *ahab*, and *chesed* is not love in that sense. Jeremiah 31:3 (AV) is ‘I have loved with an everlasting love (*ahab*); therefore with loving kindness (*chesed*) I have drawn thee’. For *chesed* RSV translates ‘faithfulness’.

The Word for Grace in the New Testament

The word is *charis*, and was greatly used in Greek thought and culture for ‘gracefulness’, ‘beauty’, ‘a pleasant way of doing things’, ‘a favour’ and even ‘gratitude’. It was a word which had to be infused—to the point of being transformed—with the Christian meaning. Some of these have been stated as ‘God always going towards Man to do him good’, ‘God’s unmerited favour’, ‘the free generosity of God through the self-giving of Christ’ (H. D. McDonald), ‘the love of God manifested in the form of pardon towards sinful men; and peace, the feeling of profound calm or inward quiet which is communicated to the heart by the possession of reconciliation’ (Godet), ‘the generous love or gift of God by which in Christ salvation is bestowed on man and a new world of blessing opened’ (Manson). With these understandings in mind we can now approach ‘the grace of salvation history’.

The Meaning of Salvation History

The Meaning of Salvation

Salvation means in principle being saved from the penalty, power and pollution and other effects of sin, and all other elements linked with sin such as Satan, his world powers, his world system, the bondage of the law in its penal demands, the flesh—as fallen humanity tainted with, and by, sin—and death, the outcome of sin with its overtones of the final judgement and the Hell that follows for those who are unsaved. Thus in Matthew 1:21 Jesus is given his name ‘for he shall save his people from their sins’. Salvation has other related meanings such as ‘deliverance’, ‘healing’ and so on and is used in these ways in both Old and New Testaments. ‘Go in peace your faith has saved/healed you,’ is a constant statement in the Gospels. In the eschatological sense salvation results in being saved out of ‘this present evil age’ (Gal. 1:4) into the ‘new age’ (*aeon*), i.e. that of eternal life, through resurrection and glorification. This is called in Romans 8:23 ‘adoption as sons, the redemption of the body’.

The Meaning of Salvation History

Jonathan Edwards’ famous *A History of the Work of Redemption*¹ is one of the first complete salvation histories written. It includes not only the canon of Scripture but history from the first century to the time of Edwards, whilst still anticipating the eschatological *telos*. In one sense the books of the Old Testament from Genesis to Nehemiah constitute a form of salvation history. Psalms such as 105–107 constitute covenant salvation histories in precis form.² Today salvation histories have different formats, but in principle are seen either as ‘supra-historical’ or as all history being understood as God’s work of salvation.

Salvation History

The primary matter of the Scriptures is not so much *salvation* as it is *creation* (see Study 2). God is a faithful Creator (I Pet. 4:19). As such He intends to work through history to bring creation to its full *telos*, His goal for it is ‘the new heavens and the new earth where only righteousness dwells’ and where there is no pain, sorrow or death. Humanity created in His image will be a new humanity, fully ‘renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator’ (Col. 3:10; cf. Rom. 12:1–2), and wholly glorified in body and being (Phil. 3:21; cf. I Cor. 15:51–56; I Cor. 2:6–10).

Of course salvation is a significant matter, for without it there could be no triumphant *telos*.³ What we are concerned with in this initial study is the *grace* of salvation. We take it for granted that God accomplishes salvation in Christ, but then many agree that this is so when they hold views that Man co-operates with God in salvation and so salvation is synergistic and not monergistic. If this latter is the case then grace ceases to be grace.

¹ See *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 1 (Banner of Truth Trust reprint, 1974, of original 1834 publication) pp. 532–619.

² See my *Salvation History* (NCPI, n.d.) pp. 1–2.

³ That is, goal, end, completion of God’s plan for history.

The 'Beginning' of Grace

Direct references to God's intention of grace are Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:7; II Timothy 1:9–10; Romans 16:25–26; and such scriptures as I Peter 1:10–12, 19, 20; Revelation 13:8; I Corinthians 2:6–10. In addition there is the whole body of prophecy foretelling what must ultimately be seen as grace. Even so, two things tell us of the active grace of God from the beginning, (i) the fact of the children of God from at least Abel onwards (I John 3:10–11), and (ii) the constant stream of the people of faith from Abel onwards (Heb. 11:4ff.). I John 3:10 and Hebrews 11:4ff. show us that 'the children of God' and 'people of faith' were one, and that they were under the grace of God.

The Grace of God Appearing

We have noted that grace in what we would call its pure form as *charis* is not—as such—present in its New Testament form in the Old Testament. This is not to say it is absent, nor that grace was not present—see paragraph above—but Paul could say, 'For the grace of God *has appeared* for the salvation of all men' (Titus 2:11 = 3:4–7). John 1:14, 16, 17 makes it clear that this 'grace of God' is clearly 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' (cf. II Cor. 8:9). The salutations in the New Testament Letters support this. This era of salvation brought by Christ obtains, especially since the Cross, e.g. Ephesians 2:8–10 and Acts 4:33—'great grace was upon them all'. The Acts constantly refers to this grace in all aspects of preaching and living.

The Grace That Will Yet Appear

I Peter 1:13 says, 'Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that *is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ*'. This is being dealt with in Study 3. This is surely what Paul is referring to in Ephesians 1:17–19 which in turn equals Ephesians 1:5–6 and 2:7.

Conclusion: Salvation History is the Revelation and the Acts of God's Grace Towards Mankind

Whilst we have not sought to examine grace in any great detail we are surely drawn to the conclusion that history is not just a sequence of events, or even a series of repeated cycles, but its meaning lies in the salvation God achieves—and is achieving—by His unbounded grace.

Study Two

The Grace of Covenant & Creation

(by Deane Meatheringham)

What we are about in this study is to show that humankind's relationship with the creation is directly linked with the faithfulness of God's covenant grace. The pertinency of such a theme can be quickly seen in an age which (a) worships the creation rather than the Creator, (b) is fearful of the idol it cannot manage, and (c) in order to build up a security and an inheritance, hatefully violates the creation.

1. Creation is God's Gift

The account of creation in Genesis 1–2 shows the stages of the creation as coming from God culminated in the creation of man. A key statement is Genesis 1:31 where we understand that creation is functional, purposive and set up to be the home of the human race. Man has a vocational purpose under God to bring the creation to its God given end. To that end humankind is to pro-create, participate in the Father's familial goal, utilize the wealth of gifts in the creation, to take care of the creation, so that as God's representative, man is king over the creation (Ps. 8; 104; Eph. 1:3–10; Col. 1:15f.; Heb. 2:10; etc.).

Humankind cannot be considered separately from the world over which it is set.

The Sabbath rest on the seventh day of creation points to the ultimate goal of creation (Gen. 2:1–3; cf. Heb. 4:1ff.). Barth says that man is to firmly begin history by holding in view 'the goal that creation and at the same time the beginning of all that follows, is the event of God's Sabbath freedom, Sabbath rest and Sabbath joy, in which man too, has been summoned to participate' (*Church Dogmatics III/I*, Edinburgh, T.& T. Clark, 1959, p. 98).

Keeping these things in mind we say that creation is a gift from God. Creation is grace. Barth and others argue that creation is grace basically because God plans his creation with a grace goal. He doesn't seem to say that creation is covenant, but that it is the revelation and actualization of God's eternal covenant purpose (ibid. III/I, p. 59f., passim).

Whilst there is something very appealing about Barth's view we would say that God gave creation to man prior to his need of grace. Geoffrey Bingham says that life for created man was a gift, it was not given by condescension or patronage. 'Man does not have to fawn upon God in order to live' (*Great and Glorious Grace*, NCPI, 1988, p.16). God's creation is pure gift, its ultimate purpose will be to display his glorious grace, but as man was created he did not know grace for he had no need of grace. Grace comes to restore man, and to save what was lost.

2. The Grace of Covenant

In this section we are concerned with the covenant made with Noah in Genesis 6:17–18.

The background is the insanity of man's sin. It is without motive, it is irrational, it is absurd, it is ingratitude, defiance, and *inexcusable* (Gen. 3:1ff.; Rom. 1:18ff.). As the opposition of the self to God, as an enormous contradiction of man the creature, it is surely *fatal* (Rom. 5:12ff.).

Enmity breaks up the harmony of relationships, replacing love with hatred. Humanity now lives with the 'curse'. Cast out of Paradise his relationship with the creation becomes one of fear, loneliness, wandering, murder, violence, and an increasing attempt to use the creation against the creature and against God (Gen. 4–9; cf. Rom. 8:20).

The violence and corruption of humanity is the environment in which God makes a covenant with Noah (Gen. 6:1–21). It appears that the human race was about destroying itself and the creation. The great sin of sloth had concretized itself into the imagination of man.

The institution of covenant in Genesis 6:18 is God's promise of salvation from the judgement of the Flood and in Genesis 9:8ff. it includes the perpetual rhythm of creation. But first it is important to see that God's covenant is 'conceived, devised, determined, established, confirmed and dispensed by God Himself' (John Murray, *The Covenant of Grace*, Tyndale, 1956. p.12). We see that it is unconditional and no commandment is appended. It is monergistic, i.e. it is all of God's doing, hence all of his grace.

The Noahic covenant is universal in its scope. It is designed for the future of the human race. The providential care of God is extended to all. It is not contingent upon human reactions to it. In Genesis 9 the creational mandate is restated, but unlike Genesis 1:2 it is now in terms of grace. The sign of the bow is the comprehensive guarantee of the perpetuation of the creation. The sign carries with it the endorsement of the goals of the original creation, and the certainty of its fulfilment.

3. The Covenant People and Creation

Israel, in fulfilment of the covenantal promise to Abraham and his descendants, is redeemed and bonded to God in covenant grace (Deut. 5:6; 7:7; Exod. 19:5f.; Lev. 11:44f.; Ps. 111:9; 147:19f.; cf. I Cor. 6:20; I Pet. 2:9f.).

The covenant is commanded. Israel as a people enters into a new life where Yahweh is their covenant Lord and they swear their allegiance (Exod. 24:1–8).

The covenant carries with it 'the blessing and the curse' (cf. Deut. 27–30; cf. Lev. 26). Deuteronomy 28:2f., 15ff., say the blessings are irresistible where God's people are faithful and the curses are irresistible where they disobey.

What we want to stress is that the blessing and curse have to do with God's people and their relationship with the creation.

- (i) The land was the Lord's (Lev. 25:23). The earth is the Lord's (Ps. 24:1; Exod. 19:5; Matt. 11:25).
- (ii) God's people are to be holy (Lev. 19:2; I Pet. 1:14–16).

- (iii) The land will become God's instrument of judgement where his people become idolatrous and violate the covenant (Exod. 20:3; Lev. 18:25; Isa. 24; Amos 5; etc.).
- (iv) There is nothing which God's people of themselves can do to change the curse into blessing (Hag. 1:7–11; 2:16–19).
- (v) Through their covenant relationship with God, God's people learn their dependency upon him in relation to the creation. For Israel there is the promise of 'the land I will show you' (Gen. 12:1). In time of famine the covenant people are provided for (Gen. 42). In the wilderness Israel 'lacked nothing' (Deut. 8:4; 2:7; 29:5). Deuteronomy 8:3 is a key to understanding the Lord's way of teaching dependency, which was true not only in the wilderness, but later as they settled in the land (Amos 4:6ff.; 8:11ff.; cf. Matt. 4:4; 6:7ff., 25–34; II Cor. 9:8ff.).
- (vi) The promise of restoration under covenant grace is also linked with the creation (Deut. 30:1–10; Amos 9:11–15; Isa. 35:1–10; 44:1–8; 55:1–13; etc.).

4. Man in the Wilderness

Humanistic man makes the creation a wilderness. 'Wilderness' in the Old Testament usually means unsown ground, land which is not inhabited (Gen. 47:23; II Sam. 9:10). This is where the curse prevails (Gen. 4:12). Because sin is suicidal, all who hate God love death (Prov. 8:36). This manifests itself in self-hatred. Ironically the humanists then profess a love for the wilderness. Pollution marks the wilderness areas. Society faces deliberate disorder.

Yet God's creational covenant made with humanity stands in the midst of the curse. Jesus and the apostles speak of God's provision (Matt. 5:45ff.), which must be the action of God's patience and mercy (Rom. 2:4; Acts 17:25; 14:17; I Pet. 4:19). We are told that the judgements experienced by man in the creation are the voice which his self-conscious hears warning him of the final judgement to come, and of the need to repent (Rom. 1:18ff.; 13:4).

Where man's defiance of God continues in God's world and where God continues to rule and to create, man finds himself trapped in the 'I' of the storm. 'He comes into conflict with him [God] wherever he turns. Judgement, wrath, and the unrecognized demand, are simply expressions of the fact that God continues to be God and to rule his creation'. There is also the baffling wall of silence—God's silence. 'This silence of God means death and judgement for man. Now God's silence is not a meaningless void, but is the omnipotence which refuses to speak' (G. Wingren, *Creation and Law*, Oliver & Boyd, 1961, p.66).

5. The Ultimate Restoration

This is a vast subject in itself so I will restrict myself to an outline of the main points.

- (i) We have already seen some of the promises made to the covenant people re restoration through grace.
- (ii) The promise is for the renewal, or regeneration of the whole creation which

is linked with the ultimate glorification of God's elect people (Isa. 65:17ff.; 66:22f.; Matt. 19:28; Rom. 8:21; Heb. 12:25–29; II Pet. 3:11–13; Rev. 21–22). The point we should emphasize here is that the 'faithful Creator' does not destroy his creation, but brings it through the 'wilderness' mentality of a race of vandals in order to call home those whom he saves through Jesus Christ.

- (iii) The restoration is the expression of God's grace planned before creation (Eph. 1:3ff.; II Tim. 1:9). The Mediator is the Son through whom all things were created, the eternal Word (Ps. 104) who comes as incarnate grace (John 1:1–14; Titus 2:11). The reconciliation of all things took place in the judgement of the Cross, where Christ became curse for us (Col. 1:15–20; Matt. 27:45f., 51–54; Gal. 3:13; Rom. 6:1ff.). Christ now has authority over the creation to bring it to its predetermined goal (Rev. 5–6).
- (iv) In the present age of salvation those who are justified in Christ Jesus are able to stand in the midst of wrath (Rom. 1:16–18; cf. Hab. 2:4) and can enjoy the good gifts of creation (I Tim. 4:1–5; 6:17). Having been freed from the guilt of the curse the people of God can now live with the curse without anger—sure of God's covenantal promise not to destroy the creation. They are moving towards the ultimate hope with patience (Rom. 8:22–25).

Study Three

The Grace of God Has Appeared

(by Ian Pennicook)

God Has Always Been ‘The God of All Grace’

Before creation, and so before the Fall of mankind, God was the giver of grace (II Tim. 1:9—*πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνιων*; Isa. 63:16—in the LXX, *ῥῦσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς ἐστίν*). Before times eternal grace has been given, and God has been the Redeemer/Father from the beginning, i.e. from creation (cf. Isa. 64:8). Hence at the moment of the Fall, there was the promise of God (Gen. 3:15).

Grace Has Always Been Operative

John 1:16 speaks of grace coming upon grace from the fullness of the Son. Verse 17 takes this up by contrasting the law ‘given through Moses’ with ‘grace and truth [which] came through Jesus Christ’. However, grace and law are not in opposition. The Law was given as the gift of grace. To have been left without the revelation of the character of God in covenant would have been unbearable (Jer. 31:2, Heb. *hen*). Hence the grace revealed at the incarnation came upon the continuous flow of grace throughout history.

The Grace of God Has Appeared

The appearance of the Son ‘in the fullness of time’ (Gal. 4:4) was the appearance in flesh of the grace and truth of the Father in the person of the Son (John 1:14). As such, Paul put it that ‘the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men’ (Titus 2:11). At the time chosen by the Father the full redemptive purpose of God appeared (cf. John 3:17; II Tim. 1:9–10). ‘Appeared’ (*ἐπεφάνη*) does not imply that that purpose had been inoperative prior to the incarnation; it does mean that what had been hidden for ages in God (Eph. 3:5, 9) was now visible.

The Appearance of Grace and the Abundance of Joy

The birth of Christ, the appearance of grace in the flesh, was the occasion of great joy—see Luke 2:10–11, 13–14, 20 (cf. 1:47). While God had always been the God of grace, now ‘the day of Grace’ had dawned.

This conjunction of grace and joy is seen continuously in the Scriptures (e.g. II Cor. 8:1–2; 9:15). It is the joy of liberation (II Cor. 8:9) and of justification by grace

The Grace of God Has Appeared

(Titus 3:4–7). This knowledge of grace is also expressed in the joy of proclamation (I John 1:1–4; Eph. 4:29), as men and women of grace participate in the delight of the heavens. See also I Peter 1:3–10.

Study Four

Grace in Historical Theology—I

(by Dean Carter)

Introduction

Writing a century ago, the great Congregationalist R. W. Dale confided to a friend, ‘Forsyth said a good thing the other day—he thought that “the time had come to get back the word *Grace* into our preaching”; word and thing have too much disappeared.’¹ More recently, an American Jesuit commented that ‘the word “grace” is one of the most common in the Christian vocabulary. At the same time, it is probably the most slippery word to define. Of all Christian terms, the word grace is the simplest, and at the same time it is the most complicated.’²

Both are concerned with the veracity and vitality of grace. Are we? The primary interest of our studies will be to focus on the Biblical witness to the nature and meaning of grace. From then on, the history of the theology of grace is a history of the failure by the Church to retain the thought and praxis of the Pauline Gospel, and the sovereign recalling and renewal of the Church by the God of grace.

§1. ‘The Word *Grace*’—in the Old and New Testaments

Since the word ‘grace’ is derived from the Greek word *charis*, some background is required to allow us to understand its employment within the New Testament. First, its use in its own setting, and then as used to provide a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.

In *classical* Greek, *charis* denoted what evokes pleasure, or secures joy: it could even be described as ‘beauty in motion’.³ Occasionally it was personified, with the *Charites* being three goddesses responsible for that which is charming or beautiful, or concretized as a gift or reward. In *Hellenic* Greek it could denote an ornament or endowment, favour, goodwill and the reciprocal gratitude. It was even hypostatized

¹ See A. W. Dale, *The Life of R. W. Dale* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1902), page 636. The letter from Dale is addressed to the Rev. George Barber, written on August 14, 1892. The oft quoted sequel is recorded by Forsyth’s daughter Jessie in the ‘Memoir’ in *The Work of Christ* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1910), page xv, where she states that Dale was surprised by Forsyth’s contribution to the volume of essays, *Faith and Criticism*, published in 1893. She writes, ‘When Dr. Dale read it he asked, “Who is this P. T. Forsyth? He has recovered for us a word we had all but lost—the word Grace.”’ But Forsyth had actually written the article on Revelation, while staying with Dale, during the time in which the letter mentioned above was written!

² Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (Gill & Macmillan: 1979), page 6.

³ H. R. Mackintosh, ‘Grace’ in *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* Vol. VI, ed. James Hastings (T. & T. Clark: 1913), page 364. See further the standard Dictionaries, such as the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Vol. 9 (Eerdmans: 1974), page 372ff. and the *Dictionary of New Testament Theology* Vol. 2 (Paternoster: 1979), page 115ff. See further the fine treatment by T. F. Torrance *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (Eerdmans: 1960).

from an aspect of royalty to an attribute of deity, or on occasion, it could indicate some spiritual potency becoming realized in prosperity. Could such a word be used as an equivalent to the rich meaning of God's relation to His people as indicated by the Old Testament?

Two key Hebrew words denote God's relation to His people. The rare word *Aheb* means unsought and unexpected love (Deut. 7:7ff.):¹ *hanan* conveys the idea of stooping, and so condescension to others. To this latter, there is no recourse for the suppliant (cf. Job 9:1ff., esp. 15.). Put together, as Mackintosh notes, they approximate what is conveyed by the New Testament use of *charis*: 'grace is love in its princely and sovereign form, love to the indifferent and the disloyal, whose one claim is their need.'² Next, the word *hesed* speaks of persistent love, linked with covenant. It is this that is nearest the Gospel term *charis*. It meant the fundamental relation of all Israelite life, embracing all relationships. Those faithful were the *hasid* (cf. the *hasidim*, for the Pharisees, versus the 'sinners').

God's relationship to man was deliberate, determined and secure, confirmed by oath, fixed by formal contract. Thus *hesed* was actualized by the covenant form, with the content provided in the form of law, so that man is embraced within a relationship, and knows the will of the LORD. Hence, this man is required to be righteous (*tsedeq*), to be obedient from the heart. It is critical here to appreciate that to the Hebrew, both *hesed* and *tsedeq* are inseparably linked as covenant terms, together forming a unitary thought.

Those who wrote the Septuagint (LXX) lacked any Greek equivalent to either *hesed* or *tsedeq*, even less a word to convey both together. Consequently, a wedge was driven between love and righteousness; what in the Hebrew signified a unity of thought was breached, and words with different meanings employed to convey disparate ideas. Hence, *hesed* was generally rendered as *eleos* (mercy) [cf. *hasid* translated to mean moral correspondence to law], while *tsedeq* rendered by *dikaiousune* (precise justice) which has no suggestion of mercy. Here, where the Old Testament Hebrew required particular terms, Greek was found wanting: the Septuagint failed at this critical point to convey the exact meaning, and so force, of the Hebrew. The word content is weakened, the unity is divorced, the meaning all but lost. [For a good example of the startling difference between a Pharisee (member of the *hasidim*) and 'sinner', see the parable in Luke 18:9–14, where the subsequently justified Publican petitioned God to be 'propitious' (merciful).]

Turning to the New Testament, we find the writers struggling with terminology, especially with *charis*, since they are required to convey a meaning not found in any ante-cedent usage. Their difficulty echoes that of God, who resolved the impasse by means of the Incarnation—the Word became flesh, full of grace and truth. In this unprecedented act Jesus Christ is the actualization of, the ground and content of, *charis* in its distinctive Christian use.³ Now the will, work, being and act of God are revealed and realized in Christ, now neither good will nor the gift are separable from the Giver, God in Christ. Linguistically and theologically speaking, the word 'grace' has been recreated.⁴

¹ See N. H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (Epworth: 1962), page 131ff. for a treatment of 'The Election-Love of God'.

² H. R. Mackintosh, *The Christian Apprehension of God* (T. & T. Clark: 1934), page 212.

³ T. F. Torrance, op. cit., page 21.

⁴ 'Then came the Gospel—and Paul—baptizing the word with new meaning, and henceforth 'grace' became twin-sister not to loveliness but love—the love of God for undeserving men. So what began as a *shining* word ended up as a *loving* one.' A. M. Hunter, *The Gospel according to St. Paul* (SCM: 1966), page 13.

How is this ‘grace’ term used within the New Testament itself? ‘Grace’ is not required as a term in the Gospels because it is dynamically present, is actualized in the person and work of Christ Himself. But for Paul, it was the key, delivered to him on the Damascus road, interpreting the Cross. So Kennedy observes, ‘We cannot help thinking that the clue to his many-sided conception of the death of Christ is to be found primarily in his conversion-experience. Whatever else in it subdued his nature, first and foremost was his impression of unspeakable grace.’¹ There could be no separation of the person of Christ from His work—Paul knew Christ, and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2): the objective work of God was realized in humanity within the person of Christ (Rom. 3:24). ‘Grace is bound up with the person of Christ; apart from this reference to the historic Figure, and His experiences of life and death and resurrection, it would have no tangible or permanent significance for the Apostle’s mind.’² Further, grace and righteousness are of the one, for grace bestows righteousness. Therefore, there is a new eschatological order (II Cor. 5:16) of grace, embodied in Paul’s ministry, energizing and equipping believers. Life in the Spirit is therefore charismatic (Rom. 6:23) and eschatological: it is not ethical (legal religion is judged).

Within a generation, the early Church appears to have changed in its appreciation and apprehension of grace, ‘the love of God, spontaneous, beautiful, unearned, at work in Jesus Christ for the salvation of sinful men.’³

§2. Apostolic Fathers

2:1 *The Didache*

The baptismal preparation manual, the *Didache*, its name derived from the post resurrection commission of Matthew 28:20 (‘teaching them to observe all I have commanded you’), is markedly anti-Jewish. Yet it opposes Jewish institutions, not the Law itself, which it sees as providing the pattern of Christian life. The ‘Two ways’ motif (cf. Ps. 1) is seen as paramount, as the Old Testament is interpreted to give principles for Christian life (cf. the Apostles, who used it to interpret the meaning of *Christ*). This indicates a lapsing back into moralism. So the Spirit is ‘quenched’, and freedom curtailed for sake of order, as believers see salvation as ‘enduring to the end’, a grind instead of a gift. Spontaneity, warmth and joy are lacking.

Within the *Didache* God is seen as Lawgiver and Judge. The Eucharist is not related to Christ’s saving death; there is no objective atonement; baptism is merely retro-active; sin is corruption rather than guilt, making salvation only experienced after death, but without any present assurance in the midst of striving. Within a short time the New Testament view of grace has become a correlative of merit.

2:2 *I Clement*

Christianity is the supreme ‘God fearing life’. As many pagans were attracted to Judaism for its authoritative knowledge or teaching of God, strong ethical life, and its ready refuge from confusion, so many turned to the Church, and were converted to ‘G-o-d’, but not to the God and Father of, and the Lord Jesus Christ. For Clement of

¹ H. A. A. Kennedy, *The Theology of the Epistles* (Duckworth: 1934), page 74.

² Mackintosh, ‘Grace’, page 365.

³ James Denney, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, THE EXPOSITOR’S BIBLE (Hodder & Stoughton: 1892), page 15–16.

Rome, God is primarily Creator and Provider. God's good will is as much expressed to and in creation as in Christ.

Christ is exemplar or Patron, much akin to our 'hero worship', but not mediator or personally instrumental in our salvation, which is essentially 'light . . . and knowledge' of God (I Clement 59:2).¹ Rather, we relate to God on the basis of creation, justified by faith, fear, obedience and good works. While using Christian words, it is obvious that Clement fills them with alien Hellenistic content. Christians, for example know the grace of repentance, but this means obedience which obtains the possibility to change, just as that experienced by Noah and the prophets (not with any specific Gospel content). We come under the 'yoke' of grace, akin to Hellenic Judaism (contra. Matt. 11:29 for the 'yoke of Christ'). Finally, there is ambiguity in seeing grace as both gift and merited, known by faith, yet earned by striving.

2:3 *Ignatius*

Ignatius has the most affinity with the New Testament, with an orthodox view of Jesus as the Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, as Lord in union with the Father. God's objective salvation is effected in Christ, and He is known by union with, and likeness of, God. Yet salvation is known by the reception of 'pure light' (Rom. 6:2), for Christ is also the *Gnosis*, Teacher and Lawgiver of God, Ignatius himself being only a disciple, and imitator (cf. the later term *imitatio Christi*). This means that salvation is future, a hope (cf. Christ's finished work in the New Testament).

Justification is a process dependent on man, as we follow Christ as the 'inviolable charter' (Phil. 8:2). There is no assurance, as we progress from faith to love, and so (hope-fully) to union with God. To bear the cross of martyrdom is especially helpful. Faith is to assent to the facts of the holy traditions, is our moral action for ascending to God (see especially Eph. 9:2ff.), and as endurance to the end will be rewarded ('divine grace shall requite', Smyr. 12:1).

2:4 *Barnabas [c. 80]*

Christianity is new, yet retains continuity with the old. Israel forfeited the covenant, so the eternal Son appeared as man to renew the covenant, to finally reject Israel and form a new people. Salvation is duplex, for Christ offered the sacrifice of Himself, and we know deliverance from darkness and death, into knowledge. Christ died primarily as the sequel to prophecy, to bring blessings. But does Barnabas do justice to New Testament, as he affirms that any assurance of salvation is presumption, justification is future, while hope ('the beginning and end of our faith', Ep. of Barn 1:4) is our present experience. Life is a constant struggle, as we seek to escape from darkness and lawlessness into light with a new Law (Ep. of Barn. 2:2).

Righteousness is experienced by keeping the *gnosis* of 'ordinances' (which are beyond faith) found in the Old Testament, which is scrutinized for moral precepts and principles. Having supplanted Israel as God's people, the Church now substitutes one law for another, and continues legalism. So Barnabas exhorts, 'thou shalt work with thy hands for a ransom for thy sins' (Ep. of Barn.19:10). Grace has become for Barnabas a divine endowment akin to the esoteric knowledge of the gnostics, earned by those judged worthy.

¹ The text employed here is *The Apostolic Fathers*, translated and edited by J. B. Lightfoot (Baker: 1970).

González's summation of the Apostolic Fathers is therefore warranted,

in their total theological outlook, one senses a distance between the Christianity of the New Testament—especially that of Paul—and that of the Apostolic Fathers. References to Paul and the other apostles are frequent; but in spite of this the new faith becomes more and more a new law, and the doctrine of God's gracious justification becomes a doctrine of grace that helps man to act justly.¹

§3. Doctors of the Western Church

3:1 Tertullian, the 'Father of Latin Theology' [*Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullianus (c. 160–70—c. 215–20)*]

A converted Carthaginian lawyer who finally joined the Montanist sect (focus on eschatology, ecstasy and elitism), Tertullian was a polemic writer, strongly affirming the oneness and unity of the Church. He disliked infant baptism, advocated Traducianism (the view that the human soul is transmitted from parents via sexual act to children) which led to the later view of the Fall and Original Sin, and endorsed the practice of separation from the secular community, even if this required martyrdom.

For him, grace was the divine energy working in the soul, its action that of inspiration of a higher divine quasi-physical energy or force, yet 'detached from the idea of the personal Spirit of God, and hypostatized into an impersonal force.'² It was sometimes coercive, other times being man's responsibility. Man is therefore aided in his working for the meritorious rewards of eternal life.

His legacy is best seen in his treatment of pastoral cases of lapsed Christians. Instead of asking the questions 'Who?', 'What?' and then 'How?' in that order, he commenced with the last. For him, the critical question became, 'how may the grace of forgiveness be dispensed, administered, applied and appropriated?' He was met by a dual problem—the guilt of man, and Law's demand for satisfaction. To meet these, he argued that to receive the lapsed back required contrition, confession and reparation. *If*, and *only after* all the conditions had been met, was the brother received back. So, how may *any* guilty person know salvation? By forgiveness. How may this be received? By repentance. If this first repentance meant conversion to Christ, sealed by baptism (baptism is here the seal of *repentance*), then *penance seals any further repentance*. Contrition, confession and satisfaction (Latin, *satisfactio* = ? in NT) thereby become the means of meriting forgiveness. From resolving this pastoral problem, Tertullian worked backwards to consider the work of Christ (the 'What?', here the purchased blessing of forgiveness), and so the person of Christ (the 'Who?'). Case law had become the basis for theology, penance had become a 'means of grace', Latin thinking had supplanted Biblical.

With such an explicit shift in thinking and practice, the Church was headed for a 'showdown'. It came to a head with the clash between Augustine and Pelagius.

¹ J. González, *A History of Christian Thought* Vol. 1 (Abingdon: 1970), page 96.

² N. P. Williams, *The Grace of God* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1930), page 17.

3:2 Augustine, ‘Supreme Doctor of Grace’ [Aurelius Augustinus (354–430)]

‘In Augustine of Hippo Western Christianity found its most influential spokesman, and the doctrine of grace its most articulate interpreter.’¹ Augustine had inherited a theology no longer operating on the Pauline dichotomy of ‘grace versus works’, but ‘nature versus grace’: it is not that man the sinner *does not* contribute to his salvation, but that he *cannot*. Grace, an impersonal force, is now seen not only as external to man, but also to God.

Augustine was therefore faced with a number of new questions. What is freedom, and its relation to predestination (is it determinism?)? Is man free to restrain God in His freedom, or himself from evil? If grace is an external force, can man exercise his freedom against this force? What is man’s essential nature: is the *imago dei* primarily relational, or substantial? Is man so incapacitated that he cannot have faith in God; does he require faith as a gift? If grace is an impersonal and external force, how is ‘it’ related to God?

To man, ensnared and enmeshed in a web of sin, Christ has brought the powers that enable us to freely express the new nature: this is *gratia gratis data*, upon which salvation *in toto* is dependent. Within the Church, God’s eternal predestinating will is being effected, saving some from the ‘mass of perdition’. Grace works as *gratia preveniens* or *operans*, apprehending and elevating man from sin; as *gratia cooperans*, producing good decisions and deeds (justification); and as *gratia irresistibilis*, divine omnipotence effective in renewing the heart to voluntarily respond.

Within this framework, faith is primarily assent to the truth, baptism is the means of remission of Original Sin (transmitted by the physical sexual act, as with Tertullian), and Augustine provides no clear explanation of how he sees grace and man linked to Christ, thereby leaving the door open to mystics, and Pelagians. Augustine’s theology must be seen against the backdrop of his controversy with **Pelagius**, a British theologian, reformer, spiritual director, who visited Rome and Africa. Pelagius was outraged by Augustine’s prayer—*Da quod iubes et iube quod vis* (‘Command what you wish, but give what you command.’), and theology (autonomy is not a denial of God’s sovereignty, but a gift to be held responsibly) and the idea of *massa damnata*. He denounced Augustine as a pessimist, capitulating to mediocrity: himself an optimist, he wanted all to live as ascetics, on pilgrimage to perfection.

He affirmed that it is possible for man to attain salvation by keeping the law (Lev. 19:2; Matt. 5:48), and grace is desirable assistance. Yet this grace is not *gratia interna*, but man’s good nature (with its inalienable prerogative of a free will), and the preaching of the Gospel and the example of Christ. The former is universal and indispensable, whereas the latter is neither universal nor necessary, but does ‘make things easier’ in the attaining of salvation.² So, for Pelagius ‘the real Christian is one who knows God, believes that he is accepted by God, obeys the precepts of the Gospel, and imitates the holiness of Christ rather than the sin of Adam’.³

¹ J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition* Vol. I (University of Chicago: 1970), page 293. cf. Haight, *op. cit.*, ‘Because of the experiential quality of his thought, so attached as it is to his own life experience, his theology has a kind of perennial contemporaneity and vital relatedness that has made him probably the most influential theologian since Paul’, page 32.

² L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Banner of Truth: 1969), page 206

³ Berkhof, *ibid.*

While not all agreed with Pelagius (lowering grace to the sphere of nature), neither could they affirm Augustine's view (grace liberates an utterly sinful nature). Hence, a mediating position—**Semi-Pelagianism** (it could have been called Semi-Augustinian) came to the fore. They denied the total inability of man to effect spiritual good, yet admitted an inability to perform salvific works apart from grace. Grace illumines the mind, and supports (not liberates) the will, so that the freedom of will is not violated. Grace is universal in intention, but effective only in those who make the proper (free) response. Cassian (c. 360–435) is typical of this group: the will is free at all times, the first steps to salvation are taken by man, who is then assisted by grace (cf. 'God helps those who first help themselves').

The Synod of Carthage (418) condemned Pelagianism, as did the Council of Ephesus (431), and the Synod of Orange (529), which also condemned Semi-Pelagianism. Formally speaking, Augustinianism won the day.

The legacy from the controversy is significant and lasting. Participation in grace is via sacraments, new life is not assured, grace is an infusion which enables man to achieve merit. At the end the doctrine of predestination was rejected, eclipsed by the grace of baptism: the sovereignty of grace was supplanted by sacramental grace. So, Pelagianism is not dead: Haight is correct in his assessment that Pelagius 'is strikingly contemporary since more and more today human existence is being defined as freedom, and autonomous possibility for self-determination, self-creation and world-fashioning.'¹

§4. The Eastern Church

One view—not altogether flattering—suggests that many of the conflicts and controversies of the West made little impression on the Eastern Church.

The great Greek Church of the East really stopped thinking in the eighth century, and presents us with the interesting spectacle of an arrested development of Chn doctrine—a statement of Christian truth adapted to the situation in those early ages surviving into modern times, but with only a mummy like existence, preserved in the technical sense only by being hermetically sealed against the air wh. living men breathe.²

Considering the diverse historical and cultural traditions, it is somewhat surprising that the Eastern Church has remained uniform in its view of grace. However, they have prized continuity, adhering to the traditions of the Fathers, and the decrees of the 7 ecumenical Councils.³ Initially, there was little consideration of grace: it is to be lived, enjoyed, rather than debated about. (Compare with the pastoral disorders which forced the Western Church to consider the issue, as Paul had already in his epistles to the Galatians and Romans.)

The Eastern view of man included, freedom of the will as axiomatic, with morality and religion as parallel, and sin as the obvious evidence of freedom, with grace indicating that freedom was not inhibited.

There are two main features to grace; grace as divine energy, and 'original' grace

¹ Haight, *op. cit.*, page 37.

² James Denney, 'The Restatement of Doctrine' (MSS DEN 09-06: n.d.: transcribed and edited by D. J. Carter, Feb. 1992), page 2.

³ See Mikolaski, *The Grace of God* (Eerdmans: 1966), page 19ff.; Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* (A. & C. Black: 1973); and Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. III (University of Chicago: 1973).

(cf. Protestant ‘common grace’). First, Chrysostom affirmed grace to be the life-giving power of God, that creative and salvific energy within the Triune Godhead, operative objectively in man and the world. Hence, all is affected by God: all, whether creation, providence, or redemption is grace, for God is disposed towards creation.

Second, original grace is the basal layer for redemption, yet special grace or an enlarged inherent capacity is necessary to enter the kingdom. For, while the West has seen redemption as *remedial*, due to *depravatio*; the East has thought more in terms of *revelation* or *realisation*, due to *deprivatio*. This means that salvation is more a quantitative increase, rather than radical reversal; nurture instead of a new nature, a human response in the place of a decisive divine act. Life is fundamentally a continuity, with the means of grace available and enabling man to overcome the debilitating effects of sin. Even since the fall, man remains essentially congenial to grace (all humanity is endowed with original grace and sufficient means to attain eternal bliss). But now, special grace, potentially available in Christ’s redeeming action, is made potent by means of baptism, greatly improving and assisting this pilgrimage to heaven.

However, we must not suggest that the East accepts ‘sacramental grace’. This is unknown, for ‘to the Orthodox grace is always ordinary grace and [yet] it is received through sacramental channels.’¹ Sacraments are the vehicles of grace, with the Spirit bound to employ them. Hence the ‘means of grace’ and the Spirit are limited to formal, sacramental acts, accompanied by the proliferation of mysticism, iconography.

* * * * *

Within the New Testament, grace was the leading factor of faith; that is, faith in the radical and novel salvific event in the person and work of Christ. However, it took little time for Christianity to be seen as a new life of obedience, guided by divinely disclosed truths (the *nova lex*). Why had this taken place, and so soon?

The answer is to be found in the three main thought forms of the first few centuries, of Judaism, Greeks and the Romans. First, Judaism had its great legacy of the Law, which infected the Church, even during Paul’s ministry. Judaism also provided the Church with its Bible, a Septuagint translation which failed to adequately convey the unity and force of grace and righteousness. The Gospel was therefore interpreted as a new Law (*nova lex*), its hearers under imperatives to obey, rather than gladly responding to liberating indicatives. Consequently, ethics became a critical issue, as life was considered—apart from the Gospel (note how little of the Epistles is given over to ‘ethics’). Repentance too was treated in isolation from the Cross, becoming tedious self-amendment.

Hellenism left its indelible marks on Christianity, as well as Judaism. With so many converts having a Greek background, is it any wonder that the Church reverted to the naturalism and self-justification of Hellenism, and detached grace from Christology. Here we detect a failure to correctly interpret the work of the Cross—by ignoring or mis-representing the Old Testament categories and terminology: instead of faith in the Cross, there was the fetish of a Cross, a religious exemplar to be imitated. And the person of Christ was eclipsed by God as the Creator Judge, rendering Jesus as the great Teacher and Moral Guide. Third, Roman thought, with its genius for administration, also left its imprint on the Church, in the form of the ‘means of grace.’²

¹ Mikolaski, *op. cit.*, page 22.

² Paul observed that the Cross was a scandal to the Jew and folly to the Greek (I Cor. 1:18ff.). We should not

The pastoral question ‘How?’ has ousted the Biblical focus on grace, the decisive and objective act of God in Christ, replacing it with divine aid for the worthy. Abandoning a Biblical Christology has implications for Pneumatology and Eschatology. On the one hand grace is connected with the Spirit, and slips into a Hellenic ‘pneumatic potency’ or even ‘a spiritual substance’. On the other, eschatology is shunted into the distant future, adrift from its present actualization in Christ. Grace therefore came to be dispensed and controlled from within an ecclesiastical institution (replete with ‘means of grace’ and sacramental orders of ministry).

Finally, we are reminded of the pastoral issues constantly put to us: ‘how do we use the Bible to resolve ethical problems, how can we offer hope to those around us, how can we possibly believe that God is good?’ God answers those questions with another—‘Who?’—for the ‘grace of God has appeared’, ‘the Word became flesh’, and now ‘God is with us.’

be surprised that the Early Church failed to interpret the Cross correctly. We might also add, that for the Romans, the Cross shows poor ‘management of both the product’s packaging and promotion’ in the marketplace.

Study Five

Great Grace at the Cross

(by Geoffrey Bingham))

Introduction: Grace in Romans Chapters 1–5; I Corinthians 1:17–24

There are ten mentions of the word ‘grace’ in the first five chapters of Romans, two of which are in the salutation. Of the remaining eight, five are in the fifth chapter. Even so, grace is expounded far beyond the actual mentions of the word. In this Study we will not have time for a detailed exegesis of the text. We will proceed in précis form.

Paul’s Argument Regarding Man, Christ, and the Grace of the Cross

Paul’s discussion of the gospel begins with 1:16–17, Paul not being ashamed of the gospel because it is ‘the power of God for salvation’. The conjunction *for* beginning at verse 18 tells us all that follows—at least to 5:21—is the reason why the gospel is powerful for salvation. 1:18–32 speaks of the wrath of God—a matter of immense importance. God’s wrath is ‘against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth’. In verses 24, 26, and 28, Paul shows the *nature* of God’s wrath, i.e. He gives (abandons) men and women up to their own sin and guilt. This is His personal judgement. He not only ‘abandons them up’ but does so personally, as judgement. The compounding effects of sin and guilt are His wrath.¹ If we take the components of guilt such as pain, shame, defilement, anger, confusion, heaviness, alienation from God, dread of judgement—and the like—then these elements constitute the nature of felt guilt. This is Man’s constant existential guilt.² Paul does not allow a Jewish reader to think he is exempt from such wrath because he is under the covenant of Moses, but arrives at the point in 3:19 where he shows those under law—and indeed all mankind—are ‘accountable before God’. In 3:23 he shows that all have sinned—whether Jews or Gentiles (cf. Eph. 2:3, where the Israelites are also under wrath).

What we have to keep in mind in reading from 1:16—3:23 is that Paul is not simply teaching about wrath for wrath’s sake, but in order to show the necessity for propitiation to deal with that wrath, and that—indeed—this is the true power of the gospel. Realizing the nature and fact of wrath we are shut up to the reality of propitiation which is the grace of God in action for sinners.³

¹ One of the ideas of ‘common grace’ in theology is that God restrains Man from the utter evils of his own depravity. This may well be so, but Man suffers terribly from this judgemental abandonment of God to his sin-guilt processes, which are self-compounding.

² From a pastoral point of view we must distinguish something of this pain and anguish Man knows. I suggest we look at my two books, *Man of Dust! Man of Glory!* (NCPI, 1986) and *I, The Man!* (NCPI, 1983), in order to understand something of the existential pain of human beings so that we can better minister to them pastorally. On the whole subject of the Cross and its propitiation another book *Christ’s Cross Over Man’s Abyss* (NCPI, 1987) could prove helpful.

³ This is really the point John reaches in I John 4:9–10 where love is shown through propitiation, the writer of Hebrews in his similar arguments regarding the propitiating power of the Cross, e.g. 2:17; and chs. 8–10. Most profitable is Leon Morris’ *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Tyndale, 1965), pp. 143–213. No pastor or teacher really has a right to teach and preach

The Justifying Righteousness of God

In 3:19–20 Paul is saying that if we look for human righteousness by works of the law we will be wrong (cf. Gal. 2:16), for the law brings knowledge of sin, but not salvation. In 3:21–26 he shows there is *a* righteousness of God which is not the righteousness of *the* law, for this righteousness—valid because testified to by the law and prophets—is the righteousness which justifies, (i) the Jew and Gentile who are both sinners, and (ii) the ungodly (4:5). This justification is the grace of God taking the initiative (3:24) and man receiving it by faith (3:25; 4:5; 5:1).

The basis of this grace, and the action of it is propitiation. The wrath of which Paul has spoken of from 1:18—3:21 is propitiated by God in His Son (cf. Heb. 2:17; 5:1; Dan. 9:24; Lev. 17:11; I John 2:2; 4:10). Leon Morris sums up propitiation as ‘averting the wrath of’. In the case of Romans 3:24, 25—‘they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath put forward as a propitiation through faith in his blood to be received by faith’—the wrath of God on sinners and their sins, by Christ’s personal bearing the entire guilt, is averted from sinners by Christ receiving that wrath. That is to say—in accordance with Romans 1:24, 26 and 28—‘the components of guilt such as pain, shame, defilement, anger, confusion, heaviness, alienation from God, dread of judgement, and the like’, are borne personally by Christ in his mental, emotional, moral, spiritual and physical suffering, until that wrath is wholly expended, and so grace sets the sinner free from the penalty, pollution and power of his/her guilt.

The remainder of Romans 3:25–31 shows this not to be against the law, but as being the fulfilment and satisfier of the law. Romans 4 is virtually the argument that as Abraham was not justified by works, neither is any person, however religious he or she may be. Only by faith—in the grace of God—are we justified. Romans 5 in verses 1–11 shows something of the outworking and nature of that grace, whilst 5:12–21 shows how the obedience of Christ to God—obedience both active and passive—has caused grace to abound over all our sins and set us free from sin and death.

Paul in I Corinthians 1:17—2:5 Showing the Power of the Cross

Other passages of the New Testament speak powerfully of grace at the Cross¹ but this Corinthian passage shows the Cross—i.e. the word of the Cross—to be ‘folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God’. Paul said, ‘For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.’ In other words the grace of God does what signs cannot accomplish nor wisdom create—the redemption of Man. The power of the Cross to affect men and women and effect redemption within them is nothing but the Cross—brought to them by and through the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Thess. 1:5; I Pet. 1:10). So, ‘When I came to you, brethren, I did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in much fear and trembling; and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your

without a knowledge of propitiation.

¹ For example, Gal. 1:4–5; 2:16–21; 3:1–14; 5:24; 6:14; Col. 1:11–14.

faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God’.

The passage of 1:26–31 shows that the grace of the Cross changed men and women who could be described as ‘not wise’, as those who were foolish, who were weak, ‘even things that were not’—in the eyes of the world—and that such had come to know and show the power of God.

For the rest, the power of the Cross to defeat the enemies of Man—Satan, the world powers and the world-system under Satan, sin, the law, the flesh, death, the wrath of God and the conscience—all these can be shown to have been defeated by the work of the Cross.¹ What we must keep in mind is that unless the Cross and Resurrection effect total liberation of the human spirit there can be no talk of ‘great grace at the Cross’, or anywhere for that matter.

¹ Scriptures such as Rom. 5:1–21; 6:1–14; Gal. 1:14; 2:20; 3:13; 5:24; 6:14; Eph. 1:7; 2:4–7; Phil. 1:6; Col. 2:14–15; Thess. 1:5, 10; I Tim. 1:15; II Tim. 1:9–10, Heb. 1:3; 2:14–15; 9:14, 26–28; 10:10ff.; I Pet. 1:18, 19, 22; I John 2:2; 4:10; Rev. 1:4–5; 7:9–14.

Study Six

Grace in the Continuing Life of the Church

(by Ian Pennicook)

In II Corinthians 6:1, Paul urges the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. Likewise, he warned the Galatians that they were in danger of ‘falling from grace’ (Gal. 5:4). Against these warnings come such observations as Acts 4:33, and 11:23.

The birth of the church in the New Testament was the action of such grace (cf. John 6:37, 44, 65). But it was the concern of Paul and others that, having begun by grace, the church should continue by grace. We may observe the opening greetings so common in the Letters of the New Testament: ‘Grace to you and peace . . .’ Far from being a mere epistolary formula, we may discern this to be the deep prayer of the writers. Both the beginning and the continuance in grace is seen in I Corinthians 15:10.

Receiving the Grace of God in Fullness

While grace is unconditional, and continues to be so, our life in grace is never to be passive (Mark 13:13; II Pet. 3:18; cf. 1:10–11).

- (i) Continuing in faith (Gal. 3:1–5; 5:4; Heb. 4:14–16).
- (ii) Continuing in unity and flow of love (Eph. 4:1–16; II Cor. 5:14–17; II Cor. 8:1–9).
- (iii) Continuing in holiness of hope (Heb. 12:14–15; I John 3:1–3; Rom. 6:1ff.; I Pet. 1:13–21). Half-hearted holiness is a contradiction of grace (Eph. 1:3–4).

The grace of the Cross lies at the heart of the continuing flow of grace. So-called ‘Clayton’s grace’ refers to the attempt to live with grace apart from the offence of the Cross (cf. John 12:43; Gal. 6:12). Our continuing life in grace can only be known from the Cross (Gal. 5:24); it is as crucified men and women, then, that we speak (Eph. 4:29) and use all the resources of life and ministry (I Pet. 4:10).

Having begun by grace, we end by grace (Phil. 1:6).

Study Seven

The Grace of Law & the Law of Grace

(by Deane Meatheringham)

For Christians, ancient and modern, understanding the relationship between the Law and the Gospel has always been a battle. When humankind hears the Gospel as law and commands, it cannot hear the Gospel, so that it confuses one with the other. Only in the light of the Gospel of God's free grace given in the justifying work of Jesus Christ can we understand the Law.

Pastorally we find that the area where our people most need help is in the conflict which they have in rightly hearing the commands of God, and living by faith in the redeeming grace of God.

What we will be about in this study is to theologially and pastorally set out the difference between the condemnation of the Law and the way those who are liberated from this condemnation receive the gift of the Law.

1. The Gracious God is the Commanding God

Key scriptures are Romans 8:1–4 and Exodus 20:1ff. The God who freely saves, saves us into obedience, yet we are not saved by obedience but by the grace of God (Eph. 2:8–10).

To speak of both the God of grace and the God of Law can result in a dreadful dualism. But God is One, he does not have a dark side and a light side, a left hand and a right hand, a dual personality or any such thing (Mark 12:29ff.; I John 1:5; 2:1–3; 4:8, 16; etc.).

Prior to the Fall the God of love gave commandments. After the Fall the command of God was still known to man made in God's image. Man is now condemned by the Law which he transgresses, although God remains love. Grace is that free action of God which passes beyond all claims to love.

*It is love which, after fulfilling the obligations imposed by law, has an unexhausted wealth of kindness . . . grace floods with affection the sinner who has deserved anger and resentment, trusts penitent treachery with a confidence which could not have been merited by ages of incorruptible fidelity, confers on a race which had been in revolt honours which no loyalty could have purchased, on the sinful joy beyond the deserts of saintliness (R. W. Dale, *Lectures on Ephesians*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1895, p. 178).*

The point is that such is the grace which saves us from rebellion and its dire consequences, that it gives restored humankind the Law so that we can live freely in Christ.

2. The Nature of the Law

Romans 2:20 says that in the Law we have ‘the embodiment of knowledge and truth’. God’s Law, then, is ontological. And it is the explication of what is already innate in the creation and in man. It is given to redeemed man who though justified remains a sinner and needs the new instruction from God.

The Law is the revelation of God’s personal will. Thus God addresses his people in terms of ‘My Law’, Jesus speaks of ‘the will of my Father’, and the prophets give ‘the law of the Lord’. It is only as we personally know God, that we know his will. We will see that grace gives us a heart to know and a will to obey God.

Love is the sum of the Law (Mark 12:28ff.; Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:14). Here is where we know the love of God and know the way of loving God.

The one Gospel consists of demand and promise. And our response is one of obedience and faith.

3. There is a Wrong Use of the Law

Romans 7:11 says this occurs when sin deceitfully believes that it has found a way to get a break by taking hold of the Law and using it to advance itself.

- (i) The pietistic opportunity to absorb a morality or the humanist urge for perfection, uses law to advance itself to either the status or the experience of having his life under control (e.g. Mark 10:17ff.).
- (ii) Now law is separate—it is external—and it will always produce guilt.
- (iii) Pagans also think they are justified by law, even though some would like to be free of this arrangement. Hence we have seen a movement in our society from a graceless moralism, to libertinism, to salvation by legislation. We never live without law. We may repudiate the law of Christ only to replace it with the ‘new’ law of the idols.
- (iv) Should we put the Law and the Gospel on the same footing? Some cancel grace by adding an equal equivalent of Law (Gal. 5:1ff.; Rom 11:6). This is a misuse of the Law. Is the whole of the Gospel revealed in the saving work of the incarnate Word of God, or is there a ‘God’ beyond Christ, a ‘God’ of Law? Luther’s response to such a suggestion was, ‘Don’t try any God like that on me.’ The grace which forgives sins is not one aspect of the Gospel, it is the whole of the Gospel, and it is only from within the Gospel that we hear can the Law.

4. What the Law Does

- (i) The Law exposes sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:13; Gal. 3:19). The moralist would probably accept this, but Paul is not thinking of morals nor of mere psychological pressure to make a person admit that they are failures. Paul is speaking of the ‘exceeding sinfulness of sin’ (Rom. 7:13), which must mean we cannot experience this depth of the Law until we also know the Gospel.
- (ii) The Law activates sin (Rom. 7:5, 8; 5:20; I Cor. 15:56). This means that the guilt which is stimulated by the exposure of our sin presses us to more sin. Paul

illustrates this in Philippians 3:5f. where we see that he was never without Law. The 'law came' as the Gospel pressed upon him, and as he sought to justify himself, only to find that his condition was dreadfully compounded.

- (iii) The Law condemns the sinner who resists grace. This is what it means to be under the Law (Rom. 3:9–20; 2:12; Ps. 143:2). Psalm 32 has David caught in a great tension. His tension comes from his hiding the stark contrast of what he actually does as a man of God, and what his devotional life tells him he should be. He submerges his wickedness, and covers it with his piety. He hopes that in this way he may be pardoned through his piety. But the Law searches him out. He is wedged between the truth of God and his own lies. It is intolerable. He is set free only as he no longer hides his sin, but trusts the justifying God.

Here we see the Law works wrath (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 3:10; cf. Ps. 38).

- (iv) The Law shuts us up, confines us, gives us no escape except to hear the promise of Christ (Gal. 3:22–26). While we resist grace, the Law is a hard teacher. This opposition between Law and grace which is exposed by the Gospel is not an opposition in the revelation of God, but an opposition between God and man.

5. The Grace Which Justifies According to the Law

As a large portion of this will have been covered in the earlier studies which deal with God's atoning grace in Christ, I will only make those points which deal immediately with the subject.

- (i) Christ fulfilled the Law for us and in solidarity with us (Rom. 10:4; Matt. 3:15).
- (ii) Vicariously Christ bore the judgement of the Law as he bore our sins (Gal. 2:19–20; 3:13; II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:24f.; I John 4:10).
- (iii) In Christ we are freed from the condemnation of the Law (Gal. 3:24–27; Rom. 8:1f.).
- (iv) The power of sin is broken by the acquittal from guilt (Rom. 6:7, 14).
- (v) The Law is fulfilled—not waived—therefore the conscience is free (Rom. 3:26, 31; 8:1).
- (vi) What we have is the pure action of God's free grace. It is not a mixture of Law and grace. The God of all grace provided the saving judgement which the Law requires. And through the mediation of the incarnate Son, reconciliation between God and man takes place within the Godhead.

6. The New Obedience

With sin's power broken the derelict sinner and the exposed hypocrite turn from their wicked way of justifying themselves to believe in the promise of God's justifying grace (Rom. 4:15, 16).

The constraint of grace draws sinners to forsake themselves and to live in Christ for God (II Cor. 5:14f.; Titus 2:11ff.; Jer. 31:31ff.; Gal. 2:19f.).

Through the Holy Spirit the love of God is poured into the hearts of those justified

(Rom. 5:1–5; 6:17). Through the Holy Spirit the Law is no longer an external code but is implanted in the heart (Heb. 10:14–18; Jer. 31:31ff.; Ezek. 36:25–27).

We can summarize these things from Romans 8:1–4. Our justification is in Christ Jesus. In Christ Jesus we are freed from sin's power which works death through the Law. The freedom comes into us through the new Law of the Spirit of life. The just requirement of the Law for obedience is the outcome of justification, regeneration, and our being in Christ.

The Law of love has been internalized. As we live in grace, walking in the Spirit, then the harvest of the Spirit comes (Gal. 5:16–24). The harvest of the Spirit is the harvest of love, of Christ, of grace. It is the internalizing of the Law so that it may be obeyed in the practical life of love (Gal. 5:13, 14). But we can only know it through the grace of the whole Gospel.

Study Eight

Grace in the Life of the Pastor

(by Rod James)

Why Do Pastors . . . ?

Workaholics

Question: Why do pastors tend to leave no stone unturned in the parish, but neglect their families?

Answer: Because the parish is the place where they are justified, and you don't earn a good reputation by sitting around at home and playing with your kids.

Empire Builders

Question: Why do pastors tend to equate the building up of *their* congregation(s) with the coming of the Kingdom.

Answer: Because to do so is an act of ego projection. God's kingdom and mine become the same.

One-Man Bands

Question: Why do pastors tend towards doing everything themselves?

Answer: Because perfection demands it.

'Super-Apostles'

The Christian church and the Christian pastor will always be tempted to be the super-church and the super-pastor. The '*super-apostles*' of II Corinthians 11:5 and 12:11 are the spiritual alternative to the true apostleship espoused by St Paul. Their impressive personal power and competence results in much coveted status and reputation. It is a competition between egos.

By contrast the credentials of St Paul's apostleship can only be expressed by parading his weakness, e.g. escaping in a basket. (II Cor. 11:30–33).

Grace Made Perfect in Weakness

With such '*surpassingly great revelations*' Paul no doubt desired 'a clear go' to get on and save the world. As pastors we can understand Paul's frustration when '*there was given to me a thorn in the flesh*'. Imagine the arguments he would have put up in pleading for the removal of this impediment. God's answer to the apostle gives us the classic statement of true apostolic ministry:

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:7–10).

The context and starting point of Paul's ministry is not his strength of knowledge and ability, but rather his weakness. This weakness is not only his physical frailty when compared to the task, but also his moral frailty as a sinner.

It is tremendously reviving to a pastor's spirits to realize that one's weakness and inadequacy are the places where God's grace comes into its full power and effect. This text more than any other has become, for me, the fundamental principle of both survival and fruitfulness in ministry.

Grace in Ministry

The following principles hold true:

- (i) God works out his redemptive mission by giving gifts of his grace through believers. The '*charismata*', literally 'gifts of grace', are to be interpreted more widely than the so-called 'charismatic' gifts. For example, God gave to St Paul a gift or stewardship of his grace for the nations (see Eph. 3:1–6). It was while the believers were worshipping the Lord that the Holy Spirit indicated to them the gift of God's grace which was about to unfold (Acts 13:1–3). In the Kingdom of God everything is gift (James 1:17; I Cor. 4:7). There is, therefore, no individual performances or accomplishments.
- (ii) These gifts are the content of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit '*on all flesh*', and are being given to all believers, both men and women, both young and old. Through prophecy, dreams, visions, etc., the believers have revealed to them the things that God is doing (Acts 2:17, 18). The pastor and elders are to exercise expectancy, discernment and encouragement as they watch for this outpouring among their people in response to the Word of God's grace. 'Performance pastoring' will only impede the flow of God's grace.
- (iii) It is, therefore, the Holy Spirit who guides and orchestrates the mission of the Gospel, working through all the believers.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good (I Cor. 12:4–7).

- (iv) The strength of God's grace will come most effectively to the believers in the context of their weaknesses, which are not to be falsely hidden from each other. Indeed these weaknesses are to be gloried in as the occasions of God's grace.

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me (II Cor. 12:9).

Conclusion

The ethos in the Church, then, is not one of proud, wilful people doing their thing, but one of discrete souls, who have been beautifully humiliated in the Cross, and who through their brokenness release the pure fragrance of God's surprising mercy.

Likewise the ethos of grace in the pastor's life is not one of striving for professional

competence under the stress of omnipresent efficiency. He does not need to make his bed each night in the black hole of personal inadequacy, and rise each morning to tackle the impossible single-handed.

Rather he begins his ministry well by being slain in the Spirit. Struck down from all high pretence by the appalling revelation of his own and all humanity's utter failure, depravity and futility, he is simultaneously disarmed and released by God's unmerited, unexpected, and totally sufficient grace.

He rises, like a drunken fool, to stammer what he has just learned all over again:

God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Study Nine

The Grace of Holiness

(by Geoffrey Bingham)

Introduction: Sanctification is by Faith¹

In Acts 26:16–20 Paul reported to King Agrippa what Christ had commissioned him to do. Verses 17–18 says, ‘delivering you from the people and from the Gentiles—to whom I send you to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place amongst those who are sanctified *by faith* in me’. In Acts 15:8–9 Peter was speaking in regard to the holiness or sanctification of the Gentiles, ‘And God who knows the heart bore witness to them [the Gentiles], giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their *hearts by faith*.’ In looking at justification we see that grace precedes faith (Rom. 3:24), and that grace brings faith to life (cf. Rom. 10:17). This must also be the case with sanctification—that sanctification is the gift of grace. As justification is the gift appropriated by faith, so sanctification is the gift appropriated continually by faith.

Note: Just as justification—as a gift—constrains us to live in righteousness, so sanctification—as a gift—constrains us to live in holiness. In our conclusion—see last section of this Study—justification and sanctification are inseparable.

Grace Plans and Executes the Holiness (Sanctification) of the Believer

I Peter 1:2–3; II Thessalonians 2:13–14; Philippians 1:6 (cf. 2:13–14; I Thess. 5:23) all show God’s planning of our sanctification or holiness prior to time. In Ephesians 1:3–4 Paul shows that God ‘chose us in him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him’. Colossians 1:21–22 says, ‘And you, who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him . . .’ Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,’ and the writer of Hebrews exhorted, ‘Strive for peace with all men, and for the holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.’ In Revelation 21:27 it is said of the Holy City, ‘But nothing that is unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life’. 22:11 speaks of a time when opportunity for change will have passed, ‘Let the evil-doer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy’.

¹ I would like to recommend my book *The Splendour of Holiness* (NCPI, 1985), which covers many aspects of sanctification and practical holiness of living.

If before the foundation of the world God chose His elect to be ‘blameless and holy before him’, then in conformity with II Timothy 1:9–10 it must have been grace that planned the holiness of the elect. Ephesians 1:5–7 adds ‘sonship’ to this list, and says that by it the elect would be to ‘the praise of the glory of his grace’. Grace covers sanctification and adoption, as it also covered justification.

The Theology of Purification

- (i) Purification will mean nothing to us unless first we see (a) we are impure, being defiled by sin, and (b) we can do nothing about purifying ourselves. That we are impure cannot be seen just by seeking to look at, or for, our impurity. Only by seeing God can we see our own impurity (Isa. 6:5; Luke 5:8). All forms of guilt are uncleanness (Ps. 32:5; Isa. 6:7; Jer. 33:8; Heb. 9:14; I John 1:9).
- (ii) The impurity of man is seen in the following passages: Jeremiah 17:9; Isaiah 4:4; 57:20–21; Ezekiel 36:25; Mark 7:20–23; cf. Romans 3:9–18. This impurity is indelible.
- (iii) Man has a (ontological) need for purity, i.e. he *must* be purified. He is forced to resort to ritual cleansings but—by nature of the case—they cannot satisfy. David expressed the need for cleansing (Ps. 51:6–10). Since man cannot purify himself, then it must be by grace that God does it.
- (iv) The sacrifices cleansed the offerers in the Old Testament. Compare with Leviticus 4:26, 31; 5:5–6, 10, 13, 16, 18 where *forgiveness* is given, and Hebrews 9:22 where sins are cleansed by blood (cf. I John 1:7, 9; Heb. 10:22).
- (v) Promises of purification were made in the O.T beyond the O.T. sacrifices (Zech. 13:1; Isa. 4:4; Ezek. 24:25). They are often looked upon as accomplished (Isa. 1:18; 43:25; 44:22). See also John 1:29, and Matthew 26:28.
- (vi) Christ effected purification (Heb. 1:3; 9:14). This purification is received by repentance and faith (Acts 3:19; 15:8–9; 22:16; I Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5–7; I Pet. 1:2, 22; Rev. 7:14).

The Various Aspects of Biblical Holiness

The following are ways of looking at holiness. When examined we see that all are from grace, and none is synergistic.

- (i) *Elective holiness*—i.e. God’s calling and grace before time (cf. II Tim. 1:9–10), Ephesians 1:4; I Peter 1:12; II Thessalonians 2:13.
- (ii) *Separative holiness*—i.e. separated by grace unto God. Holiness is separating (cf. II Cor. 6:14ff.). Israel was separated (Exod. 19:5–6; Lev. 11:44). See I Corinthians 1:12; 6:11; Romans 1:17.
- (iii) *Corporate Holiness*. This is also separative. God’s people, through Christ and the Spirit are separated to be His community (I Pet. 2:4–10; I Cor. 6:11). This community under Christ is prophetic, priestly and royal.
- (iv) *Critical Holiness*. The personal crisis of purification as seen in Hebrews 1:3;

9:14; 10:22; I Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; this effecting a pure heart (Ezek. 36:25–26; Ps. 51:7; Isa 6:5–7; Acts 15:9; cf. I Pet. 1:22), a pure conscience (Heb. 9:14), and a pure mind (II Tim. 2:22).

- (v) *Practical or Experimental Holiness*. This may also be called *processive holiness*. I Thessalonians 4:7, ‘God has not called us *for* uncleanness but *in* holiness’. So I Peter 1:13–15 calls this, ‘. . . as he who has called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct’. See II Corinthians 7:1; I Thessalonians 3:12–13; Philippians 1:9–11; 2:12–13; Hebrews 12:14; II Timothy 2:22; II Peter 3:14.
- (vi) *Eschatological Holiness*. We saw in our first paragraphs (above) that our calling to holiness determines that we shall finally be before Him ‘holy and blameless’. From such passages as Ephesians 5:26–27; Philippians 1:6; 2:12–13; Colossians 1:22; and I Thessalonians 5:23–25, we see that God is now about the work of accomplishing that goal in us. In this sense holiness is synergistic since it is ‘God working in us to do and accomplish His good will’.

Conclusion: Sanctification is of Grace and Faith

We have seen this principle above in our first paragraph, but it needs enlarging. Romans 6:1–23 as also Colossians 3:11–25 are passages which show us that grace justifies and sanctifies us. Romans 6:1–14 shows that our baptism into Christ takes us into his justifying death (6:7, ‘He that has died is justified from sin’), and brings us up into resurrection of life, and sin has no power for the grace of justification has taken its power away (cf. I Cor. 15:55–56). So, then, sin has no dominion over us, for ‘you are not under law but under grace’. That is, the power of sin lies in guilt (of the law), but when guilt is vanquished, the power of the Cross and Resurrection has asserted itself.

In verses 15–23 of Romans the triumph of grace is in holiness (sanctification is shown). The will—gripped by grace—brings the submission of the human spirit, and the reality of holiness and the experimental (practical) growth of it. Only in, and through, and by, grace are sinners brought to sanctification in all its parts.

Study Ten

Grace & Mercy in the Preaching of the Pastor

(by Grant Thorpe)

We are talking of the preaching of the pastor, but must talk about the grace and mercy in which the pastor lives, and the deeds that express these things—because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34).

The Gospels reveal a Christ who was constantly moving out to show compassion (*splagchna*—Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32) to those passed by, or ostracized by, the legalism and sterility of Judaistic religion. There were many who sought him for the mercy he showed and proclaimed (Matt. 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30, 31). He taught that it was one of the great things of Israel's faith and that it was reprehensible in her to have ignored it (Matt. 9:13; 12:7; 18:33; 23:23). Their leaders neither thought they needed it, nor saw the need to display it to others.

But Jesus had come 'to perform the mercy promised to our fathers' (Luke 1:72), and so the Gospel narratives disclose the manner of this.

It is necessary for us to be deeply acquainted with the mercy of God. Firstly, we need it. Secondly, while our governments may legislate 'kindness' and 'mercy', they cannot produce it, and those who live their lives under wrath are often without familial affection (Prov. 12:10; Rom. 1:31). Thirdly, an evangelical piety or charismatic worship or Biblical activism can be just as unsympathetically demanding and unrealistic as any other legalism (e.g. II Cor. 6:12). Most significantly, it is the nature of God to be merciful and it is to God's glory that he be truly represented (I Tim. 1:13, 16).

Relation of Grace and Mercy

It is not possible to separate the action of grace (*chesed* and *chen*) from that of mercy (*racham*). See, for example, Exodus 34:6–7; Isaiah 30:18; 63:7; Jeremiah 16:5; Hosea 2:19. The Psalms frequently link 'steadfast love' (*chesed*) and 'mercy' (e.g. Ps. 25:6; 103:4; **145:8–9**). They also link 'favour' (*chen*) and 'mercy' (Exod. 33:17, 19).

See also, Romans 12:1 (which summarizes the revelation of grace and mercy which precede it); Ephesians 2:4 (summarizing vv. 5–9); Titus 3:5; with 2:11; and Hebrews 4:16. In I Peter it is by mercy that we have hope, but the hope is the appearing of grace (1:3, 13).

But it is possible to distinguish them in emphasis. Trench does this as follows:

The *charis* of God, the gift of his free grace that is displayed in the forgiveness of sins, is extended to men as they are *guilty*, his *eleos* as they are *miserable* (*Synonyms of the New Testament*, by R. C. Trench; Baker, 1989; p. 183).

Mercy on the Miserable

The ‘mercy’ of God is on those whose state has become pitiable because of their sins (Luke 18:13; Eph. 2:4; I Tim. 1:13; II Tim. 1:18; Titus 3:5).

However, the sinfulness of those on whom God shows mercy is not always in question (II Cor. 1:3; Phil. 2:27; II Tim. 1:16; James 5:11).

Mercy on Covenant Breakers

Mercy was especially appropriate to Israel given their breaking of covenant—and the promises of mercy to such a people (e.g. Neh. 9:19, 27f., 31; and especially Hosea 1:8–11). It was these promises which were recalled when the day of the Christ arrived (Luke 1:50, 54, 58, 72, 78).

In Romans 9–11, especially 11:30–31, the teaching of Hosea is extended to Gentiles, who, though never a covenant people, needed the same saving from the chilling prospect of having no God (Rom. 11:30–31; I Pet. 2:10).

Mercy Triumphant Over Judgement

The root cause of the pitiable condition of the ungodly is the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18–32), but in wrath, he remembers mercy (Isa. 54:7; 63:15; Dan. 9:9, 18; Hab. 3:2). In Hosea (e.g. 1:6–7; 2:19; 11:8–9), and Romans (9–11), mercy is strongly contrasted with wrath. God wounds, but comes to heal (Isa. 57:15–21). Mercy triumphs over judgement (James 2:13; Ps. 40:11–12).

Geoffrey Bingham writes:

... the N.T. use of mercy—and perhaps something of its O.T use also—links mercy almost always with His wrath, and in His wrath He remembers mercy (cf. Hab. 3:2). It seems mercy in this case is somewhat other than *chesed* (O.T.) and even *charis*, i.e. grace (N.T.). It might almost be said to be stronger than both. Certainly *chesed* has a predictable element, as does also grace, but mercy (Heb. *rachammim*; Greek *eleos*) is an action of God which springs out of His love in a wholly gratuitous manner (G. C. Bingham, paper: ‘The Magnificence of Mercy’, p. 1).

Mercy is Wholly Gratuitous

Mercy does not inevitably come to those under wrath; it is the free act of God (Rom. 11:32) and given to those whom God chooses to receive it (Exod. 33:19; Rom. 9:15, 18).

The ‘Affective’ Element in Mercy

It appears from Hosea that *racham* has an affective emphasis—that is, it calls to mind the heart or affections of God in having the relation to Israel that he does (see Isa. 63:15f.; Dan. 9:8–9, 17–19; Hosea 2:1–2, 14–15, 19; 11:8–9; Zech. 1:12–17).

The Hebrew *racham* may be related to the word for womb and so suggest brotherly or motherly feeling. The plural *rachamim* is translated as compassion (*splachna, oiktirmoi*) and mercy in the LXX. ‘It expresses the affective aspect of love: its compassion and pity. “The personal God has a heart”’ (Barth) (*New Bible Dictionary*, p. 761).

The Greek *elios* has to do with compassion for those in need, the helpless or the distressed.

Paul speaks of God being ‘rich in mercy’ and of the ‘great love with which he loved us’ (Eph. 2:4). Speaking of God as having affections should not make us consider God to be victim of his own feelings, but it does say that what he does comes from the depths of his being.

Compare with the manner in which modern thinking makes human feelings absolute.

The Mercies of God are His Wonderful Deeds

The mercy of God is not his mere feeling toward, but his deeds on our behalf. His love is expressed in his wonderful deeds, his washing of us and pouring out of his Spirit (Titus 3:3–7; I Pet. 1:3–5; 2:9–10).

Who is Sufficient For These Things?

Therefore, to preach and to represent the mercy of God to sinners must mean to set before them the saving deeds of God in all their severity and kindness, and to proclaim the mercy of God which has triumphed over judgement.

It must mean that the proclaimer is caught up in the mercy and grace of God so as to know its operations in his own heart and experience. It must mean also that the wisdom of the preacher is ‘full of mercy and good fruits’ (James 3:17).

Hosea had his affections widened by the word of God to him in the midst of his grievous marital situation. The children of this marriage were named—for the town where Israel would fall, for their being not pitied and not being God’s people. Yet God would reverse these judgements and the name of his daughter would be ‘Pitied’.

Hosea was to have mercy on his wife as God did for Israel—with recognition of the awful offence, but with compassion that anticipated a revelation of her true situation and a restitution to true affections (2:14–17, 19).

All this came from God, not from Hosea. He needed the mercy of Yahweh personally to direct him and enlarge him. He was to love a wife who was unfaithful (3:1); the revelation of Israel’s deeds was to be in the context of Yahweh’s mercy (chs. 4–5), as was the call to repentance (6:1–3; 10:12; 14:1–3); Yahweh could not give up his bride (11:8–9) and would love her freely (14:4).

We need to live in the mercy of God so as to proclaim it to others—with fear if necessary (Jude 1:17–23).

Given the roots of this mercy, not all will recognize it as such, but it will be mercy, received with joy by all who look for the kindness of God. They will thank God for his mercy (Rom. 15:9), joining Israel in their many Psalms concerning the mercy of God (Ps. 13:5; 33:18; in all, 39 Psalms have reference to mercy—*rachamim*).

Study Eleven

The Grace of the Sacraments—I

(by Deane Meatheringham)

Introduction

Perhaps one of the chief causes for controversy and division over the theology and practice of the sacraments is because they are at the heart of our participation in the Gospel of Jesus the Son of God. In the sacramental life of the Church more than anywhere else, the free grace of God is either mollified by seeing the sacraments as our work, or God's glory is praised as we participate in his action conveyed to us through Christ.

Whilst we have a responsibility to refine our doctrine and practice according to the word of God's grace, we are not justified by a perfect doctrine. Furthermore, our godly fathers in the faith, though of sinful-like flesh with us, were justified by God's redemption in Christ Jesus. These fathers, we believe, were called by God to be our servants. This means they are God's gifts to the whole Church. Sectionalism allies itself with selected human leaders in order to get the best from them. Paul calls this style of churchmanship a dipping into the wisdom of this age. Rather, we should see that in the free gift of God's grace 'all things are yours' (I Cor. 3:18–23). We have no need to cut ourselves off from the riches which all the teachers or traditions can bring to us. Selectivity cuts us off from the wealth which other teachers could bring, and also the wealth of the riches of the teacher who we selectively devote ourselves to. Such an approach misses the heart of the gospel, which is the wisdom of God. 'All things are yours'. Paul says that even the heresies are in our control. The point is that our fathers of the past, and teachers of the present, have received their insights into the grace of the sacraments in order to share them with us. We, too, have these riches to share with others.

1. The Authority of the Sacraments is Found in the Power of Christ's Word

The two ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper were instituted by the command of Christ (Matt. 28:18ff.; 26:26ff.; Mark 16:15f.; Acts 2:37ff.; I Cor. 11:23ff.). The power of these rites is not in the rites themselves, nor in the ceremonial as such, but in the word of promise given by Christ. For the disciples, as for the early Church, and also for the worshipping congregation in the present, it is Christ's vital presence with his people giving them his word that gives the sacraments their power. Baptism is the seal which Christ gives us by his word. The Supper comes from the Lord who says, 'This is my body . . . This is my blood . . .'

When we say that the authority of the sacraments are found in Christ's word, we mean the word of the Christ who justified us. There is a danger of reading the word

given from a legal position. If we did this it would turn the sacrament into a commodity where its effectiveness would be restricted to the rightness of our procedure. We can read the Bible with a legal mind. But Christ is the substance of the Bible, and the Bible cannot be understood apart from the incarnate Son of God who justifies sinners freely through his grace (I Pet. 1:10–12; II Pet. 1:20f.; Luke 24:25f., 44–49; Rev. 19:10; etc.).

In Acts 2:41, for example, the sacrament of baptism is integrated with the preaching of the reigning Christ, the promise of forgiveness of sin, and the gift of the Spirit. In baptism the repentant believer enters into the dynamic of what he/she has heard in the proclamation. This ‘real forgiveness *is* regeneration’.

The point I wish to emphasize at the conclusion of this section is that the sacraments arise from the work of Christ. This is the Word become flesh, the redeeming Word. Therefore the sacraments are valid because they arise from Christ’s command, and the command arises out of the person, and his work, and his Gospel in the Church.

2. The Sacraments are Signs and Seals of the Covenant

We need to briefly reiterate what was stressed in Study 2, ‘The Grace of Covenant’. God’s covenant was his unilateral choice of Abraham, and in Abraham all of his descendants to be his people forever. It was a personal bonding between God and the people whom he called. Yahweh makes promises of his unfailing faithfulness and of guaranteed inheritance. The revelation of God and the word of his promise calls out the faith of Abraham as it also later constrains obedience from Israel. The covenant is sealed in blood. Both parties swear loyalty to the covenant, and God gives pledges of his faithfulness for his people to memorialize the bond between them and himself (Gen. 15:1–6; 17:1–4; Exod. 19:5–8; 24:1–11; Deut. 7:6ff.; Luke 1:67–75; Matt. 26:27f.; II Cor. 1:19–22; 3:17f.; 5:14f.; Heb. 9:11–22; I Pet. 2:9–10).

The covenant rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as a command for himself, and his sons, and all those males who were joined to his family (Gen. 17:1–14). The command that the children of the covenant were to be circumcised on the eighth day after their birth is reiterated in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 12:3).

There are three aspects to the sign of circumcision which relate to this study:

- (i) Circumcision was a sign or seal, a witness, a recollection of the relationship which existed between God and his People (Gen. 17:11; cf. Rom. 4:11). On its own, apart from the word of God’s promise, circumcision has no *real* meaning. Circumcision itself is not the reality, but points to the relationship which is beyond the sign. It is given in God’s presence, and what makes Israel unique is that God dwells with them so that the sign is more than a symbol for it conveyed God’s covenant promise (Rom. 3:1ff.).
- (ii) Circumcision was a sign of regeneration (Deut. 30:6). This is the work of God’s covenant grace which renews the heart by cutting away the evil, and giving a will to obey his laws (cf. Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:25–27; Rom. 2:28f.).
- (iii) The sign of circumcision as the pledge of God’s ownership should awaken faith, and constrain to obedience (Deut. 10:16; Lev. 26:40; Jer. 4:4; 9:25; Ezek. 44:9; Rom. 2:4, 25f.).

Baptism is a covenant sign and seal. The Abrahamic Covenant re the nations is the context for baptism in Matthew 28:18ff. More explicitly this is spelled out in

Colossians 2:11–15 where, through our union with Christ, it is God who circumcises the heart. This act of regeneration is con-joined with our old nature being ‘cut away’—put to death in Christ and our being raised in Christ through the covenant sign of baptism. In this ablution the uncircumcised enter the true Israel and we see that it is the forgiveness of sins which effects regeneration (cf. Titus 3:3–8). Baptism is the seal of our belonging to God. It is his gift to us before it is our response to him (Phil. 3:3; I Pet. 3:21; Heb. 10:22; 12:24; Rom. 6:3).

The Lord’s Supper was instituted during the seven day festival of the Passover. The original meal was preparatory for the Exodus journey (Exod. 12). The sprinkled blood over the doorways spoke of judgement and redemption. There was the paschal lamb to be eaten. And it was to be a continual memorial of the covenant people (Deut. 16:1ff.). The description of the meal in Matthew 26:26ff. and I Corinthians 11:23ff. is where the setting is preparation for a new Exodus (Luke 9:30, 31). Jesus replaces the stress on the paschal lamb to that of the bread and the wine after the substantial repast. The bread is con-joined with Christ’s body, which is linked with sacrificial blood—the blood of the covenant. Here is the New Covenant, the renewal of the old, through the forgiveness of sins. Here there is more than symbol, there is a partaking. Christ’s words mean that with the food eaten there is conveyed to the participants the ongoing sustenance of Christ’s body and blood.

Baptism, then, is the sacramental sign of God’s grace for entrance into the covenant, and the supper is the sacramental sign of our continuance within it.

3. The Sacraments are a Participation in Christ’s Action

The sacraments are a participation, a communion of persons, a partaking in the trans-figured humanity of the incarnate Son of God (Gal. 3:27; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 10:2; Eph. 4:24; I Cor. 10:16ff.; 11:24, 27ff.).

What this portrays to us is that the life of the people of God must not be reduced to spiritualism or mysticism. If the sacraments were merely spiritual mysticism then they would be simply another aspect of worship. To partake of the sacraments is not to watch a religious drama, or to meditate upon emblems as one would a picture. Water washes those baptized, food is consumed at the table of the Lord.

The whole life of faith is a life lived in Christ (e.g. Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:3; John 14:23). Christ’s is a vicarious humanity so that ‘for us’ and ‘on our behalf’ are key emphases of the New Testament. Christ, in solidarity with us, is circumcised and baptized as our representative. In our place Jesus obeys, and as our Head Jesus dies for our sins and is raised. It is not that we merely share in Christ’s personality. Christ came to redeem—for this purpose he was incarnate. The energetic, crucial and tragic action is found in Christ’s work, drawing all sinners into the judgement of his cross where both the holiness of God and the conscience of humankind is satisfied. Justification is realized in the risen Lord Jesus—but we have this work, this personhood, this power, and this grace bestowed upon us in the sacraments. Christ is the Chief Actor.

With the coming of the Word in the presence of the Holy Spirit, in the solemn moment of truth the Gospel is crystallized, and we are clinched in our relationship with Christ in his action conveyed in baptism (I Cor. 12:12–13; Acts 22:16; I Cor. 6:11). It is the continuity of our life in Christ which is reinforced, and highlighted to us in the Holy Communion. For here, in a sacramental way, the life of Christ is conveyed into the life of the worshipper through the bread and wine.

‘ . . . the bread and the wine of the Eucharist are not merely emblems of the sacrifice that was once offered for the sins of the world; they are the vehicle by means of which the virtue of that sacrifice is appropriated by the participant’ (P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments*, Independent Press, 1947, p. 162).

Study Twelve

Grace in Historical Theology—II

(by Dean Carter)

Introduction

‘Grace means the free unmerited, unexpected love of God, and all the benefits, delights, and comforts which flow from it. It means that while we were sinners and enemies we have been treated as sons and heirs.’¹

But not all the recipients of such grace have shared the same view of whether man is a ‘sinner’ or ‘son’, or how he could receive grace? Could he prepare himself, or was the donation totally dependent on the arbitrary will of God? To these issues and questions we turn in this study, and to help us, we will concentrate on Thomas Aquinas as representing a ‘mainstream Roman Catholic position’ and then, after Martin Luther and John Calvin from within the ranks of the reformers, look at three further theologians—John Wesley, John McLeod Campbell, and Karl Barth.

What has prompted such a selection? Two reasons: (i) Wesley has an experience akin to Luther (even from his preface to the Epistle to the Romans), while Campbell has marked affinity with Calvin, (ii) our own theological and pastoral traditions and experiences have much in common. Finally, Barth is chosen, as heir to both Luther and Calvin, and as the most significant theologian of the twentieth century.

§5. Roman Catholicism

‘The Eastern doctrine is simple in statement but subtle in the practice of the religious life. Conversely, Roman Catholic doctrine is subtly defined, but simple in practice.’² The Medieval scheme had flowered into the sacramental system, with grace as a power or substance communicated by the sevenfold sacraments (baptism, confirmation, penance, holy communion, marriage, orders, unction: baptism and penance generally seen as being indispensable; sacraments work, merely by *ex opere operato* [the work being worked]), merited (or at least co-merited) by Mary (distributor of blessings and object of devotion), and the saints.

5:1 Thomas Aquinas [Tomaso d’Aquino (1224—1274)]

Aquinas sought to do justice to the Biblical emphasis on salvation as gift, but retain some place for man to make contribution to his justification. He rejected the Franciscan view that man can effect works of merit, prior to any infusion of grace. Yet, man’s natural will is healed by grace to contribute to the act of justification. He sought to make

¹ R. P. C. Hanson, *The Attractiveness of God* (John Knox: 1973), page 138.

² Mikolaski, *The Grace of God* (Eerdmans: 1966), page 27.

place for human responsibility, but predestination to grace is not to be equated with predestination to glory.

Applying Aristotelian philosophical categories to Biblical truth, he argued that the Spirit acts in Christ's name to donate grace; grace is infused into the soul as habit to form a permanent disposition or haven for the virtues, the soul existing in a different way, now being able to relate to the heavenly realm. But we must not think that grace is necessary for man as creature (as natural), it is only needed for eternal life (i.e. Adam needed grace to attain heaven). For, original sin is the loss of original righteousness (deprivation of supernatural gifts), so that even the unbaptised could merit *gratia de congruo* (congruent grace = grace to help when God sees a good outcome of the act).¹

Aquinas' major concern is that grace *elevates the soul*, while also, as a minor theme, restoring the impaired soul. Such grace is beyond man, yet correlative to the soul (not an ontologically 'foreign substance'): it is hypostatized (vs. Augustine) so is external and not existential. It comes to man as *gratia medicinalis* so that 'the supposition of Catholic laymen that grace can be gotten like a hypodermic injection through religious exercises should evoke no surprise.'²

Grace, then, justifies and sanctifies, both as a process; *justificatio* as a process to a new state of being, *sanctificatio* bringing participation in the divine life by infused grace. Hence, *gratia operans* brings process to its commencement, and leads on to possess 'super'-natural justice. By means of this infusion of grace there is a voluntary movement to God by faith coupled with a voluntary movement against sin, the sequel being the forgiveness of sins. The aim is the ultimate experience of holiness and sonship, the filiation of the soul.

Given his great attempt in the *Summa Theologiae*, he is still open to the charge of having prevenient grace preparing way for justifying grace. While strenuously seeking to avoid Pelagian and semi-Pelagian tendencies, he retained the view that final salvation is dependent on meritorious works, by a process which includes penance, the petitioning of the saints, and various pilgrimages.

5:2 *Catholicism and Trent (1545—1563)*

Trent, strictly speaking, was the 'Counter Reformation', but will be dealt with here, prior to our treatment of Luther and Calvin.

The Council of Vienna (1311) affirmed the notion of *informis gratis et vitutes* (the virtues), Trent that of *gratia et doma*: man now received the virtues. There are 3 theological virtues—faith, hope and charity, 4 moral virtues—prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. To these are added the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, and finally the Spirit Himself.

Justification is dependent on some preparatory activity from the human side, man is accepted due to the righteousness implanted by the Holy Spirit. However, when man commits a 'mortal sin' he forfeits any sanctifying grace. In this new state he cannot receive any grace: but how may he extricate himself, for the question of how he may merit grace again remains a mystery?!

¹ This view was held by the Jesuits, but repudiated by the Anglicans, in their 39 Articles of Faith:

Art. 13—'Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of His Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.'

² Mikolaski, *op. cit.*, page 29. See further, on Aquinas, Roger Haight, *The Experience and Language of Grace* (Gill & Macmillan: 1979) for treatments of Aquinas and Karl Rahner. For a brief, yet complex presentation of current Catholic views, see Klaus Berger and Karl Rahner 'Grace' in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. K. Rahner (Burns & Oates: 1978), pages 584-601.

Overall, Semi-Pelagianism has made a partial resurgence.

§6. The Reformation

6:1 *Martin Luther*¹ [1483—1546]

Like Paul and Augustine before him, Martin Luther's theology grew out of his traumatic experiences, from which he developed a new perception, purpose and power, that of the Gospel of Grace. Intensely conscious of God's wrath, he realized that grace and wrath are diametrically opposed, that they deal with man personally, wholly, and that the only means of escape from dreadful wrath is the unmerited grace of God in Christ, and the repudiation of personal merit. Where he had—with others—been striving under the burden of the Medieval penitential system, with its absence of any joy from absolution, he became aware that his position as a saved sinner was guaranteed by Christ, rather than remaining a disturbed candidate for salvation.

With this new perception of present salvation, and rejection of grace as a gradual process or piecemeal infusion of grace (which by his time had become finally hypostatized, and man's sinful state fixed and total), he came to see that the action of grace is personal, with the Spirit working on (or in) man to apply forgiveness and restore to favour. Now he argued that objectively man is saved by the grace of God in the person and work of Christ, subjectively by faith and trust in God, in response to Christ. Now, he affirmed *sola gratia* is linked to *sola fide*: God works within man to deter sins, and deter from further sins. At last Luther knew peace of conscience.

His critics, however, accused him of simply substituting his 'faith' for another work (albeit subjective): they would at least retain the ecclesiastical ordinances as preferable, since they are 'dominical'. But this faith is no mere 'work'. It is not the adherence to creeds, dogma or facts: it is the certainty that Jesus is the sinner's surety before God, and the readiness to abandon oneself to Him. It must be the work of God, who disclosed Himself in Christ to be the loving and forgiving Father. Such faith and its reception is like the earth gladly receiving the rain, which then is seen to produce a fruitful harvest.

But if God is held to be the prime actor in this salvation, what place is given to the Law, predestination, and the means of grace? Luther was now ready to face these issues. First, in respect to Law, he made two claims: the Law's function is to drive a man to despair, and on to repentance, so that he turns to Christ, coming to know the relief and liberty of faith, justification and forgiveness. And along the way, part of the despair experienced is to understand that fulfilling or failing the Law is beside the point, since God doesn't deal with man on that basis (here Luther is especially to be applauded for 'ridding' the Church of Judaistic legalism). Second, if man is passive, with his will in bondage, how may he respond to God at all? Doesn't this mean that all are kept ignorant of God's arbitrary will and ways (as in Catholicism)? Not so, for Luther, while seeking to safeguard God's freedom and omnipotence, reminds his critics that they are not ignorant of God's 'will and way', for the incarnation assures us of both;

¹ We refer the reader to James Atkinson, *The Great Light* (Paternoster: 1968); Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1951); John R. Loeschen, *Wrestling with Luther* (Concordia: 1976); Gordon Rupp, *The Righteousness of God* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1953); and P. S. Watson, *Let God be God!* (Epworth: 1948), for introductions to the life and thought of Luther.

Christ is true God and true man, the question has now become, ‘do you have a knowledge of Christ?’

How can such a knowledge be obtained? By the proclamation of *das Wort Gottes*, the sole means of grace, from which the sacraments are only means in a secondary sense. And that Word declares the forgiving love, the justifying grace of God. *Sola scriptura* is now the means of *sola fide*.

The Church, made up of those who are *simil iustus et peccator*, receive grace and manifold gifts. Here grace and gifts must not be confused, to obscure the place of Christ, for ‘between grace and gifts there is this difference. Grace means properly God’s favour, or the goodwill God bears us, by which He is disposed to give us Christ and to pour into us the Holy Ghost, with the gifts.’¹ Among the gifts is faith, as is the Spirit, and the sacraments. Sacraments are effective as believed, not performed: to retain infant baptism he maintained that faith is directly bestowed in the ceremony (essentially baptismal regeneration). Within the Church the Christian man lives in freedom under the Spirit, instructed by the Word for service.

6:2 *John Calvin [Jean Cauvin (1509—1564)]*

Calvin, the brilliant Bible exegete (and quoits and bowls exponent)² from Geneva, had a particular concern for ‘order’. He affirmed that man, a creation of grace (existence is ‘good’) and not merely love, had integrity and was doubly gifted: naturally (‘healthy, wealthy, and . . .!’) and spiritually (faith, righteousness). His contingency on the Word evoked gratitude as he lived to God. This man has only one obligation to God, to correspond to the one Covenant of Grace (the Old and New Testaments are merely two forms of the one, thereby underlining Calvin’s view of a unified Bible). [Later the Federalists argued for a two-fold obligation and knowledge of God, since they held to two covenants.]

Created man is called to give account (Heb. 4:13) of himself, under grace; as he receives, not achieves life. Man is called to acknowledge God and the Word, with faith, obedience of faith, love and gratitude: he lives as he obeys (not because). But sin has dis-eased his life of rest, leisure. There is now a breach in man as he refuses to see and accept life as God’s gift by the Word. The created order has been dislocated, and perverted by sin. So, sin is dis-grace, infidelity, with his disobedience expressed as a vandal bent on anarchy; covetousness (*concupiscentia*), dys-functional (dis-ordered) life, and ingratitude. The sinner is left ignorant, guilty, deceived, and conscience renders him inexcusable.

Yet God’s purposes remain intact, His order is not withdrawn, even though it has

¹ See Martin Luther ‘Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, 1552’ in *The Works of Martin Luther* Vol. VI (Muhlenberg Press: 1932), page 450.

² See Percy A. Scholes, *The Puritans and Music* (Oxford: 1969), page 332ff., for Calvin’s sport and past-times. For an illuminating analysis of Puritan life-style, see Leland Ryken, *Worldly Saints* (Academie Books: 1986).

For an introduction to the life and thought of John Calvin, we refer the reader to Jean Cadier, *The Man God Mastered* (IVF: 1964); T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin* (J. M. Dent & Co.: 1975); *John Calvin*, ed. G. E. Duffield (Eerdmans: 1968); Ford Lewis Battles, *Analysis of the Institutes of the Christian Religion of John Calvin* (Baker: 1980); and Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Baker: 1980).

On the issues treated in this paper we refer the reader to Robert Doyle, ‘The Repentance in John Calvin’ in *God Who is Rich in Mercy*, ESSAYS PRESENTED TO D. B. KNOX, ed. P. T. O’Brien and D. Peterson (Lancer Books: 1986), pages 287–321; R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism* (Oxford: 1979); Holmes Rolston III, *John Calvin Versus the Westminster Confession* (John Knox: 1972); *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today*, ed. Alasdair I. C. Heron (St. Andrew Press: 1982); and to the work by M. Charles Bell, cited in footnote 1, page 46.

been forfeited by man. Here man knows both the natural and spiritual gifts disrupted, and the blessings he still receives are prostituted, perverted, in his ingratitude. And, while creation still objectively points man to God, even though this is not subjectively received (Rom. 1:18b–20).

In the face of ‘failed’ grace, God provides law, to bring man back to grace. Calvin insists that ‘law’ (and so legal relations) is always a secondary feature in the order of things. There is a law for Israel, yet the Gentiles are not without law (at least on the heart: cf. Rom. 2). In such a scheme, righteousness is that by which ‘believers are preserved, and are most tenderly [graciously] nourished.’¹ This is not equivalent to judgement, rather the return to order (a restoration). God’s concern is not primarily to ‘bring man to justice’, but to bring righteousness *to* man. In this context Calvin sees man having response-ability (cf. responsibility): this speaks of his obligation, that which binds him in relationships (it is primarily filial and familial, the forensic secondary).

If man is accountable, how may this response-ability be expressed? Calvin uses these terms, the human will (*voluntas*), and choice (*arbitrium* or *electio*) and while conceding man’s ability to make choices, argues that the power to choose is a gift of God. In fact, man’s desire for a free will (*liberum arbitrium*) is a vain hope to be free from God Himself. Man must therefore live either *under grace* or *in freedom*.

God remains responsible for creation, as the arena in which evil and sin could arise. The restoration to true order for creation—including man—is effected by the incarnation of the eternal Word-Son, His death and resurrection (as grace works *through* judgement), and endowment of His renewed life. This takes place by our union and participation in His vicarious humanity. The Spirit applies this ‘realised eschatology’ to us, in anticipation of our reaching the last day ‘with Christ’. Man, the recipient of the grace of Christ—which is not offered on a ‘take it or leave it basis’—is renewed, restored and reconciled, to again live by grace, and effect the works of grace. For, agreeing with Augustine, ‘not only is grace offered by the Lord, which by anyone’s free choice may be accepted or rejected; but it is this very grace which forms both choice and will in the heart, so that whatever good works then follow are the fruit and effect of grace; and it has no other will obeying it except the will that it has made.’²

So, Calvin has argued that God relates to both creation and redemption by grace. In his view this safeguards both the freedom of man and sovereignty of God (as Creator and Redeemer); grace as prevenient for creation’s renewal, as well as that for man; and grace as actual in Christ, the true Man (hence ‘any’ true man must be of grace, unless it is utterly alien to man’s constitution). Hence, for Calvin, the *ordo salutis* is ‘grace → lost in ingratitude (and ‘law’ in context of grace) → grace restored’.

Federal theology is post reformation, instigated by Ursinus (1534–83), Cocceius (1603–1669) and Turretin (1623–1687). As a system, it was first formulated by the Scot, Robert Rollock (1555–1599). Its basis was a duplex view of covenants, one of nature/works and a second of grace. The simple *ordo salutis* consisted of ‘law → broken law → grace.’

Within this, grace is irresistible (affirming the sovereignty of God in conversion and new birth) and sufficient (as a genuine offer to all Christians). Prevenient grace, for the Roman Catholics operated in baptized infants while for the Protestants it

¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, LIBRARY OF CHRISTIAN CLASSICS Vol. XX (Westminster: 1973), I:10:2, page 98.

² Calvin, *Institutes*, II:3:13, page 308.

denoted a secret work of God in the heart, prior to conversion. Common grace directed to man as a sinner: restrains from evil, enables to do ‘good’ and brings blessings to all men. Then special (spiritual or salvific) grace is effective for and in the elect.

Against the Roman Catholics, grace is personal, so sacraments are witnesses to, not the source nor containers of, grace. For, as the eternal (and incarnate) Word is the font of life and gifts (John 1:1ff.; Rom. 6:23), so the Word (spoken and written) is the font of sacraments.

The Word of God which creates the relationship between God and us is in content essentially the Word of grace. It is the Word of grace, so the Reformers taught, not although but because, precisely because, the Word judges us and sets us in our place as sinners. He calls them his and so he tells us that we belong legitimately, justly to him. This is our justification. He claims us, our faith and obedience. This is our sanctification. Both justification and sanctification are without contribution from us, without a preceding or subsequent ‘merit’, as the catchword of the Middle Ages called it. We always find ourselves known as sinners from head to toe. For us, as sinners, divine reconciliation is valid. And through this divine reconciliation we live as children of God by faith and not by sight; ‘and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.’¹

The Reformed views were opposed at the Synod of Dordt (with Jacob Arminius’ theology contra. the ‘Five Points of Calvinism’) in 1618: Reformed theology also lapsed into Protestant Orthodoxy, and Pietism.

§7. Post Reformation Protestantism

7:1 Wesley² [1703–1791]

For Wesley, God’s power is not separate from His justice and mercy. Man’s incapacity is that of a sleep, of dysfunctionality, like being a ‘stranger’ to Law. As recipient of the Spirit he experiences quickening and illumination, since the natural man is unable—by himself—to free himself and obey. He has completely forfeited the *imago dei* in its *moral* capacity: he retains an impaired natural and political ‘image’. Man is sinful through and through, with no knowledge of God, and powerless to turn. But, there is prevenient grace, given by God to all men.

In 1738, as a sequel to the ‘strange warming of my heart’ (his ‘conversion?’), Wesley rejected the Calvinist view of predestination, taking up the Arminian view. Acknowledging the moral bankruptcy and alienation of man in Adam, he affirmed the recovery of humanity in Christ, the second Adam. Arguing from Romans 8:32, he contended that grace is ‘free in all, and free for all’. The former excludes all justifying works. For, no man sins because he has no grace; rather, because he doesn’t use the grace already at his disposal. Saving grace is therefore free *for* all, since there is prior

¹ Karl Barth, *Theology and Church* (Harper & Row: 1962), pages 328–329.

² For a useful summary, see Colin Williams, *John Wesley’s Theology Today* (Epworth: 1960); Harold Lindström, *Wesley and Sanctification* (Epworth: 1961); see also the very helpful treatment in A. S. Wood, ‘The Contribution of John Wesley to the Theology of Grace’ in *Grace Unlimited*, Clark Pinnock, ed. (Bethany Fellowship: 1975), pages 209–222. This section of the paper is very dependent on Wood’s article.

Another ‘theologian of grace’ worthy of consideration, but beyond the scope of this paper, is the American revivalist Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758). For an introduction and survey of his life and thought see, Carl W. Bogue, *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace* (Mack Pub.: 1975); Conrad Cherry, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards: A Reappraisal* (Doubleday & Co.: 1966); Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: a New Biography* (Banner of Truth: 1987); and Harold Simonson, *Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart* (Eerdmans: 1974). See especially Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace* ed. and introduced by Paul Helm (James Clarke: 1971).

grace operative *in all*.

For Wesley atonement is universal (II Cor. 5:14–15; I John 2:2), that all *may* be saved, but not all *will* be saved. How are some damned by decree? The decree is one of grace, for God has one covenant, of grace. God's almighty power is that by which all things are possible, His grace is not irresistible, for there are those who have opposed. Moderate Calvinists concurred with him, as he argued that all those who believe are decreed to be conformed to the image of the Son. Election is twofold: (i) some events must occur due to divine appointment (i.e. Paul's commission to preach), and (ii) some are elect to eternal bliss (predestination is to be interpreted via justification). And who are these? Those that believe! Hence, God's covenant is eternal and conditional. On justification he claimed to agree with Calvin against the Calvinists, so that he could have a credible basis on which to preach the good news.

7:2 *John McLeod Campbell*¹ [1800–1872]

A Church of Scotland minister, deposed in 1831 after 5 years of service to the Rhu parish in Dunbartonshire, Campbell was accused of teaching universal atonement and offering assurance of faith.² With his pastoral setting a joyless and guilt-ridden church, Campbell felt compelled to reconsider the Federal Calvinism he and they had inherited, and return to the New Testament for guidance.

His diagnosis was that his people suffered under the burden of *legal*, and not *evangelical* religion: they heard the Gospel not as donation, but demand, as conditional grace. Sensing their own inadequacies and failures they believed themselves to be 'not good enough', and strived to receive Christ as a reward for obedience. This meant that the call to believe in Christ became an extra demand, and added duty, not the divinely provided means of fulfilling their duties. Campbell, however, had come to see that repentance is the response to grace, not its precondition.

Campbell had to redefine his thought, and so, pastoral praxis. He deduced that the God of the Federal Calvinists is One whose love is conditional, due to their view of 'covenant.' They held to two covenants (cf. Rutherford and Dickson, who held to a Threefold Covenant—of Works, Redemption, and Grace)³, one of Works, a second of Grace. God entered into a Works covenant with Adam, who was to obey the laws of creation, and thereby find eternal life. Since the Fall, God has elected a number from within reprobate humanity, and entered into a covenant of Grace with Christ for them. They are called by the Spirit, who employs the Word and sacraments (covenant seals).

Campbell rejected Federal Calvinism for at least four reasons. First, its confusion about the number and nature of covenants. Like Calvin, he reaffirmed that there is one covenant—of Grace. The Federalists (from *foedus*, meaning both covenant and contract) had also confused 'covenant', a theological term denoting unconditional

¹ See George M. Tuttle, *So Rich a Soil: John McLeod Campbell on Christian Atonement* (Hansel Press: 1986); M. Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Hansel Press: 1985); especially ch. 9 on John McLeod Campbell; and James B. Torrance, 'Covenant or Contract?' *Scottish Journal of Theology* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Feb. 1970), pages 51–76.

² Campbell documented his position in *The Nature of the Atonement* (Macmillan & Co.: 1878), originally published in 1856.

³ Oswald Allis comments that 'the relationship established in Eden has been properly called the covenant of works.' After the Fall, he continues, 'consequently, in the plan and purpose of God, the covenant of works was immediately followed by the covenant of grace' (page 97). See his article 'The Covenant of Works' in *Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. C. F. H. Henry (Holt, Rinehart & Winston: 1962), pages 96–102. Matthew Henry called the covenant of works the 'covenant of innocence'. More recently William Dumbrell, among others, has criticised Federal/Reformed theology, citing Charles Hodge and Herman Hoeksema as typifying Federalism's continued submerging of precise biblical exegesis in the interests of its own 'dogmatic' agenda: see Dumbrell, *Creation and Covenant* (Paternoster: 1984), page 44ff.

relations, with obligations not being its conditions, with ‘contract’, a legal term, understandably dependent on conditions. Second, Federalism was a reversion to Medieval theology with its spheres of nature and grace, necessitating the perfection of nature by grace. Third, its limited atonement reduced Christ’s mediatorial Work—that only considered in terms of a judicial contract, and overlooked His Person. Finally, with its focus on man’s obedience, it eclipsed Christ’s life and work for us, with the sacraments becoming seals of our obedience and repentance (Tertullian revisited!).

In the place of Federalism’s lack of assurance, concentration on anthropology, the forensic instead of filial, its arbitrary view of predestination, and its mainly retrospective (only justification, omitting prospective = sanctification) salvific action, Campbell recovered the Biblical truth of the unity of the Father and the Son in will and work, and the vicarious humanity of Christ (with Campbell’s contribution on Christ’s vicarious repentance), so providing his people the basis for *evangelical* repentance and religion. He had recovered the primacy of grace, and rescued his people from legalism.

§8. The Modern Church—Karl Barth (1886—1968)

The dominant motif in Barth’s theology is ‘God’s electing grace in the eternal and incarnate Son, Jesus Christ’: it is central to all doctrines and issues considered.¹ Jesus Christ is the incarnate grace of God, in the most comprehensive sense of the term. (While appreciating the Berkouwer’s recognition of the place of ‘grace’ in his theology, Barth was critical of the title of Berkouwer’s exposition and evaluation of his thought—*The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth* [Paternoster: 1956]—which suggests that grace is a ‘general principle’ rather than ‘governing person’). Barth has worked out the Reformational principle *sola gratia* more thoroughly (and exhaustively) than any other theologian. How did he come to this startling view of grace? His perception was that Jesus Christ as the eternal Word-Son and incarnate, yet crucified Lord is the presupposition for all, coming out of his careful Biblical studies, together with his personal and pastoral experience.

For Barth, Jesus Christ as eschatological Man, as Alpha and Omega of electing grace, the Word of God, is the key to the mystery of Creation: all (creation and anthropology) is surveyed from the vantage point of electing grace incarnate in Jesus Christ. There is one eternal decree (from eternity to eternity), the covenant of grace rather than love providing the ground or foundation of creation itself. That is, grace is the inner logic of creation, not merely its *telos*. Since grace is of the very will and way of God, it is so of man as the *imago dei*, and creation at large; hence, grace must not be seen as contingent on sin, a previously hidden divine reflex. For, ‘grace must come first, in order that sin may be manifest to us as sin, and death as death’², and sin is the contradiction of grace. Sin therefore comes under the judgement of grace.

But what is this ‘grace’ of which Barth speaks? How it is to be defined and employed within his thought? But before we can appreciate his contribution, Barth seeks to prepare us by dismissing what he considers defective views. Unlike the medieval nature vs. grace dichotomy (cf. the debate with Brunner about natural theology),

¹ For introductions and surveys of the life and thought of Karl Barth, we refer the reader to Geoffrey Bromiley, ‘Karl Barth’ in *Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology* ed. P. E. Hughes (Eerdmans: 1969), pages 27–62; idem. *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth* (Eerdmans: 1979); Colin Brown, *Karl Barth and the Christian Message* (Tyndale: 1967); Herbert Hartwell, *The Theology of Karl Barth: an Introduction* (Duckworth: 1964); and Thomas F. Torrance, *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Theology 1910–1931* (SCM: 1962).

² Karl Barth, *Credo* (Hodder & Stoughton: 1964), page 44.

Barth contrasts grace with *religion*, which to him epitomizes human rebellion and sin. Grace is therefore a *re-ligio*, a new binding of man to God, yet this is only possible in Jesus Christ, the eternal and incarnate Son.

Next, grace cannot be abstract or general principal, a detached supernatural or quasi-physical substance with magical powers to be infused into man. Nor can it be hypostatized as an independent element between God and the object of His grace: rather it is a mode of His very being, His self-conduct. Therefore he rejects the *analogia entis* of Roman Catholicism, replacing it with *analogia gratiae*, which is established by God's grace between God and man and through Jesus Christ, thereby enabling true knowledge of God within a real creaturely relation, reflection and conformity.¹

We may now come to his definition: grace may be defined as 'the inner being and self-conduct of God which distinguishes His doing directed towards the seeking and creating of fellowship by the fact that it is determined by His own free inclination, favour and benevolence, unconditioned by any merit or claim in the beloved, but also unhindered by any unworthiness or opposition in the latter—able, on the contrary, to overcome all unworthiness and opposition.'² It is summed up in the apostolic benediction—'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' (II Cor. 13:14), the construction being read as an objective, rather than subjective genitive: so, 'the grace *which is* our Lord Jesus Christ'.

Since this is so for Barth, there can be no distinction between the gift and the Giver: God makes Himself to be the Gift. Grace is always dynamic, renewing, self-giving. Paul's idea of a 'state of grace' in which we might stand (see Rom. 5:2; 6:14f.; 12:6) is foreign to Barth. For man as both creature and sinner is dependent on grace, to be able to share in the benefits of grace (there is no 'common grace').

If this grace is renewing, what does this mean for salvation? We should expect Barth's answer. All of God's works—including 'salvation'—are but expressions of the one work of grace in Jesus Christ. Barth is consistently Trinitarian, yet Christological. So, Jesus—as God's faithful covenant-partner—is the fulfilment from God's side, and man's, of reconciliation, 'the fulfilment of the covenant of grace'.³ This act resumes, restores and reaffirms communion as the original purpose of creation, with God's action in Jesus Christ as the means whereby the breach is finally bridged and healed. Now we experience reconciliation (so forgiveness and justification), and anticipate fullness of life and freedom, that is, redemption, with all creation.

Human freedom is located within Jesus Christ, so is the freedom of grace, under grace and for grace. Creaturely existence is to be joyfully dependent on grace in Jesus Christ, in every sphere of life. So, Jesus Christ, for Barth, is the ground and meaning of his view of the Church, as the locus of Jesus Christ's rule, as the sphere in which men live by grace: for 'there is no grace without the lordship and claim of grace.'⁴

Barth is consistent, even at the eschaton, for the final question to be put to man, standing before Jesus Christ as Judge on the day of the LORD is, 'did you live by grace or did you set up gods for yourself and perhaps want to become one yourself?'⁵ That not all have responded to grace remains a mystery—a 'possible impossibility'.

¹ Barth, having repudiated Liberal theology, rejects Roman Catholicism and historic Protestantism as being anthropocentric. Hence, he abandons the Roman Catholic view of 'analogy of being' as a non-Biblical category, and the Reformers' view of *sola fide*, as a poor reflection of a 'more Biblical' view of *solus Christus*.

² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (hereafter *CD*) II.1 ET (T. & T. Clark: 1957), page 353.

³ Karl Barth, *CD* IV.1, page 79.

⁴ Karl Barth, *CD* II.2, page 12.

⁵ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (SCM: 1958), page 152.

Conclusion

In drawing our study to a close, we must affirm that salvation is by grace through faith, with both God and man involved, that all grace is the grace of the Trinitarian God, and that in Christ we are both responsible, and response-able.

We must also beware of the dangers of any abuse of the ‘means of grace’, since the New Testament focus is on Christ as Mediator via the Word and Spirit. Dietrich Bonhoeffer has rightly alerted us to the danger of ‘cheap grace’. There are the dangers of synergism: salvation is totally of God, yet man accountable—what does freedom (yet neither determinism nor voluntarism) mean, for God, and man? How may we affirm the objective work of God in Christ, yet hold to the subjective responses in man? And what dangers do we face as we preach the Gospel of grace, as we proclaim that we are preclaimed, that acceptance of forgiveness is not equivalent to achievement?

Finally, we acknowledge the paradox is resolved in Christ, since in Him we see the congruity and coincidence of God’s will, human aspirations, grace and gratitude. We must hold a Biblical Christology, Pneumatology and Eschatology, as God works now to enable us to respond in Christ, by the Spirit. So, like—and with—the reformers, we may gladly witness that salvation is *sola fide*, *sola gratiae*, and *sola Christo*.



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Study Thirteen

Grace, Enmity & Friendship

(by Geoffrey Bingham)

Whilst God's love¹—*agape*—and the flow of this in the community of Christ, is of great wonder and is effectively dynamical, the human race—and no less the church—is confronted by the fact of enmity.² It figures enormously in the history of the human race, and it is vast and pervasive every day in the life of any person and of every society, beginning at the husband and wife, continuing in the family and being national and international in its expression. Without going into the matter of enmity between God and Man, and human beings who are one against the other, the following principles can be adduced from the Scriptures.

- (i) All enmity is primarily against God.
- (ii) All enmity proceeded primarily from the serpent.
- (iii) Human enmity against God is accompanied by guilt and proceeds from guilt. We are enemies of God through, or by, our wicked works. Job sacrificed daily for his children for, 'It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts'.
- (iv) The guilt is the state of death which human beings know in their relational death to God.
- (v) The lack of innocence—the presence of guilt—causes human beings to try to justify themselves by what they do. Humanity, though depraved, is still in the image of God, and has therefore the tension of living according to the image, yet wills to live against it.
- (vi) Enmity arises in the conflict of persons seeking to prove (justify) themselves. All humanity is in competition—one with another—in the drive to prove themselves. This requires (a) developing a secure situation in which to live, (b) rising higher than the others with whom one is necessarily in competition.
- (vii) Failure to achieve may weaken the will to succeed, but the bitterness of being a failure, or not succeeding will deepen the animosity towards the Creator, and others. This is a passive sort of enmity, but quite dangerous.
- (viii) God's affirmation of men and women of faith—His justifying them—is resented by those without faith towards God. Hence the rise of opposition, persecution and overt anger and enmity.

¹ For NCPI materials on love see *Where I Love I Live; Constraining Love; Twice Conquering Love; Living in Faith, Hope and Love; All Things are Yours*; as also Monday Morning Pastors' Study Group Series.

² See Pastors' Study Group 4/5/92, 'Enmity—Divine, Celestial and Terrestrial' for an extended treatise on the matter of enmity. See also *The Splendour of Holiness* (NCPI, 1985), pp. 93–113, for an exposition of Man's enemies, and their defeat.

Out of Hate and Into Love and Friendship With God and Man—by Grace

A reading of Titus 2:11—3:7 is sufficient to show us that all humanity—because of the Fall—was ‘hating and hateful’ until the event which Paul described as ‘the grace of God has appeared’, and ‘when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared’, whilst John (1:14) wrote, ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.’

The Biblical Nature of Friendship

(i) Jesus Teaches Friendship in the N.T.—I In John 15:12–17 there are three things, (a) a friend lays down his life for his friend, (b) friends inform friends as to what they are doing, (c) friends do what the friend demands; ‘(a)’ and ‘(b)’ lead to (c), the friends share in what is the project—what is to happen.

(ii) In the O.T. There are Friends of God. (a) *Abraham*, II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; (b) *Moses*, Exodus 33:11; (c) *Israel*, Jeremiah 3:4; Isaiah 5:1f. The three criteria for friendship are fulfilled with Abraham (cf. Gen. 18:17–19), and Moses (cf. Exod. 33:11; Num. 12:6–7). In particular prophecy tells the friends what God—as their Friend is doing, in which he is involving them. (d) *Job* knew God’s friendship—see Job 29:1ff.

(iii) Human Friendship. Deuteronomy 13:6 speaks of ‘your friend who is as your soul’—‘the friend with whom you share your life’ (*JB*). Proverbs 18:24 contrasts false and true friends, ‘There are friends who pretend to be friends, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother’. Koheleth (Eccles. 4:9) has a comment on the power of friendship. Much is spoken of friendship in Proverbs, ‘Your friend and your father’s friend do not forsake.’ ‘Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy’, tells us a lot (27:6, 10). David calls a curse upon himself ‘if I have requited my friend with evil’, for one ‘does no evil to his friend’ (Ps. 7:4; 15:3). Proverbs 17:17 says, ‘A friend loves at all times, and kinsfolk are born to share adversity’. For all the criticisms that are made of Job’s friends they did stick with him throughout all his trials—albeit they were of no great comfort theologically!

(iv) Examples of Human Friendship are (a) *David and Jonathan*, ‘And when he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David and Jonathan loved him as his own soul’ (cf. Deut. 13:7). After the death of Jonathan we have David’s beautiful lament (II Sam. 1:25–26). (b) *The story of Ruth and Naomi* is no less beautiful. Ruth’s words to Naomi show this (Ruth 1:16–17).

Examples in the New Testament are also many. There is no doubt that Jesus loved Lazarus with a special warmth, that there was a disciple whom he loved in a special way, and the apostles—in particular Paul, John and Peter—show great warmth and affection towards their converts.

(v) Jesus Teaches Friendship in the N.T.—II (a) He also teaches us in Luke 11 the true nature of friendship in the parable of the friend who came at midnight. For that friend the host-friend was prepared to go to his neighbour-friend and ask for food, and this at a most inconvenient time. It is, of course, telling us that God is greater than any earthly friend. If a human friend will be inconvenienced, how much more will God be Friend to the needy. (b) Jesus taught that God was ‘the friend of sinners’ by himself sitting and eating with them (Luke 15:2). In the story of the lost coin and the lost sheep

the friends of the owners come and rejoice—rejoicing is one of the marks of friendship. In the story of the lost son the father is friend to his son, and on his return makes merry for him, but the elder brother is enemy and does not rejoice, but he had wanted—so he said—‘to make merry with *my* friends.’ John the Baptist saw himself as ‘the friend of the bridegroom’ and as one who ‘rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice’.

(vi) Pentecost and Friendship. Chapters 2 and 4 of Acts show us the utter oneness of the community. It is here we come to the crux of the matter. The key to it lies in Acts 4:23, ‘When they were released [from the judgement of the Sanhedrin] they went *to their friends* and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them’. This verse establishes the fact that the people of the new community were *the friends* of the apostles, as they were to the members of the community. The coming of the Holy Spirit meant, of course, that every baptized person was forgiven all sins and received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hence a new community arose in which all were friends, i.e. *they parted themselves from the ‘crooked generation’* (2:40) and so could not be ‘friends of the world’ (cf. James 4:4), they were ‘*attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes*’, and ‘they partook of food with glad and generous hearts’, they were ‘*of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common*’. So, ‘Distribution was made to every man as he had need’. Hospitality was the new order of friendship.

(vii) Friendship and Covenant. In Psalm 25:14 the RSV and NRSV have, ‘The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant’. We can draw the conclusion that friendship, confidences and the sharing of secrets (cf. Deut. 29:29) belongs within the matter of covenant. In Deuteronomy 13:6, 7 the covenant with God overrides any personal covenant of friendship with another. Personal covenant is again revealed in Psalm 55:20, ‘My companion stretched out his hand against his friends, he violated his covenant’. Proverbs 2:17 points to the highest of covenants when it speaks of ‘the loose woman’ who ‘forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God’ (NRSV, ‘sacred covenant’). Properly seen, this means that the woman has forsaken her marriage partner, and also the covenant with God who said, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery,’ hence the statement in Malachi 2:14 (see context).

(viii) Friendship Within hierarchy. I am convinced that there is no true hierarchy which lacks friendship, no true friendship which lacks hierarchy. We have ontological hierarchy which of necessity must be a relational unit of love—*agape*. Today we may speak—in a loose sense—of hierarchies which exist as properly as possible under grace. In a hierarchy such as I Corinthians 11:3 we must see that although there appears to be an ascending–descending order, yet authority being love—and only love—there is no authoritarian colour to true hierarchy. **Each one within the hierarchy is the friend of the others—all others simultaneously.** Whilst Abraham and Moses—and others—were friends of God they are also addressed as ‘servants’. Within the friendship of two there is a form of hierarchy. ‘You are my friends if you do whatever I command you’, tells us that at any given moment one may command the other. Jesus said the servant does not know what his master is doing and this is true, but the servant who is the friend of the master—the master being friend to him—does know what his master is doing, and is glad to be in the doing of it, even as a servant. Jesus is certainly the suffering servant of both God and Man, and is friend to both.

No wonder John can write (III John 15), ‘Peace be to you. The friends greet you. Greet the friends every one of them.’

Study Fourteen

Grace & Worship

(by Trevor Faggotter)

The Grace of Worship

Romans 12:1–2 (Rom. 9:14–18; 11:25–36). We have no claim on God’s grace, but rather, mercy is our confident plea. God’s judgements are unsearchable and His ways inscrutable. He is sovereign and decides without the assistance of counsellors. We will never worship God until we understand how much we are indebted to His mercy. ‘*Tis mercy all, immense and free!*’ (C. Wesley). We must surely enjoy the mystery of God’s love and grace for sinners:

God can be called merciful when He has mercy but may not be called ‘unmerciful’ if He does not have mercy (G. C. Bingham).

When Man was created he had no need of grace. What Man was made to be by God did not require him to live in grace (G. C. Bingham).

Man, by nature of the case, is dependent upon God for his being, but he is given his life by nature and not by grace (G. C. Bingham).

Everyone is a worshipper by *nature* (Gen. 1:28), created to serve God, Man and creation (Gen. 2:15). We may assume there was a special time of worship *at the time of the evening breeze* (Gen. 3:8, *NEB*). When, as people restored by His mercy, we see that all God’s works in heaven and on earth praise Him (Ps. 19; 66:4; 76:10; Rev. 5:11–13), then we begin to glimpse the irrationality of sin, and the horror and tragedy of the Fall (Rom. 1:21–25).

To deny God worship, and to seek for oneself that which only properly belongs to Him, is evil. It is this saga which is at work in history (Ezek. 28; Matt. 4:9), and sadly within the human heart (Jer 17:9; Mark 7:20f.).

Worship is at the centre of everything. We are diverted if we merely think of worship as one of the numerous activities in a range of Christian options. It is at the altar of God that we either live out our lives with integrity or not. If we are out with our worship, we will be out with everything else (D. Meatheringham).

True worship is given to the righteous by grace, and by faith that which is offered to God is acceptable to Him (Gen. 4:1f.; Heb. 11:4; I John 3:11–12).

True worship belongs to Israel (Rom. 9:4) as God’s elect, yet they frequently succumbed to the false worship (Exod. 32). It was a great occasion when Moses was given a revelation of God’s grace (Exod. 33:19; 34:6–8), and when the Father of Covenant mercy (Exod. 34:10–16) yet again restored Israel to true worship. The security of Covenant grace evokes rich worship.

The Father seeks us (John 4:23; Gen. 4:26), and reveals Himself to us (Matt. 11:25–27), that we may worship Him; He comes in the midst of our human sinfulness

and redeems us. In the Cross the Son and the Spirit reveal the Father (John 14:9; 16:8f.; 17:3). (See *Christ's Cross Over Man's Abyss*, G. C. Bingham, p. 101.) The Father initiates and participates in the work of the Cross. The taking away of guilt, the bearing of sin, and the experience of the love of the Father overcomes the rebel heart (Isa. 6:1–11; John 9:38; Matt. 28:9). *** We worship the Father (Q. In our service and worship as Pastors, are we 'ardent' students of Pateriology?). 'O come to the Father . . .'

The Grace That is Known in Worship

Q. 'What is central to worship?' It is not 'forms' (though they are significant), but the presence of the Triune God who graces us that we may worship Him in spirit and in truth (Heb. 6:20; 8:6; 7:25, 13:15). *** Our worship is a participation in *the faithfulness of the Son of God* (Gal. 2:20).

The two aspects of (a) revelation, and (b) response are inseparable. Luther: '*to know God is to worship Him*'. P. D. Manson says: '*The shortest route to deeper and richer worship is a clearer theology*' (*The New Dictionary of Theology*, p. 730).

(a) Revelation:

In worship the Triune God is present, takes the initiative and reveals Himself. In His Church, Christ is the One True *Leitourgos*—the Leader of our worship (cf. Heb. 8:6; Rom. 15:16–17). Our priestly service is 'in' Christ.

The essence of worship is:

the descent to man of the Father's love in the Word, and the ascent to the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit of, the filial response to that love, fulfilled by the Incarnate Word in the humanity which He took, which is also our humanity, so that the response is ours as well as His (W. Nicholls, *Jacob's Ladder: The Meaning of Worship*, p. 66).

We can know God only if he brings us into communion with him in the inner relations of his own being as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (T. F. Torrance *The Trinitarian Faith*, p. 54).

the Gospel of the reconciliation of man with God has to be understood not just in terms of God's mighty act of salvation upon our humanity, but in terms of its actualisation within the depths of our human existence in the perfecting and presenting in and through Jesus of our response in faith and obedience, in love and worship, to God the Father. For us to share in the worship of the Father through, with and in Jesus Christ, belongs to the essence of our reconciliation to God, and is of the very substance of the Gospel (Torrance, p. 4).

(b) Response:

Amen. And yes we are participants, and yes, amazingly we do love and adore and serve God! (I John 4:19; Rom. 5:5; II Cor. 4:1).

When Are You Going to Tell Us How to Do It?

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by his holiness; the nourishment of mind with his truth; the purifying of imagination by his beauty; the opening of the heart to his love; the surrender of will to his purpose—and all this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin (W. Temple, *Readings in John's Gospel I–XII*, p. 68).

The Means of Grace

God's creative Word (Isa. 55:11) is paramount, and determines all that occurs in worship. I Thessalonians 5:16–26 gives 'headings of a Church service' from the early Church. In O.T and N.T. worship and service are synonymous. Our worship *is* our everyday life—everything the body does (Rom. 12:1). All our worshipping life (all sacred, no secular) God graciously moves toward us to do us good.

* **Sunday** is a special point of concentrated worship for the community of faith, where Christ is present, takes the initiative, and graces us with the Word, the Spirit, the gift of prayer and the Sacraments of the Living Lord. These means of grace all enliven, enlighten and enable worship. Note: '*Means of grace*' does not mean '*means by which we get grace*', but '*the means grace uses to grace us*' (G. C. Bingham). It is a gathering where *the work* of the People of God is *accomplished*.

* **Methodists** had a whole range of means of grace—*love-feasts, covenants, society classes, hymns—in addition to the limited range of the Prayer-book.*

* In Calvin's 55 year lifetime he preached more than 3,000 sermons. It was the means of grace above all others by which he expected God to transform Geneva.

* In this, knowing the Jesus of the Gospels and learning the reality of justification are means grace uses to grace us.

* **For Pastors:** Visitation (Matt. 25:39), reading and research (Col. 3:16) are means by which God uses to grace us and his people; Calvin was a theologian who wrote the Institutes in order to be a Pastor to his people!

* **For the work of the people,** liturgy should: (i) have biblical and theological integrity, (ii) be reasonable 'intelligible' worship—not only correct but understood, (iii) be for edification (I Cor. 14:26), and (iv) have simplicity (Calvin).

* Our offering is acceptable by grace! Therefore we can genuinely say: '*The hymns were poorly sung, but the worship was good*'. 'The real test of our worship of God is the way we give honour to men and women' (G. C. Bingham), neighbour (Rom. 12:8), as means of grace!

Romans 12:1–2, Paul makes his appeal for the offering of the totality of our being in worship. *And the New Covenant made by God for us in Christ demands the joyful, grateful, loving 'Amen' of the whole person—which worship is.* As those constrained by covenant mercy, we are exhorted to have our mind continually transformed that we may know the will of God and do it.

'*Christian worship is the most momentous, the most urgent, the most glorious action that can take place in human life*' (Barth). It is the approaching goal of history (Rev. 21:22; II Peter 1:4).

Study Fifteen

The Grace of the Sacraments—II

(by Deane Meatheringham)

We have already noted that the sacraments are an enactment of the whole Gospel. The vehicle by which the once for all act of the Cross is enacted by the living Christ in his Church. Christ's act of atonement, effected for ever through his sacrifice, is shown forth and made over to us. Such a deed is the act of God's grace.

1. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the Prescribed Way of Human Response

In the history of Israel during periods of covenantal disobedience, it is recorded that 'every man did what was right in his own eyes'. The worship of the covenant people was a gift which Yahweh gave them, a gift derived from the true relationship of God with his people (Heb. 8:4–5; cf. Exod. 15:17; 25:40; I Kings 8:24). Israel was given the liturgy as a prescribed way of response. It was divinely appointed and not consensually popular.

With the superseding of the old order with its priestly service for the New Covenant headed by Christ's High Priestly ministry, the two liturgically prescribed responses are baptism and the Lord's Supper. These replace circumcision and the Passover (Heb. 7:12, 18, 24f.; 8:1–2).

Our response of repentance and faith is drawn from us by the constraining love of Christ. God expects this obedient response. Baptism is never the infusion of a commodity. Baptism seals what the Word has generated. It is the gift in which Christ meets us in personal action, drawing us out of ourselves into himself. Thus faith is not in ourselves but in the justifying work of Christ. In baptism there comes the release from the slavery of sin. In accepting our condemnation through our death with Christ, the prison door is opened. The new life in the Triune Name brings home the great eternal security we have in Christ. Baptism now opens us so that the Word of promise has its full effect (Rom. 6:1–11; Col. 2:11ff.).

The point we are making is that the testimony of our baptism tells us that we are not our own but we are Christ's. It is Christ who has met us, enabling us in baptism to respond in covenant obedience.

In a similar way the Lord's Supper is the sacrament of our continuous participation in Christ—in all that he has done for us and continues to do for us. The Supper is a gift of grace and our involvement in that grace. In the Eucharist we participate intimately in Christ's body and blood, in his sacrifice, in his obedience, in his humanity, and in him we worship in the presence of God's majesty.

In baptism we are sealed to the truth that our old egotistical humanity has been crucified and renounced, and that we have put on Christ. And in the Supper we continue to live not out of ourselves, but out of Christ.

2. The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving

This point is linked with the previous one. Who offers sacrifice in the Lord's Supper? The answer is that as the Gospel is Christ, it is Christ who has offered himself up once for all for our sins, and in the Supper we share in the benefits of his passion. Where the grace of the Gospel has been sent to the archives the modern publications speak of our sacrifices.

Luther has this to say of those who wish to offer bread and wine to God as the sacrifice of Christ:

Here standeth a wretched brainless man at an altar and like a fool asketh that he may make an acceptable, a holy and untouched sacrifice when he hath nothing but a morsel of bread and a sip of wine . . . Darest thou, a man, sinful and worm's meat, stand forth in the sight of God's majesty and play the fool with a piece of bread and a little wine (M. Luther, quoted in *The Lord's Supper From Wycliffe to Cranmer*, D. B. Knox, Paternoster, 1983, p. 56).

The thanksgiving is Christ's. This was the nature of his sacrifice wherein he gives praise to God for the redemption bound up in God's covenant grace. In Christ we have an altar (Heb. 13:10) which is Christ's sacrifice, and it is through him that we offer the praise or sacrifice of our thanksgiving and humble obedience (Heb. 13:11–16). In the sacrament we are in the Mediator who is one with us and one with God.

3. Regaining of Confidence For Those Who Are Dispirited

It would seem to me that God's people lose confidence when they discover some sin in themselves. Now they wonder if they are truly Christian, and even if they ever were Christian. In this state we will revert to law which will only add to our condemnation.

Here the Pastor may take a person back to their baptism, enabling them to see it first as an objective act of Christ in which all sin was justified and all filthiness purged. Let them see that Christ is greater than their sin, and that in baptism what we acknowledge is that it is all Christ's enactment *for* them. Let them recall God's seal in this. This may be what is called 'Creeping back under your baptism'.

Likewise the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Gospel through the Word of promise, the manual acts and the presence of Christ who is the Host of the meal (I Cor. 11:26). Again we believe the action of Christ conveyed in the meal is objective, just as in the preaching of the Word, and that neither can be ineffectual. The Pastoral proclamation of grace, the warmth of absolution, the freedom of confession, linked in with the Saviour who eats and drinks with sinners, restores confidence.

The sacraments are essential for the health of the Church for they give expression to elements of the Gospel which would be stifled if repressed, or if repressed distract the people of God to substitute therapies which grow out of proportion.

4. The Officiating Elders

- (i) As the sacraments proclaim and seal the nature of the Gospel, the Pastor's life in the Gospel as a justified man who loves God, bears witness with the sacraments.
- (ii) While each church seems to have its own domestic protocol, or house manners for celebrating the sacraments, it is a pity if the elders lose the sense of occasion.

Extra:

Don't rush the meal. No activity is as intimate and bonding as a meal. We are eating and drinking with God in the fellowship of his people (I Cor. 10:17f.). The liturgy and preaching should naturally lead into the lifting up of hearts, the thanksgiving and personal distribution of the bread and wine. As true praise comes from the Spirit, so too does quietness.

Another extra:

We may need to graciously welcome those who feel unworthy to come to the Table, as well as gently warn those who ignorantly treat the sacrament as a frivolous affair (I Cor. 11:27ff.).

And another:

Beware of liturgies which chiefly produce giddiness, or are so over dependant upon ritual that their purpose is lost. Get to the heart of the matter.

- (iii) 'May it not be that in the fervour of our protest against sacerdotalism and a merely mechanical view of religion (a protest that was divinely inspired and has been abundantly justified by its works), we have allowed our iconoclasm to carry us too far, and as a result we have attached too light a value to ordinances which to other Christians have been not merely "the medicine of immortality and the antidote against corruption", as Ignatius put it, but the mainstay of the faith of the soul in the life that now is' (P. T. Forsyth, *The Church and the Sacraments*, Independent Pr., 1947, p. 166).

Study Sixteen
Grace in Strength & Weakness
(by Grant Thorpe)

The Necessity of Strength

Numerous stories in Scripture and the obvious necessities of our present work make it clear that living in the grace of God and making it known, are not done by those who parade their weaknesses and glory in their ineptitude. Such maudlin focus may be an attempt to escape the obvious need to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The Lord remonstrated with Moses for such contrivance (Exod. 4:13–14). Joshua was exhorted to be strong and courageous (Josh. 1); the second exodus was accomplished in the same spirit (Ezra 7:28; Neh. 2:18; 6:9); our fore-fathers are those who won strength out of weakness (Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:34); the church moves forward as its people are made strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10); and, to that end, weak knees must be strengthened (Heb. 12:12; Rev. 3:2).

This means not fainting in the day of adversity (Prov. 24:10), and for this purpose, we should pray so as not to faint (Isa. 40:31). Our heart, soul, mind and strength are needed for the service of God (Mark 12:30).

Human Strength

However, the Scripture has no time for the vaunting of human strength (Ps. 33:16; 147:10), and little commendation of it at all (but see Prov. 20:29; 24:5). While God has respect for the possible accomplishments of human strength and ingenuity (Gen. 11), he makes sport of those who think they have independent means (Ps. 2) and strongly reproveth his people for imbibing this spirit of Babel (Jer. 17:5–6).

Strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:10)

True strength for living is ‘in the Lord’. Or, even more pointedly, the Lord is our strength. This was frequently the cry of Israel’s true worshippers (Ps. 20:6; 22:9, 19; 27:1; 54:1; 71:16; etc.; Isa. 12:2; 45:24; Jer. 16:19). Our strength is that God comes to our side to help us (Isa. 41:10).

In the New Testament, Paul exhorts us to know this strength which is God being present to us in his grace (Col. 1:11; Phil. 4:13; II Tim. 4:17). This is nothing other than the working of his love in us (Eph. 3:16).

The Change From Human to Godly Strength

To know these things is not necessarily to be aware of what strengths we are dependent on in our living and work. The apostle Peter needed to be made aware of his false (egotistical, self-justifying) trust in himself. This happened under the watchful tutelage of Christ himself—so that his faith was preserved intact during and after the revelation (Luke 22:31–34; John 13:36–38). When he was converted, he could strengthen his brethren.

Conventional religion (and especially if it does not differ from the conventions of the society of which it is a part) may be as much a fortress for the defence and establishment of human independence as ever Babel was. Those who rely on conventional ritual (Jewish in this context) for the building up of their lives, ought to turn to Christ and be built up by grace (Heb. 13:9). This is the ministry we need to have—the ministry which arises, not from strength but from weakness—that knows the dependency of being a creature and the frailty of being a sinner and is converted from self-trust by the grace of God.

Nature of Our Weakness

It is given to us to continue to feel our weaknesses. We are instructed to be aware of them, and even to be grateful for them. Paul does not identify the peril which led to his being ‘unbearably crushed’ in Asia, but he understood its purpose: ‘to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead’ (II Cor. 1:8–10).

For completeness, the N.T. references to ‘weakness’ are listed. They refer to numerous conditions—physical and social, moral and spiritual, relational and vocational:

being in the body (I Cor. 15:43);

being the recipient of aid (Acts 20:35);

being of little account in the world (I Cor. 1:27);

needing protection (I Cor. 12:22; I Pet. 3:7);

being unwell (I Cor. 11:30);

being unable to reconcile ourselves to God (Rom. 5:6);

susceptibility to temptation (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 4:15; 5:2; 7:28);

being unsteady in faith or conscience (Rom. 15:1; with 14:1; I Cor. 8:7–11);

having the love which takes a non-assertive position (I Cor. 4:10; II Cor. 11:21), particularly towards a person with a weak conscience (I Cor. 9:22), or who is weak for any other reason (II Cor. 11:29; also 10:10);

not understanding how to pray (Rom. 8:26);

standing before unbelievers with only the gospel and the necessity to proclaim it (I Cor. 2:1–3, with II Cor. 5:11).

Living in the Weakness

It is our having been found to be weak—particularly in areas where God’s call and commands suggest we should have been strong—which alert us to the need for reliance on God’s grace and mercy. Paul never forgot his days of culpable ignorance (I Tim. 1:15–16; I Cor. 15:9).

The desire to be strong is never far away. The Psalmist felt the pangs of comparison with the arrogant and ‘almost stumbled’ (Ps. 73:4–9). He chose instead to know God as the strength of his heart and his portion for ever (v. 26).

In the days of Israel’s restoration, God proclaimed that their prospering was by his Spirit (Zech. 4:6).

Our proclamation will give us no kudos (I Cor. 1:21–25). In fact, we should shun the pursuit of power, and rather, seek the power of those we help (II Cor. 13:4). This is the action and power of love.

Ministry Effective in Weakness

We are to help the weak (I Thess. 5:14).

*‘Help’ means to hold to a truth or to be closely attached to a person. So here, the verb must mean to support or strengthen by standing alongside the weak and helping them to shoulder their burdens (so Howard Marshall in *I & II Corinthians* [NCB], pp. 151f.).*

With the background of knowing our weakness, we are kept in the knowledge of how things are with God’s grace and may truly represent it to others—who may be waiting to see it in us!

Compare with comment of Manning Clark re strength and now weakness of the church.

In such a case, we are strong (II Cor. 11:30—12:10). Christ was strong in his weakness and it is this we share (II Cor. 13:3–9). God’s weakness is stronger than our strength (I Cor. 1:25).

Study Seventeen

The Triumph of Grace

(by Geoffrey Bingham)

God's Triumph of Grace Over Man for Man—In Justification

The Fall brought Man into enmity with God¹, and placed Man in the midst of enemies that are against him. The prime enemy is the idolatry of things. Romans 1:18–32 is the *locus classicus* of this. He must devise a godliness that meets his own inward consciousness of what ought to be and what he ought to be. Thus God is his enemy and with God's law, God's wrath, and death which comes from sin. Because Man's conscience is in himself² he is unable to see and hear what is required of him. He assumes law is the way of climbing upward, or maintaining his high plane of achieved righteousness. The Devil constituted himself the enemy of God (Gen. 3:14–15; cf. Rev. 12:9), and thus of Man as the image of God. Hence Man's enemies are Satan, the world system of that evil ruler, the principalities and powers, and the world-principle of total egotism.

God's way of triumphing over all His enemies, and the enemies of Man—for Man, in grace—is the work of the Cross and the Resurrection, namely the justification of the ungodly (Rom. 4:25). God's first triumph over Man's conscience is destroying its drive to justify itself by its legal—dead—works. The very law which Man uses to climb to his righteousness actually slays him (Gal. 2:19; Rom. 7:4). The judgement of law is upon sin and so is called 'the curse of the law', i.e. the death-dealing action of law. Hence 'by the works of the law shall no man be justified' (Gal. 2:16). In fact Galatians 2:17 says that Jews who sought to be justified in Christ, first had to discover they were sinners. There could be no liberation from law—death until one recognized that his 'conscience of law' was indeed sinful and full of dead—legal—works. Thus Hebrews 9:14 says the purification of these dead works—cf. Romans 3:24–31—is consonant with the Christ having taken the death-curse of the law and so the wrath of it. This is also indicated in Colossians 2:14–15 where the ordinances of the law which are against Man are nailed to Christ's Cross. As in Hebrews 2:14–15, so in Colossians 2:14–15 (cf. Gal. 6:10), the Satanic system is defeated. This system which with sin (Rom. 7:9–11) seeks a righteousness and a holiness by self-effort, is thus crippled and paralysed. Grace delivers Man from the whole complex of enemies. Primarily Man is saved from himself by the objective work of the Cross but not without being involved in that Cross by God in Christ. Galatians 2:19–20; 5:24; 6:10 (cf. II Cor. 5:14–15) shows us Christ was not only Man's substitute, and his representative, but Man was co-crucified in order that he might be personally delivered from all things of sin and

¹ See Rom. 5:12–21; 1:30; 5:10; Col. 1:19ff. When sin and death entered, Man hated God, but there have always been men and women of faith as Heb. 11:3ff., and I John 3:10–11 show.

² In Rom. 9:1 Paul speaks of his conscience as being, virtually 'in the Holy Spirit', and the writer of Hebrews speaks of the conscience being purged from dead works, and thus is in the matter of worshipping and serving the living God. This conscience is purified of legal thinking and legal works—law as a way of salvation and holiness.

enmity. Romans 3:24 show it was primarily grace which triumphed over Man for Man, and that Man must receive this act of grace by faith. Such faith means his faith in obeying the works of his conscience is thus made empty, null and void.

The Grace of Christ and of God

The salutations in the Epistles make it clear there is no ‘grace of God’ without God, and no ‘grace of Christ’ without Christ. In fact grace is God in action, and is Christ in action. Grace is not a commodity, nor a power working on its own, nor can it be abstracted from the Father and/or the Son and be utilized in the interests of salvation and holiness. At no point is grace an immanent power to be utilized by a person so that he can go the way of law and obtain, or even sustain and maintain justification. Nor is it God’s infused power working to get Man to obey law, as such.

Justification an Eschatological Event

By this we mean a ‘once for all crisis’ effected by God that sets its object in salvation and is irreversible. Paul can rightly speak of ‘the hope of justification’ (Gal. 5:6), for its outcome in the redemption of the body and glorification, is based on present acquittal from judgement, and this acquittal is invariable.

God’s Triumph of Grace Over Man for Man in Sanctification

In Study 9 we saw ‘The Grace of Holiness’ and that as justification is by faith, so is sanctification (I Pet. 1:2; I Cor. 6:11; Acts 15:9; 26:18), for since justification is firstly the movement of grace (Rom. 3:24) requiring faith to appropriate it, so is sanctification of grace, requiring faith to appropriate it. What we have to see—especially as it is set out in Romans chapters 6–8—is that whilst justification is certainly forensic, yet it is not *only* forensic. If it is not forensic then the heart and conscience of Man is always troubled. Because it is forensic then Man is acquitted from the guilt of law, the guilt of sin, and is set free from their burden. This, in itself, is a magnificent result of the work of the Cross. Never again will law have reason to accuse justified Man, and for that matter no other enemy can effectively accuse. Yet when Man is dead to law as a condemnatory element, he may be tempted, then, to seize upon law as a means of maintaining justification, or of advancing to what he would think to be sanctification. In that case he would be back where he was before. Romans 6:1–14 shows that justified Man is freed from sin, meaning ‘justified from its penalty’. This means he is free from death because in Christ he has died his penal death, and in Christ has been raised from that state of death. Sin has lost its power since sin’s power (*dunamis*) lies in guilt of sin (Rom. 6:10–14; I Cor. 15:55–56). What we must keep in mind is the rush of love—from grace—into the heart of the justified (Rom. 5:5ff.; I John 4:10, 19), those who are forgiven all sins, and the great liberating power of absolute purification (I Cor. 6:11; I Pet. 1:22; Heb. 9:14; 10:22).

Yet that is not all. His death and resurrection happened in Christ (in baptism) and so there was co-death, co-resurrection, and now there is co-living (Gal. 2:20). Through the Holy Spirit all these events are dynamical, and Christ indwells by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 3:16; Rom. 8:9–11; II Cor. 1:22; II Tim. 1:14; cf. Ezek. 36:24–28), so that all the grace of his death and resurrection remain powerful for us, in Christ’s person, and in the Spirit who is the Spirit of the Son, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Jesus and the

Spirit of the Lord—all in one! In one way of speaking we say the Spirit effects *within* us what Christ has effected *for* us in his death and resurrection. This is seen in Romans 8:1–3. Of course it is God Who is ‘the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God had made our wisdom, our righteousness, sanctification and redemption’. Galatians 2:20 brings this out clearly. We are not only killed by the law in co-crucifixion with Christ, and raised with him in co-resurrection, but we have ‘co-living’ with Christ by faith in him, continually.

No study of the grace of sanctification would be complete without Titus 2:11–14—a passage which shows us that the grace which justifies (i.e. of the Father and the Son, by the Spirit), is the grace which leads into the practical elements of daily holy living. This should be compared with I Timothy 1:8–11 which should warn us against adverting to the tyranny of law.

God’s Eschatological Triumph of Grace for Man in Glorification

We saw in previous Studies that it is grace from before the foundation of the world which called us into holiness (I Pet. 1:2; Eph. 1:3) and which determined that eschatologically we would be ‘to the praise of the glory of his grace’ (Eph. 1:6–8; 2:6–10; II Tim. 1:9–10). I Peter 1:13–21 speaks of present hope as a dynamic which assists us in daily living in sanctification. In verse 13 he says, ‘Therefore gird up your minds, be sober, set your hope fully upon the grace that is coming to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.’ As I Corinthians 2:6–10 indicates, there is a coming of glorification which is beyond description, but I John 3:1–3 (cf. II Cor. 3:18; 4:16–18) with I Peter 1:13, assure us that this eschatological or teleological grace will be wonderfully transforming for us. Now ‘we see as in a glass, darkly’, but then it will be ‘face to face’. This will be the triumph of grace when all are conformed into the image of His Son, and enter into ‘the glory of the liberation of the children of God’, and wholly ‘partake of the Divine nature’ and are one with Him in the Triune Godhead—the ultimate of grace.