

a brief history of deviant calvinism

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introduction

The subject of this paper is the Reformed (or not so Reformed as the case may be) doctrine of the atonement. As with my previous papers on this topic it is my contention that in regards to the doctrine of the atonement, this doctrine underwent some serious modifications in the years subsequent to Calvin. It is my contention that theologians, specifically Theodore Beza, John Owen and other Protestant Scholastics essentially modified this doctrine. As in my previous 2 papers, I argue that it is clear that Calvin did not hold that Jesus Christ came into this world to save only the elect, or that he died only for the elect. I argue in this paper that Calvin subscribed to what has been called The Medieval Synthesis. That is, that Christ willed to come into this world with the intention to die for all men *sufficiently*, but for the elect *efficiently*. For Calvin, this willing and intention to die for all men sufficiently was an expression of God's revealed will, while the will and intention to die for and save the elect efficiently was an expression of God's secret decretive will. For various reasons,¹ Beza and other subsequent Protestant Scholastics could not reconcile this idea with their new theological schemas and paradigms. As a result, these later men denied any universal will and intention on the part of Christ to die for and to save all men, or specifically, the non-elect.

I will divide this paper into 3 parts. For Part 1, with the view of advancing and sustaining my claims, my method will be to firstly present some introductory comments and, importantly, some definitions, then two key baseline ideas from Francis Turretin. In regards to Turretin, my intention here is two-fold. I wish to delineate Turretin's definition of the sufficiency-efficiency formula. Secondly, I want to demonstrate that Turretin concedes that in terms of the revealed will we can speak of a certain *intentionality* on the part of God which is not efficacious. A third point, which I will not labour here, is that for Owen and the Protestant Scholastics there can be no real volition in God that is not efficacious. As I have already noted, for the Protestant Scholastics, the revealed will normally described theologically as volitional by Calvin, was now only described as a passive constitutional delight or complacency.²

For Part 2, I will once again establish a baseline case from Calvin himself, demonstrating that he did not teach that Christ died *only* for the elect. To state this another way, I will show that Calvin did teach that in some salvific sense, Christ died for all men, even the non-elect. The phrase "salvific sense" needs to be qualified, else the reader may misunderstand my intent. In this context, I do not mean that Christ died to effectively save all men, but failed. Rather, I mean that in terms of their eternal destinies, Christ, as with the Father, desired that all men live, be saved, and not die, thus ending in perdition. Therefore, the person and work of Christ is offered to all men as an expression of this "desire." To the establishment of my claim here, I will again document a number of key statements from Calvin. These statements will be very different from the ones I have used previously in papers 1 and 2. I will, however, present one more quotation from John Calvin on John 3:16 because I think it is important that it be acknowledged. After this, I will discuss and critique a number of arguments from some contemporary Calvinists who argue that Calvin did not teach unlimited redemption.

For Part 3, I will then analyse the essential arguments from Richard Baxter's work on unlimited redemption. Here I will also, yet concisely, sum up Moise Amyraut's views as they are presented by Brian Armstrong. In my treatment of Baxter, I will argue that while one may disagree with the theological language and terms, I do think he is trying to be truer--as it were--to the biblical data. I will also present some explanation for the assumptions behind Baxter's chosen terminology.

This paper does not pretend to treat Calvin and Baxter exhaustively. Its intention is to present an outline containing a strong probable case. Furthermore, it is beyond the scope of this paper to deal with every possible response to its arguments. What is hoped is that a reasonable foundation and grid may be laid that will serve as a baseline to answer other, hitherto, not discussed objections and issues regarding Calvin, Baxter and the Atonement. The intent of this series of papers is to essentially look at the issue from different aspects. I would also caution the reader to keep an open mind.

¹See my discussion of his in, *Saving Thomas Boston*. (no pl: no pub; 2002).

²For proof of this see the *Formula Consensus Helvetica*, co-written by Turretin and John Henry Heidegger, specifically art., 6 and onwards; in A.A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1983), pp.,656-663.

The lessons of history are clear. For example, Boston in his day, was charged with heresy. And though in evangelical spirit, men like James Brown of Hadow were deficient - they were, however, expressing evangelical orthodoxy. Their “orthodoxy,” as seen from their writings, was the very same orthodoxy of Rutherford, Durham, Owen and Turretin, and so forth. Thankfully, in the course of time Boston has been exonerated.

part 1

To begin with, the reader understand that at no point am I, or was Baxter, or even Amyraut³ denying the so-called 5-points of Calvinism, as commonly expressed or represented by the TULIP or by the Canons of Dort. Our contention is not one of subtracting any key idea, but that we need to add something. It’s not that Christ’s efficacious atonement is being denied, but that we need to also assert its sufficiency, along with its correlative divine intentionality, of the atonement for all men. Further, it is clear that for many, the language ‘unlimited redemption’ is a denial of the limitedness of Christ’s redemption. However, this is not so. The problem is again that of categories. For example, it is the case that for many Calvinists, there are only two theological baskets, metaphorically speaking. Wrongly, the categories are limited to either limited redemption as expressed by Owen, *et al*, or unlimited redemption as taught by Arminius, *et al*.

The problem is that for Arminius and modern day Arminians, they deny the *efficiency* side of the formula. Christ in no way died *efficiently* for the elect only. Rather he only died for all men, sufficiently. In terms of the will of God, the classic Arminian collapses the decretive will into the revealed will. Thus, the death of Christ was an expression *only* of an intentional yet inefficacious will of God. When Amyraut, Baxter, even Thomas Boston, spoke of a broader reference point for the death of Christ, all were accused of being Arminian exactly because of this failure to recognise a broader categorical base. Or to put it another way, they were so accused, because their opponents failed to acknowledge that there are indeed more than two conceptual baskets. Unfortunately, the problem does not end here. What happened historically was that the third basket, now tagged Amyraldianism, was considered a deviation from the true theology of the Reformation. What has not helped is that at times, Amyraut did speak of Christ dying *equally* for all.⁴ This gave his opponents the impression that he was now espousing an Arminian formulation of the atonement.

When Amyraut and Baxter, or anyone for that matter from within the orthodox camp, spoke of unlimited redemption, what the orthodox “heard” was the denial of limited efficacious redemption. Throughout this paper, when I speak of unlimited redemption or atonement, the reader should not take this to entail a denial of limited efficacious redemption. For that is not implied. Nor, is it not a case of either/or, but of both/and.

My contention is that there are more than just three baskets. For now, and for the sake of my argument, I will assume that the Amyraldian category, as popularly defined, is true. That is, Christ died for all men equally. I would argue that even if that were so, there is a fourth category that is more true to the Bible and to Calvin and to the early Reformers. This fourth category allows both the particular and universal elements of the atonement to co-exist in harmony--though in paradox. Unfortunately, whenever one speaks of unlimited redemption, one is either cast into the Arminian category or the popular, albeit distorted, category of Amyraldianism.

Another point to keep in mind is that in holding that Calvin did not believe that Christ only died for the elect, and that it was, in fact, Beza, *et al*, who departed from Calvin, the Barthian thesis is not thereby maintained. Nor the arguments by the Torrance brothers, nor the polemic advocated by R.T. Kendall.⁵ While I do think that Barth did identify some

³It should be noted that given that there are no extant publications of Amyraut in English, I will assume that Brian Armstrong’s portrayal of Amyraut is accurate. I see no reason to doubt this. One may not agree with him in his interpretations and conclusions, yet his historical analysis is sound.

⁴I do not think that Amyraut meant his statements to this effect to be taken as teaching Arminianism. In his thinking, there was a qualification which I will get to below.

⁵While Barth was right to identify certain theological drifts from Calvin, his conclusions and responses, I hold, are incorrect. The issue is not about the *ordo docendi* and the placement of the discussion of predestination in a different locus in the systematic works of Beza and the Protestant Scholastics. Nor do I accept the Torrance brothers’ claim that a loveless contractualism (that is, Federalism) was imported into Reformed theology, which was not

changes in Reformation theology as it progressed from Calvin to the Protestant Scholastics, I would wish that the so-called “orthodox” would learn to see past this, while seriously acknowledging the evidence for this drift. It would be better if the orthodox accepted that Calvin taught that Christ died for all men sufficiently, and that they just disagreed with him.

Francis Turretin

Turretin was the pre-eminent theologian of the latter half of the 17th century. His *systematic* reflects the culmination and solidification of Protestant Scholastic theology. Regarding the sufficiency formula, in the context of his discourse against all forms of unlimited redemption, he says:

Hence the state of the question [did Christ die for all men?] is easily elicited. (1) It is not asked with respect to the value and sufficiency of the death of Christ--whether it was in itself sufficient for the salvation of all men. For it is confessed by all that since its value is infinite, it would have been entirely sufficient for the redemption of each and every one, if God had seen fit to extend it to the whole world. And here belongs the distinction used by the fathers and retained by many divines-- that Christ “died sufficiently for all, but efficiently for the elect only.” For this being understood of the dignity of Christ’s death is perfectly true (although the phrase would be less accurate if it referred to the will and purpose of Christ).⁶

Immediately we see a problem here. Turretin does redefine this formula in a way that the fathers of the Reformation did not propose.⁷ The import of this is both profound and laden with folly. At stake is the issue that there was an atonement sufficient for all which itself was an expression of the will and purpose of Christ. Turretin’s entire polemic against the Amyraldian position hinges on his denial here. And yet, the converse was the very heart of Calvin’s understanding of the death of Christ.

The next citation from Turretin comes again from his *Institutes*. Turretin, in his treatment of the calling of God to the reprobate, argues strongly that this calling in no way demonstrates that God intends their salvation. The term *intention* in Turretin is loaded with meaning. For him, a divine intention which is an inefficacious yet purposive will and desire of God is repugnant to the wisdom, goodness and power of God.⁸ However, in the next section, he goes on to concede that there can be an inefficacious divine intentionality:

God does not intend faith in the reprobate; therefore neither does he intend salvation (which cannot be attained without faith). Now that he does not intend faith is gathered from the fact that he does not give it to them, nor did he decree to give it; nay, he determined to withhold it. It is of no avail to reply that God did not intend to produce it in the reprobate, but still he intends and wills that it should be possessed by them.

Now comes the key point I wish to underline:

That intention either respects the very futurity of the thing (in which sense God cannot fail in his intention) or it respects only the will to give them this command (in which sense we do not deny that God intends this); but this is reduced under the approving and preceptive will of God (of which we do not treat here).⁹

present in Calvin. I readily accede to Federalism as biblical. Nor do I need to buy into Kendall’s claim that for Calvin, Christ died for all but only intercedes for the elect.

⁶Francis Turretin, *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, (New Jersey: P&R, 1994), vol., 2, pp., 458-9.

⁷In my previous two papers I document the acknowledgment by some Reformed historians that this formula did undergo a redefinition after Calvin.

⁸Turretin, *Ibid.*, vol 2., p., 505. Naturally, I would argue that he is being dominated by his own subjective apprehensions of God’s character which do not mirror the bible accurately at this point.

⁹*Ibid.*, p., 506.

The issue is not really the intentionality of God, but the nature of the revealed will. As noted already, the revealed will for Turretin was primarily passive and constitutional. Only rarely and in passing, does he speak of it in volitional terms, as a velleity.¹⁰ What really drives Turretin, along with Owen, is an extra-biblical rationalism that denies that it can be meaningfully said that God can “desire” anything that does not come to pass. What is more, I do think that the point of contention is even more subtle. I believe that Turretin could speak occasionally of God’s desire for things that do not come to pass, insofar as these are works *ad extra*. That is, a work outside of God apart from what he purposes to do in himself, but rather, what he would want *us* to *do*. Turretin could accept this--only at this level. However, God is never believed to act or do anything on account of this divine velleity. Nothing God does *ad extra* is grounded or motivated by this velleity. In this way, could Turretin have made those passing statements about God desiring all men to be saved, or that *we* should *obey* his commands. Turretin would have understood Amyraut as saying that in terms of God’s works *ad intra*, God had an ineffectual yet purposive velleity, which to Turretin would have been repugnant and sounding too Arminian for his comfort. Yet contrary to Turretin’s sensibilities, this is exactly what Calvin (and Amyraut) maintained.¹¹ For them, for example, John 3:16 is only intelligible as an expression and motivation of God’s purposive sending (as an expression of the will revealed) of his son into this world in order to save it.

The irony here is that for Amyraut and for Baxter, the divine intention of Christ to save all men was an expression of that very same approving will, never of the decreeing will. Even if this ineffectual intentionality, and “desire,” was interpreted anthropomorphically by Amyraut and by Baxter, men like Owen, Turretin, and the Protestant Scholastics still rejected them and their teaching because of *their* (that is, the Protestant Scholastics), remodeling of the definition of the revealed will of God. The problem is that Turretin, and others, misread the situation, exactly because they did not have a category for the revealed will that allows it to be described as volitional, purposive or intentional, albeit anthropomorphically. To them, anything that seemed to imply volitionality to the revealed will smacked of Arminianism, smacked of the attempt to collapse the decretive will into the revealed, and which further reduced the entirety God’s purposing will to a mere velleity. If, however, that misreading could be corrected, then the issue with the Amyraldians and Baxter would become a non-issue. Indeed, if this misreading could be corrected, it can be seen how close Amyraut and Baxter were, in actuality, to the Protestant Scholastics.¹²

To conclude then, for Owen, Turretin and the Protestant Scholastics generally, the work of Christ was defined in the light of the claim that divine intentionality or purposiveness must be entirely efficacious. Therefore, any idea that Christ’s mission was motivated by an ineffectual yet volitional intentionality or desire was *a priori* rejected, as was the auxiliary idea that Christ, while on Earth, and as the divine-human mediator, could have any ineffectual desires or intentions. If one can demonstrate that Calvin affirmed the very thing denied by the Protestant Scholastics, then logically it is established that they are the ones who have, in fact, drifted away from him.

To deal with this topic, then, it serves us well to examine Calvin further. Recall that the Amyraldian claim, that has been categorically rejected by our modern “orthodox” men, was that Calvin taught that Christ died for all men, not just the elect. I want to show that it is truly the case that Calvin did not share the underlying assumptions of Owen, *et al*, indeed, and that it was the case that Amyraut and Baxter were closer to Calvin, on this point, than were Beza, Turretin and Owen. This can be established by collating some hallmark passages from Calvin regarding the death of Christ.

part 2

John Calvin

¹⁰See section 21, on p., 509; c.f., section 8 in vol 1., p., 397.

¹¹And in this camp and on this point, I would add such as Dabney, Boston and John Murray.

¹²Here that I should note. The problem is further confused due to the fact that since Boston, the “orthodox” are able to speak of an ineffectual divine desire, and yet still they reject, out of hand, Amyraut’s and Baxter’s teaching. One would think the “orthodox” would now be more open to Amyraut and Baxter. This anomaly is partly due to the firm grip of Federalism, the limitedness of the categories on the table for discussion, the institutionalisation of certain ideas confessionally, the ignorance of the historical definitional changes, and the general misunderstanding of Amyraut and Baxter.

Firstly, because I think Calvin's understanding of Jn 3:16 is fundamental to his thought, and because his position on this verse is often either misunderstood, abused or neglected, citing another comment from him is *apropos*:

It is true that Saint John says generally, that he loved the world. And why? *For Jesus Christ offers himself generally to all men without exception to be their redeemer.* It is said afterward in the covenant, that God loved the world when he sent his only son: but he loved us, us (I say) which have been taught by his Gospel, because he gathered us to him. And the faithful that are enlightened by the holy Ghost, have yet a third use of God's love, in that he reveals himself more familiarly to them, and seals up his fatherly adoption by his holy Spirit, and engraves it upon their hearts. Now then, let us in all cases learn to know this love of God, & when we be once come to it, let us go no further.

Thus we see three degrees of the love of God as shown us in our Lord Jesus Christ. The first is in respect of the *redemption* that was *purchased* in the person of him that gave himself to death for us, and became accursed to reconcile us to God his father. That is the first degree of love, *which extends to all men, inasmuch as Jesus Christ reaches out his arms to call and allure all men both great and small, and to win them to him.* But there is a special love for those to whom the gospel is preached: which is that God testifies unto them that he will make them partakers of that benefit that was purchased for them by the death and passion of his son.

And for as much as we be of that number, therefore are we double bound already to our God: here are two bonds which hold us as it were straightened unto him. Now let us come to the third bond, which depends upon the third love that God shows us: which is, that he not only causes the gospel to be preached unto us, but also makes us to feel the power thereof, not doubting but that our sins are forgiven us for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake... let us understand that he shows us a third love.¹³

Whatever we make of Calvin's second and third degree of love, his first degree is clear. Calvin: "For Jesus Christ offers himself generally to all men without exception to be their redeemer." And again: "That is the first degree of love, which extends to all men, inasmuch as Jesus Christ reaches out his arms to call and allure all men both great and small, and to win them to him." For Calvin, the general call to all men, which is a call of love, is grounded in the offering of Christ to all. Please note well, this offering is *not* the offer of the gospel, made by ministers of the gospel, but is an offering made of Christ himself. To limit the force of Calvin's words here to the mere external ministerial offer of the gospel is to clearly distort Calvin. Calvin undeniably regarded Jn 3:16 to be a statement about God's love to all men without exception, which he calls the first degree of God's love. In no way could Calvin have believed that Jn 3:16 describes God's love to the elect only.

What I want to do now is to present a range of citations from Calvin where he says, though with some variation, that souls for whom Christ died, and shed his blood, or washed by his blood, were yet either are unsaved, perish or go to perdition.

Hence it ought to be observed, that whenever the Church is afflicted, the example of the Prophet ought to move us to be touched (*sumpatheia*) with compassion, if we are not harder than iron; for we are altogether unworthy of being reckoned in the number of the children of God, and added to the holy Church, if we do not dedicate ourselves, and all that we have, to the Church, in such a manner that we are not separate from it in any respect. Thus, when in the present day the Church is afflicted by so many and so various calamities, and innumerable souls are perishing, which Christ redeemed with his own blood, we must be barbarous and savage if we are not touched with any grief. And especially the ministers of the word ought to be moved by this feeling of grief, because, being appointed to keep watch and to look at a distance, they ought also to groan when they perceive the tokens of approaching ruin.¹⁴

¹³John Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1987), 4:36-38. [Italics mine].

¹⁴Calvin, *Commentary*, Isaiah 22:4

Which he hath purchased. The four reasons, whereby Paul doth carefully prick forward the pastors to do their duty diligently, because the Lord hath given no small pledge of his love toward the Church in shedding his own blood for it. Whereby it appears how precious it is to him; and surely there is nothing which ought more vehemently to urge pastors to do their duty joyfully, than if they consider that the price of the blood of Christ is committed to them. For hereupon it follows, that unless they take pains in the Church, the lost souls are not only imputed to them, but they be also guilty of sacrilege, because they have profaned the holy blood of the Son of God, and have made the redemption gotten by him to be of none effect, so much as in them lies. And this is a most cruel offense, if, through our sluggishness, the death of Christ do not only become vile or base, but the fruit thereof be also abolished and perish; and it is said that God hath purchased the Church, to the end we may know that he would have it remain wholly to himself, because it is meet and right that he possess those whom he hath redeemed.¹⁵

The next thing is--that when the weak conscience is wounded, the price of Christ's blood is wasted; for the most abject brother has been redeemed by the blood of Christ: it is then a heinous crime to destroy him by gratifying the stomach.¹⁶

There is, however, still greater force in what follows--that even those that are ignorant or weak have been redeemed with the blood of Christ; for nothing were more unseemly than this, that while Christ did not hesitate to die, in order that the weak might not perish, we, on the other hand, reckon as nothing the salvation of those who have been redeemed with so great a price. A memorable saying, by which we are taught how precious the salvation of our brethren ought to be in our esteem, and not merely that of all, but of each individual in particular, inasmuch as the blood of Christ was poured out for each individual... For if the soul of every one that is weak is the price of Christ's blood, that man, who, for the sake of a very small portion of meat, hurries back again to death the brother who has been redeemed by Christ, shows how contemptible the blood of Christ is in his view.¹⁷

And, indeed, in like manner as God showed by an inestimable pledge, when he spared not his only--begotten Son, how great is the care which he has for the Church, so he will not suffer to remain unpunished the negligence of pastors, through whom souls, which he hath redeemed at so costly a price, perish or are exposed as a prey.¹⁸

If the faith of one individual were in danger of being overturned, (for we are speaking of the perdition of a single soul redeemed by the blood of Christ) the pastor should immediately gird himself for the combat; how much less tolerable is it to see whole houses overturned?¹⁹

The Apostle in the meantime exhorts us to be mutually solicitous for the salvation of one another; and he would also have us to regard the falls of the brethren as stimulants to prayer. And surely it is an iron hardness to be touched with no pity, when we see souls redeemed by Christ's blood going to ruin.²⁰

¹⁵Calvin, *Commentary*, Acts 20:28.

¹⁶Calvin, *Commentary*, Rom 14:15. Calvin could not have meant merely that a brother temporarily falls into sin, for then there would be no meaning to his comment that the blood of Christ was *wasted*. For it would not have. Calvin's strong language implies a strong sense of absolutivity.

¹⁷Calvin, *Commentary*, 1 Cor 8:11 & 12. Note here as well, the "brother" is said to return again *to death*. This is not really the language of the temporarily wounded conscious and backslider.

¹⁸Calvin, *Commentary*, 2 Tim 4:1

¹⁹Calvin, *Commentary*, Tit 1:11

²⁰Calvin, *Commentary*, 1 Jn 5:16. Rainbow when he cites this from Calvin, adds the line after ellipses "It therefore follows that we ought to regard them as brethren, since God retains them in the number of the faithful." Here Rainbow, I suspect, is implying that Calvin merely speaks of back-slidden elect believers. However, Calvin adds that line after in his subsequent discussion of the phrase *a sin which is not unto death*. It does seem from Calvin that in the first instance he speaks of those in need of salvation, but who sin unto death, but as his thought progresses,

So we must beware, or souls redeemed by Christ may perish by our carelessness, for their salvation to some degree was put into our hands by God.²¹

He now expresses more clearly that they who *profess a naked faith are wholly without any true knowledge*. He then says that they go astray like the blind in darkness, because they do not see the right way which is shown to us by the light of the gospel. This he also confirms by adding this reason, because such have forgotten that *through the benefit of Christ* they had been *cleansed from sin*, and yet this is the beginning of our Christianity. It then follows, that those who do not strive for a pure and holy life, do not understand even the first rudiments of faith. But Peter takes this for granted, that they who were still rolling in the filth of the flesh had forgotten their own *purgation*. *For the blood of Christ has not become a washing bath to us, that it may be fouled by our filth*. He, therefore, calls them *old sins*, by which he means, that our life ought to be otherwise formed, because we have been cleansed from our sins; not that any one can be pure from every sin while he lives in this world, or that the cleansing we obtain through Christ consists of pardon only, but that we ought to differ from the unbelieving, as God has separated us for himself. Though, then, we daily sin, and God daily forgives us, and the blood of Christ cleanses us from our sins, yet sin ought not to rule in us, but the sanctification of the Spirit ought to prevail in us; for so Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians 6:11, “And such were some of you; but ye are washed,” etc.²²

Though Christ may be denied in various ways, yet Peter, as I think, refers here to what is expressed by Jude, that is, when the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness; for Christ redeemed us, that he might have a people separated from all the pollutions of the world, and devoted to holiness, and innocency. They, then, who throw off the bridle, and give themselves up to all kinds of licentiousness, are not unjustly said to deny Christ by whom they have been redeemed.²³

The only Lord God, or, God who alone is Lord. Some old copies have, “Christ, who alone is God and Lord.” And, indeed, in the Second Epistle of Peter, Christ alone is mentioned, and there he is called Lord. But He means that Christ is denied, when they who had been redeemed by his blood, become again the vassals of the Devil, and thus render void as far as they can that incomparable price.²⁴

It is enough for them [the papal clergy] that they may lord it, & they bear themselves on hand that they may hold poor souls under their tyranny, which were redeemed by of our Lord Jesus Christ... Again we see that such

he speaks of actual brothers who sin, but not unto death. Jonathan H. Rainbow, *The Will of God and The Cross*, (Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1990), p., 160.

²¹Calvin, *Commentary*, James 5:20. This is taken from *Calvin's Commentaries: A Harmony of the Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke, Volume III and The Epistle of James and Jude*. eds., D. F. Torrance & T.F., Torrance, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972.)

²²Calvin, *Commentary*, 2 Peter 1:9. [Emph., mine.] Note how Calvin connects the “cleansing” of these unbelievers, not with baptism, mere church association or common grace, but with the blood of Christ. See also David Paraeus’ citation of this verse in the context of his discussion of the universal sufficiency of Christ’s death, in: Zacharius Ursinus, *The Commentary of Dr. Zacharias Ursinus on the Heidelberg Catechism*, (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: 1994), p., 222-3. The fact that both Calvin and Paraeus use this verse in this way shows us that there was once an exegetical and theological tradition in the background of their thinking which they were tapping into, but which we today have lost.

²³Calvin, *Commentary*, 2 Peter 2:1. C.f., Ursinus, p., 222. Paraeus uses 2 Peter 1: 9 and 2:1 to theological conclusions, while Calvin uses them to exegetical and pastoral ends.

²⁴Calvin, *Commentary*, Jude 4.

as should maintain God's truth, do let all slip, and though they see never so much disorder: it grieves them never a whit, neither do they pass though all go to havoc.²⁵

Behold our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory, abased himself for a time, as says S. Paul Now if there were no more but this, that he being the fountain of life, became a moral man, and that he having dominion over the angels of heaven, took upon him the shape of a servant, yea even to shed his blood for our redemption, and in the end to suffer the curse that was due unto us: were it convenient that notwithstanding all this, he should nowadays in recompense be torn to pieces, by stinking mouths of such as name themselves Christians? For when they swear by his blood, by his death, by his wounds and by whatsoever else: is it not a crucifying of God's son again as much as in them lies, and as a rending of him in pieces? And are not such folk worthy to be cut of from God's Church, yea, and even from the world, and to be no more numbered in the array of creatures? Should our Lord Jesus have such reward at our hands, for his abasing and humbling of himself after that manner? God in upbraiding his people says thus: My people, what have I done to you? I have brought you out of Egypt, I have led you up with all gentleness and lovingkindness, I have planted you as it were in my own inheritance, to the intent you should have been a vine that should have brought me forth good fruit, and I have tilled thee and manured thee: and must thou now be bitter to me, and bring forth sower fruit to choke me withall? The same belongs to us at this day. For when the son of God, who is ordained to be judge of the world, shall come at the last day: he may well say to us: how now Sirs? You have borne my name, you have been baptised in remembrance of me and record that I was your redeemer, I have drawn you out of the dungeons where into you were plunged, I delivered you from endless death by suffering most cruel death myself, and for the same cause I became man, and submitted myself even to the curse of GOD my father, that you might be blessed by my grace and by my means: and behold the reward that you have yielded me for all this, is that you have (after a sort) torn me in pieces and made a jestingstock of me, and the death that I suffered for you has been made a mockery among you, the blood which is the washing and cleansing of your souls has been as good as trampled under your feet, and to be short, you have taken occasion to ban and blaspheme me, as though I had been some wretched and cursed creature. When the sovereign judge shall charge us with these things, I pray you will it not be as thundering upon us, to ding us down to the bottom of hell? Yes: and yet are there very few that think upon it.²⁶

For to give up immediately on a man which has sinned, or when he is as it were, on the road to destruction, is to further the destruction of the poor soul that was redeemed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.²⁷

Again in general, if I see my neighbour go astray and destruction, I ought to reclaim him... Now if our Lord extend his love even unto Oxen and Asses; what ought we do to those whom he has created after his own image, & which are like ourselves, & to whom we be linked by a kind of brotherhood; not only in respect to our bodies; but also in respect to our souls? Shall we see them run astray & go to destruction, & not reach then our hand nor do our endeavor to bring them back to salvation? Behold, God tells us that we belong to him, & that we be his heritage. Now if a poor man go astray like a beast that is lost, and I shall suffer God to be bereft of his right, or to have his possessions diminished? True it is, that we cannot enrich him: but yet does he show how dearly he loves us, in that he has *purchased us with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ*. I see God's *possession*

²⁵Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, 4:1-2. I grant that this citation from Calvin is a little ambiguous. However, I have included it because it appears that here Calvin speaks of souls within the Catholic church who have been redeemed by Christ. And the clause, "all go to havoc" most probably refers back to these tyrannised souls. This conclusion is further confirmed by the same language used in the Deut., 24:7-8 citation where he is explicit.

²⁶Ibid., 5:11.

²⁷Ibid., 20:16-20.

go to *havoc*, and make no account of it, and so is *lost* from him through my own default: and how shall I excuse myself?²⁸

And thus men steal themselves away, both from God & and from his church. They make merchandise & sale of their own souls, as it were for a mess of pottage, as it is said of Esau: that is to say, for earthly food they sell themselves & become the bond-slaves of Satan. And so we see that this law is nowadays very ill kept: and therefore we ought to so much the more to note the intent & meaning of God, to the end that every many after that God has vouchsafed him the grace to gather him unto the number of his people, may keep himself among them: and the better to maintain the liberty we have, lust us consider (as S. Paul says) how dearly it has cost th Son of God: let us not enter again into bondage of Satan and of sin, seeing that we are freed thence by the blood of only Son of God: but let us walk according unto that privilege which God has given unto us, and to hold fast the possession thereof as long as we live. And when every [one] of us shall have had such regard of himself, let us do the like to wards all our brethren, that they whom God has joined unto us depart not out of his house: but let us employ our pains as every [one] of us may keep his estate, that none may be diminished, that none wander nor go astray. And father let us be afraid to make merchandise of those souls which have been redeemed by our Lord Jesus Christ which are so dear a price, and let us not seek after our own commodity in that behalf, as we see how wretchedly many give themselves over to this point, and so they find the fatter fare, they care not one whit whether they remain in the Church of God or no.²⁹

And this is well worthy to be marked, because (as I said before) were it not that we are afraid to cast our selves in this sort into Satan's bands, there is none of us but hath itching ears: and we true that too much which is said in the second canonical Epistle of S. Peter, to wit, that our ears are always itching, desiring novelties, & curious things. But when we hear that they which disguise the word of God in such sort, as merchants of our souls, (as S. Peter also saith) and make traffic of us and of our salvation and make no bones at it, to cast us headlong into hell, yea, and to abolish the price that was given for our redemption, it is certain that they destroy souls and besides that, make a mock of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.³⁰

Therefore Jesus Christ will not answer before Pontius Pilate. Why so? Because he seeks to satisfy the will of God his father, & the decree which he had concluded: he knows that by his sacrifice, he puts away *the sins of the world*. And therefore Jesus Christ being in the place of sinners, & in their persons, defended not himself... we must lift up our eyes to the blood of the unspotted lamb, that was shed... For else what honour should we do to Jesus Christ, if his death did not suffice us for that certainty of our faith: were not this to make the passion which he suffered a thing of naught? Were it not to tread his blood under our feet, seeing it is called the blood of the everlasting testament, which is the true seal as we have said already? and therefore it is not in vain that S. Paul protests in this place, that we do injury to our Lord Christ & *do not honour the blood that he shed for our salvation*, if we follow not this confession that he made when he gave his life to assure us... If we will be partakes of all that was gotten us b the Son of God, we must have patience: after that he has shown that when Jesus Christ had *suffered for the sins of the world*, he went up into heaven... For it is nothing if the fruit of this

²⁸Ibid., 22:2-4. A little later, Calvin goes on to state that we should have a care for men in the church, "that men may be preserved unto him." It would seem that here Calvin moves from men as neighbours and image bearers, that is men generally, to men in the church

²⁹Calvin, *Sermons on Deuteronomy* 24:7-8. [Emph., mine.] One should note here Calvin's repeated use of the expression: men who make merchandise of souls. Here his language echoes Dt 24:7 and 2 Pet 2:2 (KJV).

³⁰Calvin, *Sermons on 1 Timothy*, 6:3-7. Here Calvin speaks generally to his congregation as they stand as sinners. Calvin often uses an inclusive plural (us, we) to speak to us as men and women, as sinners, even as those who profess to be believers. He is not here speaking to men as elect, or as regenerate believers. This point holds good for the following citation as well. The marginal reference provided for this quotation is Calvin references 2 Pet., 2:2, which again shows us how he understood that passage.

redemption, which was purchased for us, does not show itself by faith: for otherwise, it will become a thing of naught.³¹

But when we see pestilent plagues, that go about to empoison the church of God, when we see ravening wolves that seek nothing, but to breed dissension in the flock, when we see robbers and thieves, that would rob Jesus Christ of that that belongs to him, when we see church robbers, that labour to mar the doctrine of salvation must we bear with them, and cover their filthiness? What gear call you that? That is a terrible honesty, when we shall suffer silly souls, which were so dearly bought, to go to destruction...³²

On the contrary side, when we feel not the glory of God to submit ourselves to it, when we know not the riches of the kingdom of heaven, when we are not drawn to his service to live in pureness of conscience, when we know not what the salvation means, which was purchased for us in our Lord Jesus Christ, we abide in this world and so by this means are profaned... And therefore if this day we see men become very beasts, after that they have known the truth of God, and become as dogs without reason, know we that God will thereby magnify his word, and cause us to feel what majesty it is of... And therefore we must not only be offended when we see them which have tasted of the Gospel, revolt from the obedience of God, but it must rather be a conformation of our faith: For God shows that he makes such account of his word, that he cannot abide in any wise to have men abuse it, and take it so in vain, and disguise and profane it.³³

We ought also to have care for our brethren, and to be very sorry to see them perish, for it is no small matter to have souls perish who were bought by the blood of Christ.³⁴

As God did once draw us out of the bottomless pit of death, when he spared not his only son: for he makes us partakers of this inestimable treasure, of this benefit that was purchased for us, when the Gospel is preached. And for this cause. S. Paul says that it is the mighty power of God to salvation to all that believe. Therefore if God will draw us to him, and to his inheritance, he uses the Gospel. And therefore it ought to be a most precious thing to us, seeing that the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is thereby applied to us, to the end we may receive the fruit of it, and be not unprofitable and fruitless to us... And moreover, we shall be made partakers of everlasting salvation, which was purchased for us by his death and passion. Therefore if there be no preaching, the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ will come to nothing, the world will not know him to be the Redeemer of the world: it will avail us nothing at all, that he was so delivered to death for us... [H]is death and passion shall be a payment for us, to exempt us from all our debts: for he will always do the part of an Advocate, though he be our judge. And let us mark well, that this is general to all, though Saint Paul speaks to Timothy, that whensoever we are called and cited before the throne or judgment seat of the son of GOD, we must think on the one side, that if we vouchsafe not to receive this inestimable treasure which is so offered us, to wit, that we may enjoy this redemption which he has purchased for us, he will not suffer it to be despised... If nowadays we stop our ears, when the Son of God admonishes us, we shall hear this horrible trumpet, which shall confound us in the bottomless pit of hell, we shall hear the sentence of condemnation upon our heads, if

³¹Calvin, *Ibid.*, 6:13-16. [Emph., mine.] Note here how Calvin connects the expiation for “the world” with the blood of Christ given for our redemption and salvation.

³²Calvin, *Sermons on 2 Timothy*, 2 Tim 1:15-18

³³*Ibid.*, 2:16-18. [Emph., mine.] A little later Calvin says: “If the poor unbelievers which never knew anything, are in so miserable condition, let us now come to them, whom God had reached his hand unto, & had opened them the gate of his Church, to say, God in, and had given them his mark, that is to say, Baptism: if they revolt after that they have known what the Gospel is, and cast away the knowledge they had received, & bury God’s gifts, and profane the blood of Jesus Christ, to be short, *tread all that was given them under foot*: shall not Satan take double possession of them” *Ibid.*, 2:25-26. [Emph., mine.]

³⁴Calvin, *Ibid.*, 2:19.

we will not obey the sweet and loving voice, whereby we are called this day to be partakers of the salvation purchased for us.³⁵

Must we leave the poor church of God in the power of wolves and robbers? Must all the flock be scattered, the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ trampled under foot, and souls which he redeemed at so costly a price go to destruction, and all order be set aside, and must we still be silent and shut our eyes... Moreover let us mark that also that which is added, *That they subvert whole houses*. If one man only were misled by them, it would be too much: for mens souls ought to be precious to us seeing that our Lord Jesus Christ has esteemed so high of them, as not to spare his own life, for our salvation and redemption.”³⁶

When we see that men will not suffer themselves to be brought to good pass willingly, we must use that remedy, which God commands us here, that is to say, we must reprove them sharply, we must go roundly to it. For the word which S. Paul uses, imports as much: we must cut them short, we may not use great Rhetoric with them, we may not deal gently with them that are so stubborn, but summon them in a word. Come on you wretched creatures, with whom think you play with all? Do you not see that you fight against God? what a master is he? Think you, he will always suffer you? If he deal gently with you now, and call you to come to him, in the person of mortal man, think you this will continue? Will he not cast forth his lightening at the length? Will you be devils instead of creatures, which has fashioned to his own image? Do you not think, what a woe is to you, to forget the price of your redemption, by thus despising the grace of his Gospel? Therefore when ministers of the word of God know, that the world is so hard to govern, they must come to the rough kind of dealing, & to these hard speeches.³⁷

And secondly again, thereafter as we see the mischief prevail, let us bring these back unto God which are gone astray, and labor to stop those that lead their neighbors after that fashion to destruction, and seek nothing but to turn all upside down: let such men be repressed, and let every one that hath the zeal of God show himself their deadly enemy, breaking asunder whatsoever may hold us back: and whither there be friendship or kindred between us, or any other or the straightest bonds in the world: let us bury everywhit of it in forgetfulness, when we see the souls that were bought with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, so led to ruin and destruction: or when we see things that were well settled...³⁸

...and men make us to alter our mind in less than the turning of a hand, what else betokens it, but that we willfully refuse God's grace, as if we would shut the gate against him that he might not come in unto us? Or else, if after we have once known, that he offers us so inestimable a benefit in his Gospel, we cast it down and trample it under our feet: think we that God will suffer his grace to be so lightly esteemed and held scorn of? No. For we cannot despise the doctrine of the Gospel, but we must unhallow the blood of God's son, which he did shed for our redemption: for the one cannot be separated from the other. Whensoever and how often soever God speaks to us, and offers us forgiveness of our sins, showing himself ready to receive us to mercy: so often is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ sprinkled upon us. All the teaching in the world cannot do us any good, except our Lord Jesus Christ be with it, to apply the shedding of his blood unto us. And if we despise the

³⁵Ibid. 4:1-2.

³⁶Calvin, *Sermons on Titus*, 1:10-13. After this, Calvin goes on to speak of those of us who have allowed Satan to deceive us, such that we are now given over to reprobate senses, for we have rejected the remedy offered to us. Thus he speaks to us as sinners and professing believers, not as elect.

³⁷Ibid., 1:12-15. The context is Calvin's exhortation to the minister of the word, that he must adjust his message to certain classes of people under his preaching. There are the ones who need to be spoken to sharply, and there are the weak sheep. His remarks for this section close with: "And thus let us learn that the word of God must be applied according to the nature and complexion of men to whom it is directed." In this context, then, Calvin speaks to those who are unbelievers and therefore stubbornly reject God and the gospel. It is to these that he says, "do not forget the price of your redemption, by thus despising the grace of his Gospel."

³⁸Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*. 2:11-13.

doctrine of the Gospel, it is all one as if we did spit at the holy blood of God's son, which thing is an intolerable traitorousness.³⁹

Therefore when we *see any man do amiss*, let us learn that it is no love nor charity to cloak his evil doings, so as we should dissemble them and make no countenance at all of them: but that if we have a care of him that is so fallen, *we must turn him away*. If a man be in the mire, we will reach him our hand to help him out: and if we pass by him and will not seem to see him, shall he not say it is too shameful an unkindness? Even so is it when we suffer a man to fall asleep in his sins: for by that means he is sunk down to the *bottom of perdition*. Then is it too great a traitorousness, if we do wittingly suffer a man to undo himself utterly: and therewithal we show also that there is no zeal of God in us. For if he be our father, ought it not at leastwise to grieve us and make us sorry, when we see wrong and injury offered unto him? So then, if the *souls* which our Lord Jesus Christ hath *bought so dearly* be precious unto us, or if we set so much by God's honor as it deserves it is certain that we will not so bear with men's faults, but that we will endeavor to amend them.⁴⁰

Also we ought to have good care of those that have been redeemed with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we see souls which have been so precious to God go to perdition, and we make nothing of it, that is to despise the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁴¹

It follows, moreover, that the poor souls whom our Lord Jesus Christ has bought so dearly that he did not spare himself to save them, perish and are given into Satan's possession.⁴²

However, St. Paul speaks here expressly of the saints and the faithful, but this does not imply that we should not pray generally for all men. For wretched unbelievers and the ignorant have a great need to be pleaded for with God; behold them on the way to perdition. If we saw a beast at the point of perishing, we would have pity on it. And what shall we do when we see souls in peril, which are so precious before God, as he has shown in that he has ransomed them with the blood of his own Son? If we see then a poor soul going thus to perdition, ought we not to be moved with compassion and kindness, and should we not desire God to apply the remedy?⁴³

You should have kept silence, says Pighius. It would have been a treacherous and abominable silence by which God's glory, Christ, and the gospel were betrayed. Is it possible? So God shall be held up as a laughingstock before our eyes, all good religion shall be torn apart, wretched souls redeemed by the blood of Christ shall perish, and it shall be forbidden to speak? ...shall the church be plundered by the thieving of the ungodly, shall God's majesty be stamped under foot, shall Christ be robbed of his kingdom, while we watch and say nothing?⁴⁴

Before I proceed, one should recall that for Calvin, Christ was appointed to be the redeemer of the world, and by world he meant the whole world, the human race. To establish this claim a few citations will suffice:

Although, then, Christ is in a general view the Redeemer of the world, yet his death and passion are of no advantage to any but such as receive that which St. Paul shows here. And so we see that when we once know

³⁹Ibid., 3:1-3. Note the allusion to Hebrews 10:29.

⁴⁰Ibid., 6:1-2. [Emph., mine.] The context here is the man whom Christ has purchased going to perdition, while we his friends and relatives say nothing.

⁴¹Calvin, *Sermons on Ephesians*, 5:11-14.

⁴²Ibid. Though this quotation does not mention the blood of Christ, the context demonstrates that this is implied.

⁴³Ibid., 6:18-19.

⁴⁴John Calvin, *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996), p.,

the benefits brought to us by Christ, and which he daily offers us by his gospel, we must also be joined to him by faith.⁴⁵

To bear the sins means to free those who have sinned from their guilt by his satisfaction. He says many meaning all, as in Rom 5:15. It is of course certain that not all enjoy the fruits of Christ's death, but this happens because of their unbelief.⁴⁶

God commends to us the salvation of all men without exception, even as Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world.⁴⁷

The sacrifice of Christ was ordained by the eternal decree of God, to expiate the sins of the world.⁴⁸

The Jews, indeed, rage against him with blinded fury; but as God had appointed him [Christ] to be a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world⁴⁹

And again, Calvin on Mt 20:28:

The word *many* is not put definitely for a fixed number, but for a large number; for he contrasts himself with all others. And in this sense it is used in Romans 5:15, where Paul does not speak of any part of men, but embraces the whole human race.

And lastly, but very important, speaking of Christ's shed blood for the "many," Calvin notes:

By the word many he means not a part of the world only, but the whole human race; for he contrasts many with one; as if he had said, that he will not be the Redeemer of one man only, but will die in order to deliver many from the condemnation of the curse. It must at the same time be observed, however, that by the words for you, as related by Luke--Christ directly addresses the disciples, and exhorts every believer to apply to his own advantage the shedding of blood. Therefore, when we approach to the holy table, let us not only remember in general that the world has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but let every one consider for himself that his own sins have been expiated.⁵⁰

The reader should also recall Calvin's comments on Isa 53:12, Rom 5:18 and Heb 9:28 where he affirms that Christ suffered for all, and all means all, not merely some or many as opposed to all. Take note also that Calvin speaks of a redemption of the whole world as something as having already been accomplished. It is not merely *available* for all. The

⁴⁵Calvin, *Sermons on Ephesians*, 1:7-10.

⁴⁶Calvin, *Commentary*, Heb., 9:28.

⁴⁷Calvin, *Commentary*, Gal., 5:12.

⁴⁸Calvin, *Commentary*, Mat., 26:24

⁴⁹Calvin, *Commentary*, Mat., 27:15. C.f., Calvin on Mark 14:24, Mt., 20:28 and Heb 9:28.

⁵⁰Calvin, *Commentary*, Mk 14:24. Note well, that by *general* he meant the whole human race, not a mere a part of it, or the elect, as indefinitely considered, scattered through out the world. There is no evidence to imagine that when Calvin uses the term "general" he means all kinds of elect people. When Calvin uses this word elsewhere it is with the sense of all, without qualification. Further, Rainbow is misleading here. When he deals with these passages he ignores Calvin's statements regarding the "many" from his commentary and sermon on Isa 53:12 that many here means all, and in support of which he cites Romans 5 (Rainbow, p., 151-2). There Paul speaks of the many in Adam who die and the many in Christ who live. Calvin takes this as defining the "many" as "all." All in Adam die, all in Christ live. And in his summary citations of Calvin on Mat., 20:28, Rainbow leaves out Calvin's qualifying comment: "And in this sense it is used in Romans 5:15, where Paul does not speak of *any part of men*, but embraces the whole human race." [Emph., mine.] When all of Calvin's "many" statements are taken together, there is no indication that he meant anything less than the whole human race as normally understood.

next question is, How does one respond to these so-called “wasted blood” citations from Calvin? How does one deal with what looks to be fairly straight-forward statements that Christ died for more than the elect, even for those who will finally go to perdition? What is of further interest is that in regard to Rom 14:15, 1 Cor 8:11-12, 2 Peter 2:1 and Jude 4, Calvin takes the very opposite exegetical position to the stance taken by men like Owen, Turretin, *et al.* Indeed, my almost rhetorical questions, notwithstanding, there have been some attempts to respond to these citations.

Jonathan Rainbow, himself, cites quite a few of these statements in his polemic against the claim that Calvin taught unlimited redemption. Rainbow’s response is fascinating. Firstly, he stresses that the context of these “wasted blood” statements is that of apostasy. Rainbow is almost trivially correct here given the textual background of such verses as 2 Peter 2:1-2 and Jude 4 (along with Hebrews 10:29), which form the biblical backdrop for these statements from Calvin. Rainbow continues that for Calvin, the *pastor* must ‘gird himself for combat’ in response to apostasy. This is the point which Calvin stressed in almost all the passages quoted. “God will not allow pastoral negligence to go unpunished.”⁵¹ He then tells us that the “doctrine of these texts belong not so much to Calvin’s soteriological teaching as it did to his doctrine of the visible church.”⁵² Rainbow argues that the theological issue for Calvin was not soteriology, but ecclesiology. After this he then unfolds the nuances of his argument further. He draws our attention to the judgment of charity. That is, we in the church, in love, assume that those in the church are indeed Christ’s true sheep.⁵³

Rainbow explains:

While stating that unfaithful pastors are charged with the souls they lose, and are guilty of sacrilege for profaning the blood of Christ, and have undone Christ’s redemption—strong language which implies that the success of salvation depends on man, not God—Calvin added ‘as much as in them lies’ (*quantum in se est*)... Apostates, he said, are those who, “as much as in them lies (*imo quantum in se est*), crucify the Son of God again... Men *intend* to crucify gain the Son of God... But they cannot... The phrase “as much as in them,” in its variant forms, was designed to protect against the theological conclusion that the wicked acts of men can every actually harm or thwart the design of God.”⁵⁴

Then he says:

The point at issue--whether Calvin’s “souls perish” statements imply universal redemption--may now be directly addressed. For Calvin used this phrase also in conjunction with the nullification of the death of Christ that *seemingly* [emph., mine] happens when someone apostatizes. He said that unfaithful pastors “have negated the redemption which he obtained.” But does this actually mean that pastors can undo the work of Christ by their sloth? No.... Again, the idea is not that God’s covenant in Christ’s blood can be frustrated, but that wicked men *intend* to do so by their actions and attitudes.⁵⁵

In this context, Rainbow argues that it is only men *in themselves* who would seemingly crucify Christ again and seemingly void the blood of Christ for themselves. Rainbow argues:

“On this basis pastors and all Christians must exert every effort to combat apostasy. They cannot take refuge from this responsibility in predestination. The church must proceed as *if* every member is elect, as *if* every member is redeemed by the blood of Christ, and as *if* the loss of souls from the visible church is therefore loss to the honor of God.”⁵⁶

⁵¹Rainbow, *Ibid.*, p., 165.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p., 163.

⁵³*Ibid.*, p., 164-5.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp., 167-8.

⁵⁵*Ibid.* p., 168.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p., 169-70.

And in terms of those outside of the church, Rainbow invokes the same argument from charity, to which he adds that we do not know who the elect and non-elect are, therefore we pray for and seek the salvation of all men.⁵⁷ Indeed, after some discourse, Rainbow adds that we must pray for all unbelievers as if they are elect.⁵⁸ Then, somewhat vaguely, he suggests that in terms of Calvin's own thinking and exhortation to us, we are to pray for all unbelievers with the assumption that "the death of Christ is for all—'for them as well as for us'—is an assumption that rests on our present inability to distinguish the elect from the reprobate".⁵⁹

All of what Rainbow says here is very intriguing and also very close to the mark. However, it suffers for lack of contextualising Calvin and his exegetical tradition. Further, it commits the fallacy of assuming that if Calvin did hold to unlimited redemption, then the blood of Christ was actually voided, and that by the free will of man. Rainbow is making a category error in my opinion. The blood of Christ would have been truly voided if by the decretive will of God it was intended and offered for all men to be effective. However, as Calvin held, that part of the work of Christ which was made for all men was an expression of the revealed will of God, and so never intended to be effectual. Rainbow's stress on the idea that it is "as it were" or that they only "intended" to negate the blood of Christ misses the mark. It is true that they void it for themselves, as it was truly offered on their behalf, as an expression of the revealed will. When Calvin says such things as "so much as in them lies" he means that in terms of their own sin do they void it for themselves, that which should have been their salvation,⁶⁰ not that there never was an objective redemption made by Christ for them in any sense at all. Rainbow is correct to imagine that Calvin would not have imagined that either negligent pastor or backsliding sinner could truly and actually negate the work of Christ. Yet he is incorrect for then supposing that because this would have been so unimaginable to Calvin, he could not have imagined that Christ actually made a ransom, or that he actually made redemption for all men, in some other sense. The fact that Calvin imagined that sinners can bring to naught the passion and suffering of Christ, presupposes that he considered that the blood was shed for them, in an active and positive sense. For example, Calvin says in another work:

That, then, is how the blood of our Lord Jesus, *which ought to be the salvation of all the world*, and indeed especially of the Jews, since the birthright belonged to them, cried vengeance against them.⁶¹

And again:

And it is not without cause that many understand Jesus Christ only as their Judge; for they were not willing to receive Him when God wished to give Him to them as Redeemer.⁶²

In terms of Calvin's comments on 2 Pet 2:1 and Jude 4, all that Rainbow says regarding pastoral negligence and Calvin's judgement of charity does not apply. It would be incoherent to imagine that in these examples Calvin, assuming a charity of judgement, would say that these men had been redeemed by Christ. For in these two passages, Calvin speaks theologically of those who were charitably presumed--this judgment of charity would never have been denied by Calvin--to have been believers, but yet who actually void that which was shed for them. Naturally, that which was made "for them" was the person and work of Christ according to the revealed will. What is more, with regard to Calvin's comments on 2 Pet 1:9, it is clear that he is making the connection between an unbeliever's former cleansing of sin, by and through the blood of Christ. We today would not make such a connection, for we would probably say they had been externally cleansed by mere church association, common grace and/or baptism. But in Calvin, he is able to say that in some sense, these unbelievers had been washed in the blood of Christ and so cleansed. No doubt he is referring to some form of external washing and cleansing. This fact also serves to refute Rainbow's attempted explanation.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 170-1.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 172.

⁵⁹He Ibid., p. 173.

⁶⁰Calvin's meaning seems, to me, to be very close to the intent of Luke 7:30.

⁶¹John Calvin, *The Deity of Christ and Other Sermons*, trans., by L. Nixon. (New Jersey: Old Paths Publications, 1997), p., 133. [Emph., mine.]

⁶²Ibid., pp., 241-2.

And the idea that in the case where Calvin explicitly connects our prayer for unbelievers with some supposed assumption that they had been redeemed—whatever that is supposed to mean—is an assumption wholly underived from the text of Calvin, indeed from any text of his. While it is true that Calvin states we are to assume all those within the church as part of God’s flock,⁶³ there is no evidence that he applied the same reasoning to those outside of the church, such that we should charitably assume them to have been *redeemed*. After all, Calvin’s language is strong and emphatic here. What Rainbow says amounts to a suggestion while we do not know for whom Christ died to redeem, we can pray for all and any unbeliever with the assumption that Christ died for them, or that they have been redeemed, all the while asserting that Christ died only for the elect.

The point is further underlined by noting that the clear thought in these excerpts is that these are apostates, *as now known*, who had been redeemed. There is absolutely nothing within the statements to suggest that Calvin meant to indicate that “these apostates, as now known, he *formerly assumed* had been redeemed. He knows that these men are apostates, and, still, he says that they had been redeemed by the blood of Christ. Rainbow’s interpretation, therefore, is highly forced and unnatural. The fact that there is a double punishment for those who despise the blood shed for them further reveals Calvin’s line of thought. We can add to this that Calvin speaks of grace and salvation *purchased* for known unbelievers (see below), as well as the very person of the unbeliever is bought by the blood by the Christ. Here, then, is no mere charitable assumption on Calvin’s part, but an objective and spiritual state of affairs (their ransom), was actually accomplished by the death of Christ.

It is unsound to suggest that Calvin was not speaking of soteriology, only of ecclesiology.⁶⁴ This is clear from the fact that in so many places Calvin actually states that Christ offered himself to the whole world, for their salvation, for the expiation of their sin, according to divine appointment, and that he came into this world that he should suffer *for* this whole world, even though only some are actually saved, and this by the decree of God. For Calvin, Christ, in his person and work, reaches out to all men, yet he only lays hold of those predestined to life by eternal decree.⁶⁵ It is more sensible to suppose that Calvin was operating from this theological backdrop, from which he applies his pastoral cautions. Rainbow’s explanation has insight, for sure, but it does not exhaust or truly comprehend Calvin’s meaning.

Further, Rainbow fails to locate Calvin’s exegetical and theological tradition. It is exactly because of verses like Rom 14:15 and 2 Peter 2:1 that the Medieval Scholastics developed the Sufficiency/Efficiency formula, against Gottschalk and others. And it is clear that Calvin is exegeting and operating theologically within that tradition. Seen in this light, Rainbow’s conclusions are tenuous at best. Lastly, I would contend that Rainbow is taking Calvin out of context. He divorces these many statements from the wider body of Calvin’s statements regarding the extent of the suffering of Christ. Surely, the most reasonable method would be to read these so-called ‘wasted-blood’ passages in the light of Calvin’s other direct statements where he explicitly identifies *all* as the whole human race, not just a part of it, yet which for this whole human race, Christ died and in some sense obtained their redemption. Given that Calvin did hold that Christ was given to the whole world, all without exception, and that he suffered for all, and not just the many (that is, ‘some’ as *opposed* to the ‘all’), Calvin’s statements in these so-called ‘wasted-blood’ passages ought to be taken straight-forwardly and exactly as they read. For in Calvin’s mind, it is truly because Christ, the Son of God, suffered for *all*, that “it is no small matter to have souls perish who were bought by the blood of Christ.”

Rainbow’s closing retort: “And of proponents of the Amyraut thesis should insist that these texts prove universal redemption, then not only do they prove that some perish for whom Christ died—they prove (to replicate Calvin’s language) that Christ’s death can be negated, ruined, and destroyed by man...” does not follow at all. For here is where his insight regarding Calvin’s oft used phrase “as much as in them lies” comes to bear. This qualification proves that neither Calvin, or the so-called proponents of the Amyraut thesis, actually believe that the work of Christ is objectively and effectually voided.

⁶³E.g., Calvin’s *Institutes*, 4.1.8, cited by Rainbow, p., 165.

⁶⁴C.f., Alan C. Clifford, *Calvinus: Authentic Calvinism: A Clarification*, (Charenton: Reformed Publishing, 1996), p., 80.

⁶⁵Calvin uses this metaphor many times, though mostly in the context of the will of God.

For this section of my paper I wish to present a thumb sketch critique of five modern day Calvinists who believe that Calvin did not teach unlimited atonement or redemption.⁶⁶

*Frederick S. Leahy*⁶⁷

In his preamble, Leahy first argues against Amyraldianism. For example, citing Charles Hodge for support, he argues that the idea that God could “intend what is never accomplished...” entails a lack in divine wisdom, and such things as a double decree, which is self-contradictory. And further, that the idea that an atonement of Christ which does not actually infallibly secure redemption is Amyraldianism’s greatest weakness.⁶⁸ After all this he finally presents his case that Calvin did not teach unlimited redemption. Here are his essential arguments. Firstly, he asserts that when Calvin spoke of Christ suffering for the whole world, and where Calvin affirmed that “all” meant all, as opposed to some⁶⁹ Leahy asserts:

First of all, Calvin, in total submission to Scripture never suppressed the biblical emphasis on the universality of the gospel call. On the contrary, he emphasized that call. It does not follow, however, that a universal command to obey the gospel is tantamount to universal atonement.⁷⁰

Sadly, this is a common response. It was, apparently, among the same responses given by Du Moulin and other contemporaries of Amyraut in their counter-polemic against Amyraut. Unfortunately, this response does not do justice to Calvin. In the above citations and others, Calvin speaks of more than just the divine offer and call of the Gospel, but of what Christ has done ‘for the world.’ The object of the many comments is Christ and his work of sacrifice for sin, not the offer of grace to all. It is granted that Calvin easily moves from this to the offer and call of the gospel, but clearly he does so on the already established basis of the general work of Christ for all men.

Moving on, Leahy then argues:

Secondly, Calvin does show an awareness of limited or definite redemption. Commenting on 1 John 2:2, he says, with reference to the clause “and not for our sins only”...⁷¹

For brevity’s sake I shall not quote Calvin on that passage. No one denies Calvin’s claim that *world* here represented the church scattered throughout the world. Leahy then cites John Murray on this verse to the effect that in this passage “the reprobate are not included in the propitiation and that ‘the whole world’ refers to all throughout the world who are partakers of salvation without distinction of race, or clime, or time.”⁷²

However, what Calvin actually says in regard to this verse does not prove Leahy’s case. Rather, Calvin does affirm the sufficiency-efficiency formula, and given his comments on Isa 53--in both his sermons and commentaries--he understood

⁶⁶It is impossible for this paper to present a criticism of very proponent of the thesis that Calvin believed that Christ died only for the elect. My intention here is to present these few critiques as a summary and representation of responses made against that thesis. Nor should my responses here should be taken as absolute, but suggestive and initiatory for further research and discussion.

⁶⁷Frederick S. Leahy, “Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement,” *Reformed Theological Journal* 8 (1992), 55-64. It would be well to note that it strikes me that for Leahy, the idea of unlimited atonement or unlimited redemption, necessarily entails a categorical denial of an efficacious substitutionary atonement in any other sense. Here Leahy is reading Calvin through the filter of this rather Owenic-Turretinian false-dilemma fallacy.

⁶⁸Leahy, p., 55. Leahy presents the basic core arguments against Amyraldianism in about 5 pages.

⁶⁹See Calvin on Rom 5:18 and Isa 53:12 (Sermons and Commentaries).

⁷⁰Leahy, p., 59.

⁷¹Ibid., p., 59.

⁷²Ibid., p., 60.

that in the traditional sense, not in the later sense. Further, Calvin here addresses the claim that the reprobate, even Satan, will all actually be saved, and so it is against this that he writes. Against that claim he adopts the reading that here John means the whole church as opposed to the “our” of John and his readers. What is more, and this is important, nowhere does Calvin here deny or reject unlimited atonement as he elsewhere understands it. All he is demonstrating here is exegetical flexibility--whether we agree with him or not. Calvin is simply saying that *this verse* is not teaching that all men, even Satan, will be saved, only that John stresses that only the whole church will be saved. Lastly, it would be foolish to attempt to read the rest of Calvin’s teaching by the imposed understanding of this one passage from Calvin.

Thirdly, argues Leahy, “those who appeal to Calvin’s remarks on the ‘all’ and ‘world’ passages have been less than fair to him, at times quoting selectively and even out of context.”⁷³ Building on this, Leahy introduces his fourth point that in terms of “all” and “world” Calvin meant only all sorts of men. Here Leahy cites Calvin on 1 Tim 2:3-5. Indeed, all concede that on this verse, Calvin did stress the all rather denotes all kinds of people.⁷⁴ Here Calvin basically follows the traditional exegesis of this verse. Augustine in his polemics had made this same argument against the Pelagians. For him, however, the “will” was the will of decree. Calvin assumes it’s the will revealed, yet with the same stress on all sorts of men. However, all that notwithstanding, one cannot seriously maintain that in every other instance where Calvin treated on the import of “all” and “world” he meant only all sorts of men. Calvin is crystal clear in his denial of this sort of reading in many places. So it is really Leahy who is engaging in selective and out of context readings of Calvin.

Next, Leahy states that “it is true that Calvin does not deal explicitly with the extent of the atonement, but this was not an issue in his day.”⁷⁵ The first assertion is simply not true and completely gratuitous on his part. The second assertion is likewise untrue. Limited Atonement was an issue of his day, indeed, ever since Gottschalk it had been an issue. Bucer, for example, held to it against the Anabaptists in his debates with them. The theological categories of limited atonement were present in Calvin’s time.

After this, Leahy notes that “students of Calvin have found only one passage which could be regarded as explicitly denying an unlimited atonement.” He then cites Calvin’s reply to the Lutheran Heshusius, who defended the corporeal presence of Christ in the sacramental elements. Calvin says: “I should like to know how the wicked can eat of the flesh of Christ which was not crucified for them? and how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins?”⁷⁶ I shall return again to this passage below. At this point I only wish to note some of Leahy’s comments with regard to it. Firstly, he cites Robert A Peterson, who himself thinks Calvin’s position is unclear. “But” argues Leahy, “given Calvin’s strong emphasis on substitutionary atonement, and that the doctrine of election was fundamental to his thinking, and that he clearly saw Christ’s death as actually redeeming men, it is not so difficult to decide which side he would have taken in subsequent discussion of the extent of the atonement.”⁷⁷

These are all very problematic assertions. For example, Beza and Bucer were both contemporaries of Calvin and thus there was a context for Calvin to have spoken in understandable categories--if he had, indeed, held to a Bezarian-Owenic type of limited atonement. Further, the argument from the doctrine of substitutionary atonement needs more work. The modern Owenic construction of substitutionary atonement is saturated in commercialistic language, which arose after Calvin. Therefore, when modern theologians argue that Calvin could not have held to unlimited redemption because of his strong beliefs in substitutionary atonement, they engage in some question-begging reasoning. Amyraut and Baxter, for example, both held to a strong doctrine of substitutionary atonement, as did Musculus, Ursinus, Ussher and many others, and still they held that Christ died for all sufficiently. Regarding Calvin’s emphasis on election, this is an argument that many have used, yet similarly, it begs the question. It assumes that unlimited redemption--as Calvin really did understand it, as the Medievals understood it--is contrary to election. Indeed, it was the late Protestant Scholastics

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴I shall touch more on this passage below.

⁷⁵Leahy, p., 61.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

who worked hard to attempt to establish such a contradiction between Federalism--specifically the Covenant of Redemption--and unlimited redemption.⁷⁸

Leahy then cites Cunningham as saying:

There is not, then, we are persuaded, satisfactory evidence that Calvin held the doctrine of a universal, or indefinite atonement. And, moreover, we consider ourselves warranted in asserting that there is sufficient evidence that he did *not* hold this doctrine.

Leahy then notes that for Cunningham, the doctrine of universal atonement as

somewhat alien, to say the least, in its general spirit and complexion, to the leading features of his (Calvin's) theological system.⁷⁹

After this, Leahy cites Calvin affirming the efficacy of the advocacy and atonement made by Christ.⁸⁰ All of which is, by the way, easily explicable under the rubric of the sufficiency-efficiency of the atonement, and in no way militates against unlimited atonement.

Leahy concludes:

The notion of any substitution of Christ that did not infallibly secure the salvation of all for whom he died would have been utterly repugnant to Calvin... For Calvin, with Bible in hand, Christ died for all without distinction, not all without exception.⁸¹

I can only conclude that it is Leahy who is reading Calvin through a conceptual filter foreign to Calvin himself.

*Paul Helm*⁸²

Helm in this article responds to R.T. Kendall's argument that Calvin held that although Christ died for all men, he only intercedes for the elect, and Kendall's subsequent claims regarding the Protestant Scholastic redefinition of faith and assurance. Most of what Helm has to say against Kendall is not germane to this paper. However, there is one argument that does directly bear here. Regarding Calvin's statements on Jn 1:29, Rom 5:18 and Jn 3:16, Helm notes:

What is clear from such passages is that Calvin does not teach a definite atonement, but it is equally clear that he does not teach universal atonement. Calvin seems to have various reasons for using these expressions. For instance 'the world' means the world of Jew and Gentile (*Comm.* John 1:29), 'all' means that the gospel is propounded to all (*Comm.* Rom 5:18, *Comm.* John 3:16) Overall, Calvin's remarks are not consistent with universal atonement but they are consistent with limited, definite atonement.⁸³

⁷⁸It was to Boston's credit that he finally achieved some balance and reconciliation between these two schemas.

⁷⁹Leahy, p., 62. I could be facetious here and wonder what exactly of Calvin did Cunningham read?

⁸⁰Leahy here cites Calvin in his *Institutes*, 2:16:2.

⁸¹Leahy, p., 62. I have chosen to leave out Leahy's concluding remarks against Kendall's thesis, as I am not defending that, as I have no intention of defending it. Further, the previous citations from Calvin (above) clearly show the hollowness of Leahy's claim.

⁸²Paul Helm, "Calvin, English Calvinism and the logic of the Doctrinal Development," *The Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981) 179-185 Helm, like Leahy and others, falls for the same false dilemma fallacy regarding substitutionary atonement.

⁸³*Ibid.*, p., 180.

This constant misreading and interpretation of Calvin is fairly baffling. To reduce all of Calvin's universalistic language to the singular idea that he meant only that Christ is offered and propounded to all is puzzling. On the contrary, Calvin's true thinking is that because the person and work of Christ is made for all, in some sense, it can rightly be offered to all.⁸⁴

Richard Muller

Richard Muller, the leading Calvin scholar of today states:

In the strict sense, "atonement" is not Calvin's word: Calvin uses *expiatio*, *satisfactio*, and *reconciliatio* as well as the more general term *redemptio* (particularly in the *Institutes*, 2.16.4-6). The two former terms refer to the work of Christ as it relates to the problem of sin and guilt, *expiatio* indicating specifically the propitiation or propitiatory sacrifice (i.e., the "atonement") and *satisfactio* indicating the reparation or amends made for the wrong against divine justice. Here Calvin insists on the fulness of Christ's work, the complete expiation or satisfaction for sin—which is to say an unlimited "atonement." On the other hand, the benefits of Christ's death, the *reconciliatio* or actual *redemptio*, the restoration and purchase of individuals, is restricted to the elect, to those upon whom Christ bestows his benefits; and, thus, if the term "atonement" is loosely construed to mean "reconciliation" or "redemption", Calvin arguably teaches "limited atonement." In fact, Calvin's usage of an unlimited *expiatio* or *satisfactio* and a limited *reconciliatio*, or as we shall see *intercessio*, follows closely the old distinction between sufficiency and efficiency and well fits what is loosely called "limited atonement" not only in Calvin's thought but also in later Reformed theology.⁸⁵

There is a lot here to which I can agree with, but there are some things with which I would disagree. It is good that Muller makes the concession that in regard to the *expiatio* Calvin sustained an unlimited expiation. However, two things need to be said by way of challenge. Firstly, I am not convinced that while Calvin held the expiation of Christ to be unlimited, he, on the other hand, held that the redemption was limited. The above citations would quite apparently demonstrate that the contrary is true. Other examples from Calvin may suffice to further highlight the problem here.

Calvin:

For the faithless have no profit at all by the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, but rather are so much the more damnable, because they reject the mean that God had ordained: and their unthankfulness shall be so much the more grievously punished, because they have trodden under foot the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was the ransom for their souls...⁸⁶

and a little later:

Nevertheless howsoever the case standeth, our Lord Jesus Christ is not come to give us occasion to abuse the grace that he hath purchased us, for that were a mocking of him to his face. If we should go wallow again in our own filthiness after that he hath *washed us in his blood*, were it not a willful defiling of the thing that is most holy, yea and which maketh all the whole world holy? Now forasmuch as we are all of us corrupted, and the whole world is subject to cursing, and all of us are condemned: there is not anything to sanctify us *again*, but [only] the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁸⁷

⁸⁴For instance, Helm, in another work, says: "Calvin certainly held Christ died for all men in a sense that allowed Christ to be preached to all, and all invited freely to come to him." Paul Helm, *Calvin and the Calvinists*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), p., 47.

⁸⁵Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), p., 34.

⁸⁶Calvin, *Sermons on Galatians*, 1:3-5.

⁸⁷Ibid. [Emph., mine.] Calvin goes on to say: "the faithful therefore must give themselves to all pureness of life, and consider that the redeeming of them by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the sacrifice of his death and passion, is upon *condition* that they should forsake themselves, according also as we hear how our Lord Jesus Christ telleth us, that those which will be his disciples, must abase themselves and follow him. (Mark 8:34)" Once again, this

Note here that Calvin says that the blood of Christ was the appointed ransom price for their souls. Further, interestingly Calvin alludes to 2 Peter 2:1 and 22 when he speaks of damnable men who wallow again in their own filth. Calvin thus sees 2 Peter 2:1-22 as salvific in import. Add to this the allusion to Hebrews 10:29. Calvin collapses the ideas expressed in 2 Peter 2:1 and Hebrews 10:29 thereby forming a theological foundation for an unlimited and universal reference point for Christ's redemption, as the 'blood of Christ which sanctifies the world.'

Secondly,

As for example, behold the Turks, which *cast away the grace which was purchased for all the world* [emph., mine] by Jesus Christ: the Jews do the like: the Papists, although they say not so openly, they show it in effect. And all they are as well shut out, and banished from the redemption which was purchased for us, as if Jesus Christ had never come into the world. And why so? For they have not this witness, *That Jesus Christ is not their redeemer*: and although they have some little taste, yet they remain always starved, and if they hear but this word, *Redeemer*, it brings them no substance, neither get they any profit by that which is contained in the Gospel. And thus we see now, how men are not partakers of *this benefit, which was purchased them* [emph., mine] by our Lord Jesus Christ. And how great and intolerable a treachery were it, if we as much (as in us lieth) should fall to bewraying of ourselves again in our own filthiness?⁸⁸

This statement from Calvin is nested in a rich context. In the preceding passage he speaks of the particularity of God's dealings with covenanted Israel in the OT--but he notes: "Now it pleases him to make the Heathen & Gentiles partakers of it, and have his church reach throughout the world." The follows the above quoted material. Following the quotation, he also notes that even though Christ purchased grace and the benefits of salvation for the Turks, the Jews and the Papists, he came into the world "but for one certain people" the church, who have been chosen by the Father, while setting aside the rest of mankind. Calvin considered that redemption of Christ was universal. Grace and salvation were purchased for all men, the Jews, the Turks, that is the world.⁸⁹ The second point is that what Muller describes of Calvin sounds very much like the so-called Kendal theses that Christ died for all men, but only intercedes for the elect.⁹⁰ This idea was categorically rejected by the Protestant Scholastics. Building on that, it is undeniable that the later Protestant Scholastics denied that the expiation of Christ was unlimited. For them, it was limited to the elect. What is more, Muller's closing comment is not sustainable for the fact that the Protestant Scholastics collapsed the sufficiency of Christ's suffering and death *into* the efficiency of the death of Christ. The suffering and death of Christ is only sufficient for the elect, as it is also only efficient for them.⁹¹ Rather than posit this, I would say for Calvin, the work of Christ, in all its aspects, contain both universal and particularistic elements. That is, the expiation and redemption of Christ was seen as for all men, elect and non-elect, in some sense, and yet for the elect only in another sense.

reveals to us that Calvin did understand the redemption of 2 Peter 2:1 (as well as 2 Pet 1:9), as soteriological. On the other hand, against this position, John Owen says: "...it is denied that the blood of Christ was a sufficient price and ransom for all and every one, not because it was not sufficient, but because it was not a ransom," John Owen, *The Death of Death*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1983), p., 184. By that last clause, Owen means that it was not a ransom for all. However, just before this remark, Owen does concede that some early "protestant divines" did subscribe to the position that died to provide a sufficient ransom was for all. Unhappily for us all is that one of those early Protestant divines, whom he fails to mention, was Calvin himself. This concession by Owen sustains Baxter's charge that it was Owen and his new school who introduced a revision into the original Lombardian formula. What is not appreciated today is that the new formula reflects a essential change in the underlying theology of that formula.

⁸⁸Calvin, *Sermons on Timothy*, 1Tim 2:5-6. Note the purchase and redemptive language here.

⁸⁹I would contend that there is no place for any attempted argument that Calvin meant something like all *Turks* without distinction, or all *Jews* without distinction, or all *Papists* without distinction, or all peoples of the *world* without distinction and so forth. These people reject, says Calvin, that which was purchased for them, hence he has the reprobate in mind. Calvin is using these terms broadly, inclusively and with a certain equivalency.

⁹⁰I would say here, contrary to Muller, that there is evidence that Calvin considered the reconciliation and intercession of Christ contained a universal element alongside a particularistic element.

⁹¹Remember that in their thinking, it's only hypothetical: Had God elected more or the world, then the work of Christ would have been just as sufficient for that enlarged body of the elect of God.

Roger Nicole is regarded by many as the leading expert on all things Amyraldian and all things pertaining to Calvin's understanding of the extent of the atonement. Once again, Nicole is responding to Kendall's claims regarding Calvin. However, much of what he says does have a bearing here, for Nicole concentrates on the claim that Calvin advocated unlimited redemption. Pages 119-211 mainly take up the history of this debate, from Amyraut on. Pages 212-219 are taken up with a discussion of the arguments used to prove that Calvin held to unlimited redemption. The rest of the article is taken up with his arguments to the contrary. In regard to the proffered claims against the assertion that Calvin held to unlimited redemption, I will only touch on selective arguments.

Firstly, Nicole tackles some of the so-called "wasted blood" passages. He concedes that Calvin offered no explanation of the import of his statements.⁹³ Such a statement from Nicole is exactly because he cannot take Calvin's own statements at face value. From this Nicole sets forth his counter. Here Nicole is at his weakest. Rather than stating what Calvin believed, arguing from Calvin as a source, against the premise of unlimited atonement, Nicole proceeds to give an explanation of what *he* thinks the biblical verses in question mean. For example, regarding Rom 14:15, 2 Pet 2:1, *etc.*, Nicole asserts the context is that of the weaker brother, and that Paul affirms that God will, in the end, cause them to stand and not fall. He states: "Paul's statements do not represent an expression of doubt as to God's perseverance with his own for whom Christ died, as a castigation of the selfishness of so-called strong Christians..."⁹⁴ All this is well and good, but irrelevant. What is interesting is that, as noted above, Calvin seems to imply that this destroyed weaker brother *dies* and that the blood of Christ really is wasted, not merely *temporally* rendered of no value (see fnts 15 and 16 above). I am not sure how the brother who is made to 'hurry to death' can be said to have also been made to 'stand in the end.' What is of interest is the underlying assumption in Nicole's thinking. For him to assume that this is a counter, he must be thinking that unlimited atonement, categorically, can only mean inefficacious atonement and a denial of perseverance of the saints. Once again, then, we see a false dilemma fallacy in operation. We also see a case of Nicole imposing a theological framework upon the text--he is reading it in the light of his other *a priori* assumptions.

Contrary to Nicole and Owens' exegesis of Rom 14:15 and 1 Cor 8:11-12, Alan Clifford says:

Owen rejects the very basis of the Apostle's concern: 'That by *perishing* here is understood eternal destruction and damnation I cannot apprehend.' Owen is at his most vulnerable here, for all his critical acumen seems to escape him. He was surely aware that Paul uses the same verb *apollumi*, 'to destroy utterly' as in Jn 3:16; there can be no doubt that the Apostle intends to convey the danger of eternal destruction, while it makes sense to infer that all who perish are non-elect, the irresponsibility of others is not to be viewed as a fiction, any more than the actions of those who effected the otherwise divinely appointed death of Christ.⁹⁵

Clifford is right here, for I can see no other place where Paul uses *apollumi* in a sense other than complete loss and destruction.

⁹²Roger Nicole, "John Calvin's View on the Extent of the Atonement," in *An Elaboration of the Theology of John Calvin*, ed., Richard C. Gamble, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), vol 8., pp., 119-147.

⁹³Ibid., p., 136.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Allan Clifford, *Atonement and Justification: English Evangelical Theology 1640-1790: An Evaluation*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), pp., 157-8. There orthodox have a problem here. One cannot simply create a semantic range and then theologise from that newly created range. To borrow from the style of reasoning exhibited by Long (see below), there is no other case in the Pauline corpus, or in the NT corpus that I can see where *apollumi* does not mean complete loss or ruin "unless this be the sole instance." If Long wants to use this method of argument, then he is bound to use it consistently, or else be seen to be engaging in special pleading. It seems sounder to accept the force of the word as it is used elsewhere in the NT. Indeed, and then, in this way, if this verse is juxtaposed to Jn 10:28 with Rom 14:15, the theological schema of atonement's sufficiency and efficiency provides a perfect explanatory tool for dealing with the paradox presented by just such a juxtapositioning.

In regard to Heb 10:29 and 2 Pet 2:1, Nicole, similarly, asserts that these verses apply to false professors and hypocrites.⁹⁶ He then cites Calvin as noting that these and similar verses do speak of hypocrites. While this is true, it does not sustain Nicole's thesis. Of course those who reject Christ, especially after having been within the visible church, and knowing as they ought to have known, are hypocrites. But that says nothing about what Calvin thought Christ had done for them.

After this, Nicole discusses those statements from Calvin, wherein he seems to indicate universal atonement.⁹⁷ For example, Calvin: "When he says 'the sin of the whole world,' he extends this kindness indiscriminately to the whole human race, that the Jews might not think that the Redeemer has been sent to them alone."⁹⁸ And: "By Christ's death, all the sins of the world have been expiated."⁹⁹ And: "He makes this favor [*i.e.*, righteousness] common to all, because it is propounded to all, and not because it is in reality extended to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God's benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him. And gain, Calvin: "so we see that Jesus Christ was laden with all our sins and iniquities."¹⁰⁰

To these and other such statements, Nicole responds by reminding us that the pronouns "we," "us," and so forth in many of the citations refer to believers in the world at large,¹⁰¹ or that he means to contrast the elect as opposed to the Jews. Then he also says:

Calvin is also concerned to express the sufficiency of the work of Christ so that no one inclined to claim this work and to cast himself or herself on the mercy of God should feel discouraged by thinking that somehow the cross would not avail him/her.¹⁰²

While this is perfectly true, as far as it goes, it lacks for not taking into cognizance the nature of this *sufficiency*. Was it intended for all, or was it abstracted from the purpose of Christ? Should it be understood in the sense of the Medievals and other early Reformers or in the sense of the later Protestant Scholastics? Calvin expressly states that upon Christ "he alone bore the punishment of many, because on him was laid the guilt of the whole world"¹⁰³ And again: Christ... took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgment, threatened all sinners."¹⁰⁴ This is more than just a bare or abstract sufficiency of the Protestant Scholastics. One would be hard-pressed to argue or demonstrate that the Protestant Scholastics could have thought or assert that Christ suffered for all, bearing the sins of the whole world in his suffering and death.

Nicole then adds:

Finally in the context of many of these above quotations expressions are used that connote the actual application or attainment of salvation, not merely an imputation that would still await appropriation: 'our sins are forgiven' or 'wiped away,' God is 'satisfied' or 'appeased,' 'we are justified,'.... In this respect, as in so many others, Calvin's language parallels very closely the usage of Scripture... Neither the Scripture nor Calvin can be fairly interpreted to teach universal salvation, but the passages advanced as supporting universal atonement simply do not stop there. It is of course legitimate to distinguish as clearly does, between imputation

⁹⁶Nicole, p., 137.

⁹⁷Ibid., pp., 137-8.

⁹⁸Calvin, *Commentaries*, Jn 1:29.

⁹⁹Calvin, *Commentaries*, Col 1:14.

¹⁰⁰Cited from Nicole, p., 138.

¹⁰¹Ibid., p., 139.

¹⁰²Ibid

¹⁰³Calvin, *Commentaries*, Isa., 53:12.

¹⁰⁴Cited by Nicole, p. 216, c.f., *Institutes*, 2.16.2. Compare this with Charles Hodge's comments: "Christ fulfilled the conditions of the covenant under which all men were placed. He rendered the obedience required of all, and suffered the penalty which all had incurred; and therefore his work is equally suited to all," Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1981), vol 2, p., 545.

and application, but it is improper to separate these, since they always go together. The choice, therefore, is not between universal atonement and definite atonement as properly representative of Calvin's theology, but rather between universal salvation and definite atonement.¹⁰⁵

For sure, those for whom Christ entreated effectually, to these the benefits of his expiation will necessarily be effectually applied. When Calvin speaks of the effectuality of Christ's death for believers, he speaks to the efficiency side of the traditional sufficiency-efficiency formula. However, this does not impinge upon the fact that Calvin also held that in another sense, Christ died for all men. Calvin is not hereby negating the use of the sufficiency side of the formula as it respects all men, elect and non-elect. Against Nicole, the reality is the inapplicability of the attempt to reduce all the quotations cited by Nicole down to these minimalist solutions.

In response to Calvin and his statements regarding Isa 53:12, Nicole writes: "...we reply that these quotations are indeed remarkable, since a good opportunity to assert definite atonement is here obviously by-passed. What is stated, however, is not different from the passages noted... [already]... and the same kind of response would apply."¹⁰⁶ Unfortunately for Nicole, Calvin does not resort to an "all sorts of men" argument when he comments on Isa 53:12. Typically, Nicole resorts to Calvin on 2 Tim 2:4, where Calvin does invoke the "all sorts of men" argument, and 3 other instances where Calvin limits *all* to all the elect.¹⁰⁷ However, in the 3 counter examples, the context is the election by God of certain individuals.

At this point, Nicole presents a list of counter arguments which, in his estimation, establish the case against unlimited redemption in Calvin's theology. Arguments 1 and 2 are cognates. Essentially, Nicole argues that given Calvin's strong sense of the "divine purpose does appear to imply this specific reference of the atonement, and repeatedly Calvin asserts that God's purpose of election is ultimate." He then states: "To assume a hypothetical redemptive purpose more inclusive than the election of grace is doing precisely what he precludes. It is difficult to assume that Calvin would open himself to such self-contradiction."¹⁰⁸ But once again, Nicole operates under a false conception. There is no contradiction if one accepts Calvin at face value. Calvin is operating from the traditional formula that Christ meaningfully and intentionally *suffered and died for all*, sufficiently, yet he also suffered and died meaningfully and intentionally only *for the elect*, efficiently. There is here a dual intentionality. It is because Nicole is working from post-Calvin conceptual filters that he cannot see the obvious. It is not that the work of Christ is absolutely or unqualifiedly universal, but that election is absolutely and unqualifiedly particularistic. For Calvin, elements of universality and particularism subsist side by side in the person and work of Christ.

Nicole's third argument is that for Calvin, faith and repentance have been merited by Christ. Again this is true, but in no way militates against unlimited redemption in Calvin's thinking. When the decree to save meets the atonement, efficacious salvation is secured. In terms of the will revealed, however, the work of Christ was conditionally presented to the world. A man's actual redemption is conditioned by the instrumental means of faith, which is demanded of all men, but granted to the elect. The bulk of Nicole's argument relies on certain assumptions. If, however, Calvin did not share these assumptions, then these counters by Nicole have no weight.¹⁰⁹

The fourth argument is that Calvin conjoins the benefit of the atonement, which come only to the elect, with references to the intent of the atonement. Yet again, this is perfectly compatible with the traditional sufficiency-efficiency model. The key is that the traditional model was rejected later by the Protestant Scholastics. There is a strong case that Amyraut sought to restore it and its biblical implications.

Argument five is the claim that Calvin conjoins the priestly work of Christ with the substitutionary death. Nicole cites Calvin on Isa 53:12 as saying: "that the atonement might be powerful He performed the office of an advocate, and

¹⁰⁵Ibid., p., 140.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p., 141.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp., 141-142; c.f., Calvin on Jn 6:45, 12:32, and 17:19.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p., 142.

¹⁰⁹That is, most of these arguments only "work" in a post-Owenic-Turretin theological context.

interceded for all who entered this sacrifice by faith.” And from his *Sermons* on Isa 53:12, he cites Calvin as saying: “Whenever the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached to us, we must at the same time add the prayer that he made.”¹¹⁰

Nicole adds: “...if the oblation and intercession are recognised to be co-extensive, they will either be both universal or both particular. The clear-cut particularity of the intercession becomes therefore a telling argument for the equal particularity of the atonement.”¹¹¹

A few responses can be made to this. Strikingly, Nicole does not actually cite an instance of Calvin invoking this argument.¹¹² That alone is telling. Also, from the first citation, it is clear that Calvin means those who by faith have appropriated the benefits of the sacrifice, for these Christ intercedes. Nicole’s claim, I would argue, operates within a post-Calvin thought world. It was the Protestant Scholastics who assumed a one-to-one correspondence between the atonement, redemption and intercession of Christ. Thus the argument works backwards. If Christ only intercedes for the elect, and if the intercession and atonement are co-terminus, then he only atoned for the elect. The problem here is that the alleged correspondence is always assumed, and rhetorically, at that by Owen, *et al*, never exegetically proven. And again no problem here. In terms of the efficacy of the atonement, where atonement and election meet, there is an efficacious correspondence between expiation and intercession. Additionally, if Muller is correct, and I think he is, that for Calvin the expiation is unlimited (as opposed to a limited redemption), then it is not correct to assume that for Calvin, the oblation and intercession of Christ have an exact one-to-one correspondence as Nicole tries to argue here.¹¹³

The sixth argument:

Calvin deals with texts which are usually associated with a universal saving intent in a way which shows that he was mindful at that very moment of the particular elective purpose of God. This is explicitly brought to the fore in the commentaries and sermons on Eze 18:32, Jn 3:16, 2 Pet 3:9. In the commentaries and sermons on 1 Tim 2:4 and Tit 2:13 the word “all” is interpreted to refer to “all kinds or classes of men.” In relation to Jn 1:29 and 1 Jn 2:2 the word “world” is viewed as intending to transcend a nationalistic Jewish particularism... Now we have yet to meet an upholder of universal atonement who would favour such an interpretation. In fact, we have never met one who would hesitate to use all these texts in support of his/her view. Surely if Calvin held to universal grace, he would not find it suitable, let alone necessary to provide such explanations for these passages.”¹¹⁴

Nicole says more similar to this, but this is enough. This is an odd argument. In terms of the first set of verses, Calvin does take the universal reading, and so the force of Nicole’s argument is immediately undercut. Thus, it is not difficult to turn Nicole’s argument on its head. For example, why would Calvin imagine that God loved so the whole world, that he sent his Son into this world to save all men, and yet somehow also imagine that on the cross, Christ died only for the elect? That is rather incongruous. Or conversely, it would also seem odd that had Calvin held to a limited atonement in the fashion of Owen and others, why he never attempted to limit these three verses to the elect, as did, almost uniformly, the later Protestant Scholastics. In terms of the second set, he follows the traditional Medieval reading, as set out by

¹¹⁰Cited by Nicole, p., 143, Calvin *Comm.*, on Isa 53:12.

¹¹¹Nicole, p., 143-4. Actually, there nothing in what Calvin says that logically necessitates Nicole’s argument. It is not as if he had said, when the passion of Christ is preached to us, we must add the prayer he made for us *alone*. Nicole is committing a logical fallacy here of assuming a universal negative from a bare positive.

¹¹²It is true that for Calvin, the expiation and intercession are inseparable, such that the expiation grounds the intercession making the latter possible, but that is not evidence that Calvin reversed the logic and thought that a limited intercession thereby proved a limited expiation (atonement); i.e., Christ died for the elect *alone*.

¹¹³To be noted, it is not my desire to pit Muller against Nicole, but I cannot help but see how Muller’s claim must negatively impact Nicole’s argument here. If there is some qualification from Muller which I have not yet seen, then so be it and this part of my argument will readily be retracted.

¹¹⁴Nicole., p., 144.

Augustine. For the last set, specifically 1 Jn 2:2, Calvin is concerned with the idea that all men will actually be saved.¹¹⁵ The problem is that here Nicole has invoked a category fallacy. He has made a comparison between apples and oranges. When Calvin addresses the will of God in regard to predestination in the context of any attempt to deny absolute predestination, Calvin is more likely to make qualifications (as he does with regard to 1 Tim 2:4). However, when it comes the atonement simply considered, he rarely makes any like qualifying comments (e.g., 1 Jn 2:2 which seems to be the only exception). I would argue, therefore, that to argue from Calvin's qualification of "all" in 2 Timothy 2:4 that this regulates his position on the extent of the atonement is unsound.

Lastly, there is little ground for arguing that with regard to Calvin on Jn 1:29, he meant merely the world, generally and as a mere class as opposed to the Jews. That is to read into Calvin what is not there. Calvin:

Who taketh away the sin of the world. He uses the word sin in the singular number, for any kind of iniquity; as if he had said, that every kind of unrighteousness which alienates men from God is taken away by Christ. And when he says, the sin OF THE WORLD, he extends this favor indiscriminately to the whole human race; that the Jews might not think that he had been sent to them alone. But hence we infer that the whole world is involved in the same condemnation; and that as all men without exception are guilty of unrighteousness before God, they need to be reconciled to him.¹¹⁶

While it is true that his intent to show that Christ was for all men, against Jewish claims to exclusivity, Calvin clearly states that *this favour is indiscriminately extended to the whole human race*. There is no textual or contextual evidence that by the phrase 'the whole human race,' Calvin meant something like the elect, or all kinds of (elect) people.¹¹⁷ The reference is to the whole world, as condemned, is delimited by his joining statement that: 'all men *without exception* are guilty.' He is not merely contrasting "the world" against the Jews, but including the Jews in the world, in our common condemnation, and its this condemned world's sins that Jesus bears.¹¹⁸

The seventh argument is that those 'embarrassing' Calvin statements pertain to Calvin's doctrine of the indiscriminate call of the gospel, e.g., 2 Pet 3:9. Nicole misses the point that for Calvin the person and the work is made for all, and on account of this both person and work are offered to all.

Argument eight is perplexing. It seems to amount to the claim that because Scripture itself limited the work of Christ to the elect, Calvin held only to limited redemption: "There are in Scripture as in Calvin passages where the particular intent of Christ's death is stressed... Calvin's commentaries on these passages, as well as those on Jn 11:52 and Heb 2:9 reflect this particularity."¹¹⁹ True enough, but this does not prove that Calvin did not also, equally, espouse a certain unlimitedness of the atonement of Christ, which, when Calvin is read at the face value, is exactly the case.

¹¹⁵Calvin follows Augustine's exegesis on this verse.

¹¹⁶Calvin on Jn 1:29, [italics and small caps., Calvin's]. Note how in the last sentence Calvin connects the "whole world" under condemnation with "all men without exception are guilty." There seems to be a great confusion here thanks to Lightfoot, who proposed that the Apostle John contrasts kosmos (i.e., the Gentiles, allegedly) with the Jews, when however, the Apostle more than likely contrasts kosmos (apostate humanity, Jews included) with God. Then comes the unproven assumption that Calvin uses kosmos as Lightfoot suggested.

¹¹⁷Interestingly, we do not apply this strange logic to any of the other instances where Calvin uses the phrase 'the whole human race,' in his commentary on this gospel (i.e.: 1:11, 16, 51; 2:24; 3:3, 13; 5:28, 11:25, 33; 14:30; 17:9), or for example, when Calvin says that the whole human race is bound in sin and condemned by God (e.g., *Institutes*, 3.17.1, and 4.1.17).

¹¹⁸The alternative reading is incongruent. It would amount to Calvin suggesting that Christ bore the sins of the elect, because all men without exception are guilty and need to be reconciled to God. This reading wrenches the logical structure of Calvin's thought. Rainbow's suggestion that *whole world* here for Calvin means the elect or the church is hardly feasible (Rainbow, pp., 153-8). Calvin's thought is clear: the Jews, along with *the whole world*, are bound in the *same* condemnation. The idea that he meant the Jews, along with the church or elect, are bound in the same condemnation lacks plausibility.

¹¹⁹Nicole, pp., 144-145.

Argument nine refers to Heshusius. As I intend to come back to this I will pass over it here.

Argument ten consists of the reality that Calvin uses words like propitiation, reconciliation, redemption which theologians--he does not state who and within what time-frame--"connote an accomplishment that actually transforms the relationship between God and the sinner."¹²⁰ This argument holds, if one accepts the emphatic commercialistic language in regard to the atonement that was stressed later by the Protestant Scholastics. Nicole adds: "What kind of propitiation would this be, if God continued to look upon the sinner as a child of wrath?"¹²¹

This argument is dealt out under the guise of an absolute unconditionality. All hold that the propitiatory work of Christ is conditioned by faith in some sense. No one is declared righteous before and apart from faith. For Calvin, and all the Reformed, faith is gifted to the elect, yet it is nonetheless required by all, and so demanded. Calvin held that the work of Christ is made and offered to all upon this condition of faith. It can only become effectual to them by faith. This *offering* and *making* is an expression of the will of God revealed. This does not imply free will, for even as faith is the *sine qua non* of salvation, God rightly demands it of all of us. Thus there can be an atonement for all, yet which does not automatically transforms the sinner.

Argument eleven asserts that Calvin held that the substitution of Christ was of a penal nature. Nicole then states that if this being so, and if the atonement is unlimited, then who could be condemned at the last day. Nicole adds: It is difficult to imagine that Calvin failed to perceive the necessary link between substitution and definite atonement."¹²² The most immediate problem here is that once again, Nicole does not actually cite an instance of Calvin, himself, using or invoking this argument, which is again telling. Therefore, Nicole's inferences are suppositional at best. This point is further underscored by the fact that there is good evidence that within the historic Reformed theology there have been at least two theological models of penal substitution.¹²³ Next, the first assertion rests on false a assumption. It echoes Owen's double-jeopardy argument. Nicole assumes, once again, Owen's emphatic commercialist theological categories.¹²⁴ More than that, it assumes a multi-leveled false dilemma fallacy. Either the atonement is absolutely a penal substitution, or it is not. If it is, and if he penally substituted for all men, then all men must be saved, else we are committed to the problem of double-jeopardy.¹²⁵ However, contrary to Nicole, it is not an either/or but both/and. For the elect, Christ absolutely substituted for them. For the non-elect, he only made a conditional substitution as respecting the *value* of the atonement--the infinite dignity of Christ for an infinite demerit of sin, and so forth--which is made and offered to all men, conditionally. This is exactly the point of the Medieval formula: Christ died *for* all, sufficiently, but *for* the elect, efficiently.

¹²⁰Ibid., p., 145.

¹²¹Ibid. See also the contrasting and balancing statements from Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol., 2, pp., 471, 472, 555, and 557-8. Here Hodge posits that the efficacy of the atonement may be suspended (and thereby delayed) upon conditions in that the benefits of the atonement are not *ipso facto* secured for the recipient. Further, he posits that the elect are still children of wrath, even as the rest are, when they come into this world.

¹²²Ibid., p., 146. Against the Owenic payment view of penal substitution, Dabney boldly says that 'Christ paid the "penal debit of the world," R.L. Dabney, *Christ Our Penal Substitute* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1898), p., 24.

¹²³E.g., Dabney, *Lectures*, p., 521 and 527-8; and Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol 2, pp., 438 and context.

¹²⁴Even Carl Trueman, a vigorous defender of Owen, concedes that Owen's double-jeopardy argument relies "on a crudely commercial theory of the atonement,..." Carl Trueman, *The Claims of Truth: John Owen's Trinitarian Theology*, (Cumbria: Paternoster Press, 1998), pp., 140, fn., 115. Owen's doctrine of atonement is better characterised as of debt-payment rather than a proper penal substitution. See the excellent analysis of Owen's *Death of Death* by Neil A. Chambers, "A Critical Analysis of John Owen's Argument for Limited Atonement in the Death of Death of Christ" (Th.M. thesis, Reformed Theological Seminary, 1998).

¹²⁵Against the double-jeopardy argument, see Dabney, *Lectures*, p., 521, and Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol 2., pp., 442-4 and context. In terms of this model, all appeals to the danger of double jeopardy have no place, whatsoever, with respect to Christ's penal satisfaction for all men or exegesis of the problematic texts such as 1 Jn 2:2.

Argument twelve claims that given Calvin's strong Trinitarianism, in which there is ineffable unity between the persons of the Trinity in the work of Redemption, Calvin could not have held to unlimited redemption.¹²⁶ This again is to read Calvin through the theological grid of post-Calvin Calvinism, that is, through the lens of Federalism and the anti-Amyraut polemic. The claim that it is inconceivable that Christ, as God-man, the world's mediator, could have come into the world in order to save men whom he knew the Father had reprobated assumes an imposed framework not found in Calvin.

The problem here is that this misreads Calvin's secret-revealed will dualism. Christ, as God-man, as the mediator of the world, when enacting the secret will not only reaches out to the elect, but lays hold of them effectively as well. However, Christ, as God-man, as the mediator to the world, when enacting the revealed will of God, only reaches out to all men. At every point the three persons of the Trinity work in perfect harmony.¹²⁷ For this reason Calvin on Mt 23:37 says that it was Christ as the God-man weeping over Jerusalem. And conversely, it is because of this sort of argument from Nicole, that Beza and the Protestant Scholastics held that it was only Christ as a mere man weeping over the city. Lastly (as a counter-factual to Nicole's claim), Davenant, Amyraut, Baxter, and Boston all imagined that in their constructions of the sufficiency-efficiency formula the whole Trinity was harmoniously involved in the work of Christ.

Argument thirteen asserts that it is unlikely that the entire Reformed movement could have so quickly shifted from unlimited redemption to limited redemption. He notes that Beza could not have single-handedly changed the entire thrust of Reformed theology.¹²⁸ This argument suffers from being too simplistic to have merit. No one really suggests that Beza "single-handedly"¹²⁹ changed the entire direction of Reformed theology at this point. Nicole's argument negates the impact of two key ideas, Federalism, and Beza's supralapsarianism. Even the very inculcation of ordered decretalism whether in the form of supralapsarianism or infralapsarianism had a profound impact upon Reformed thinking. These respective forms of ordered decretalism were seen as exhaustively capturing and regulating all of God's redemptive dealings, in much the same way the Covenant of Redemption later worked for Durham and others. Further, there were multiple streams of thought throughout this time. Prior to Dort there was some significant diversity, which seems to have changed post-Dort, where greater uniformity of thought was achieved. And there were Reformed theologians who did take the more traditional approach to Christ's death. Further, Nicole ignores the impact of other men such as Amandus Polanus—who was pivotal in the turn-of-the-century Dutch Reformed theological development. Beza had influenced men like Perkins, then Twisse decades later, and others like Gomarus. Furthermore, the impact of confessionalism and religious conformity must be a factor. This was supremely important in Scottish history, in the Swiss Reformed churches, and in the Netherlands's churches where Dort held a strong grip. One last thought, Nicole ignores the greater degree of internationality between the Reformed 'worlds,' and the popularity of certain theologians such as Turretin and Owen in some circles.

To briefly wrap up Nicole's arguments, the best way to expose the problematic argumentation from Nicole is to note, by way of example, his claim that *all* for Calvin always signified all kinds or classes of men.¹³⁰ There is a ready counter-example to this from Calvin in his comments on 2 Pet 3:9, where Calvin says all is all, elect and non-elect. Calvin's own words notwithstanding, we also have his comments from Isaiah where he says to the effect that 'sometimes all means all.' Calvin's *all kinds* statement cannot be taken absolutely. And so, Nicole commits two key fallacies. He isolates Calvin from his previous exegetical and theological tradition, and then he retrojects a later tradition on to Calvin. Yet he also isolates Calvin's own remarks artificially grouping them with others of seemingly like kind. The comments are disconnected from their contexts. For example, nowhere does Calvin on 2 Tim 2:1-6 ever move in his logic such that

¹²⁶Nicole, p., 146.

¹²⁷Thus Calvin's understanding of the *munus triplex* is still fully operative in his conception of the person and work of Christ as outlined in this paper. C.f., K.D., Kennedy, *Union with Christ and the Extent of the Atonement in Calvin*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002).

¹²⁸Nicole, p., 146.

¹²⁹Ibid., 146.

¹³⁰As Calvin himself apparently states in his comments on 1 Tim 2:5.

“all” becomes “all kinds” which then in its turn is transmuted to mean “some of all kinds.”¹³¹ What is actually the case there is that Calvin is stressing that Paul’s prime intent is not to focus on individuals, but kinds of individuals. Nowhere does Calvin then move to “some of all kinds” of individuals. However, it is that very move that is present in nearly all Calvinistic exegesis of 1 Tim 2:1-6. Nor is it right to insist that Calvin’s emphasis on the universal gospel offer exhausts the meaning of Calvin’s other references regarding the work of Christ ‘in and of itself.’ To do so is more of that artificial grouping and displacement of Calvin’s ideas. Most of Nicole’s arguments seem to be theological inferences based on a framework not directly derived from Calvin himself, but which are foreign to his theological system.

Hans Boersma¹³²

Of the three articles selected, Boersma’s is more balanced. He begins by asserting that his paper attempts to address “if and how Calvin’s seemingly contradictory statements on the extent of the atonement can be reconciled.”¹³³ From this, Boersma then juxtaposes the statement from Calvin in his response to Heshusius:

But the first thing to be explained is, how Christ is present with the unbelievers, as being spiritual food of souls, and, in short, the life and salvation of the world. And as he [Heshusius] adheres so doggedly to the words, I would like to know how the wicked can eat the flesh which was not crucified for them, or how they can drink the blood which was not shed to expiate their sins...¹³⁴

and one of Calvin’s ‘wasted-blood’ quotations.¹³⁵ Regarding Calvin’s comment to Heshusius, there have been many proffered responses. Cunningham, *et al*, have cited this *lone* reference to argue that Calvin did, indeed, hold to limited atonement--that is, the atonement, for Calvin, had no direct general reference point.¹³⁶ Boersma then notes: “Although these two quotations are admittedly extreme examples they do clearly illustrate the problem at hand: did Calvin teach limited or universal atonement?”¹³⁷ My response would be to ask Boersma, “Why is it a case of either/or?” Boersma also chides those of us who, following our own biases, may pick and chose a few statements from Calvin, here and there, in support of our own agendum. Rather, he calls for an attempt to delineate the “general tendency” of Calvin’s theology, first, and then the collation of the “direct and scattered remarks on the extent of the atonement” must have second place.¹³⁸ In response to this, Boersma is in danger of following a deductive top-down approach to Calvin: Find the themes we think Calvin ascribed to, then make all the inductive evidence conform to those themes. Boersma proposes that we start with 4 themes in Calvin: (1) the unity of Christ’s work in redemption; (2) our union with Christ; (3) God’s two-fold will, and (4) common grace.

Regarding the first, Boersma argues that Calvin viewed the work of Christ as a unified coherent whole. He rightly notes that for Calvin there is no tension between the work of Christ and the election of the Father (so to speak). He says wisely: “The christological character of Calvin’s doctrine of election forges a strong link with his soteriology... It is

¹³¹Indeed, there is no need to engage in such efforts to transmute “all kinds” into “some of all kinds” for Calvin, himself, states that the divine will under consideration is the revealed will and from that, the gospel goes forth to all equally and without exception. Such transmutation of “all” would have only been necessary if the will pertained to God’s secret will. Lastly, logically, the phrase “all kinds” is can be taken as equivalent to “all” (universally). There is no need to imagine that “all kinds” can only be taken as equivalent to “some of all kinds.” The phrase “all kinds of men” is quite compatible, as to its distribution, with the phrase “all men” (universally).

¹³²Hans Boersma, “Calvin and the Extent of the Atonement,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 64 (1992) 333-355.

¹³³*Ibid.*, p., 333.

¹³⁴Rainbow, p., 118. I have cited the extract from Rainbow, rather than Boersma because Rainbow cites more than does Boersma.

¹³⁵Boersma cites the quotation from Calvin’s *Sermons* on 2 Tim 2:19 (see above).

¹³⁶One has to keep in mind here that the auxiliary idea that there are or may be indirect benefits of the atonement, *i.e.*, common grace, has no bearing at this point. Further, remember that to date there has not been found any other explicit statement in Calvin’s corpus that Christ died for the elect only.

¹³⁷Boersma, p., 333-4.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, p., 335.

understandable that proponents of a Calvin interpretation which holds to limited atonement have emphasized this aspect.¹³⁹ Regarding the union with Christ, he notes Calvin's idea that by our eating of the sacraments, that it is made "one substance with us."¹⁴⁰ Further, along this same vein, he notes Calvin on 1 Cor 11:24:

Some people's explanation is that it [that is, union with Christ] is given to us when we are made sharers in all the benefits, which Christ procured for us in his own body; by that I mean, when, by faith, we embrace Christ, crucified for us and raised from the dead, and, in that way, come to share effectively in all his benefits. Those who think like this, have every right to their point of view. But I myself maintain that it is only after we obtain Christ himself, that we come to share in the benefits of Christ. And I further maintain that he is obtained, not just when he dwells in us, when he is the one with us, when we are members of his flesh, when, in short, we become united in one life and substance (if I may say so) with him.¹⁴¹

Again, Boersma, from the very tract against Heshusius, cites Calvin as saying:

When I say that the flesh and blood of Christ are substantially offered and exhibited to us in the Supper I at the same time explain the mode, namely that the flesh of Christ becomes vivifying to us, in as much as Christ, by the incomprehensible agency of his Spirit, transfuses his own proper life unto us from the substance of his flesh, so that he himself lives in us, and his life is common to us.¹⁴²

From this, Boersma argues that it is unsound to imagine that Calvin could have held that while the work of Christ, objectively considered, was universal in its potentiality, but limited in its subsequent actualisation of this potentiality by the *Holy Spirit*. Here, Boersma reinforces his previous point that for Calvin the work of Redemption is united and one in Christ. Boersma then argues that given Calvin's doctrine of our union with Christ, such a dichotomy would be unthinkable to him. He further cites Calvin to the effect that Christ by descending to the earth, prepared our own ascent to heaven.¹⁴³ Essentially, Boersma argues that Christ came into this world, with a self-conscious intentionality to save the elect, to save us. For in every aspect of Christ's mediation, his coming into the world, his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, we the elect, were intimately and inseparably united to him. He argues that it would have been unthinkable for Calvin to have considered that Christ came into this world to save all men, without exception, yet only upon his ascension and subsequent intercession would the elect be united with him.

There is a fundamental flaw in Boersma's logic. Let me paraphrase Boersma's argument. Premise 1: He imagines that Calvin considered that in the total life work of Christ, we the elect, were united with Christ, in Christ so to speak. Premise 2: However, there is also the claim that Calvin imagined that Christ came into this world to die for all men. And so the conclusion can only be that given the undeniability of premise 1, premise 2 is false. But the fallacy is that of ambiguity. Premise 2 depends on the assumption that Calvin, and those who argue along these lines, held that Christ came into this world to die for all men, without exception, and, importantly, with no distinction in the divine intentionality. Boersma forgets that the traditional formula of "sufficient for all, efficient for some" presupposes a dual intentionality on the part of the persons of the Trinity. Thus, it is perfectly true that in terms of the decreative will, Christ came into this world with the self-consciousness that he was united to all those whom the Father had given him. Yet also, alongside this, was Christ's self-consciousness that he was to die for all, in some other sense. Boersma follows the common misunderstanding and popularisation of Amyraut and the other Calvinistic universalists. However, what Boersma has done is to give us insight into Calvin's remark to Heshusius. It is more probable that Calvin, given his understanding of the spiritual presence of Christ in communion, would stress that for unbelievers there is no death of Christ for them. That is, there is no efficient or actual death of Christ for them.

¹³⁹Ibid., p., 337.

¹⁴⁰Boersma cites Calvin's *Institutes*, 4.17.3.

¹⁴¹Boersma, p., 339.

¹⁴²Ibid., p., 340.

¹⁴³Ibid., p., 341, see also, *Institutes* 4.17.2.

Curt Daniel's proffered solution to the problematic comment to Heshusius is the most sound in my opinion. After labouring to connect this statement with similar statements in the corpus of Calvin's writings, he essentially argues that Calvin is being somewhat rhetorical.¹⁴⁴ Daniel stresses that for Calvin there can be no appropriation of the sacramental grace without a prior union with Christ and infusing of the Holy Spirit. By way of attempting to summarise and paraphrase what he thinks Calvin meant, Daniel says: "I should like to know how the wicked can eat the flesh of Christ if they do not believe Christ was crucified for them."¹⁴⁵ What Daniel says aligns itself with my own conclusion that the comment aims at chiding Heshusius for thinking that in the sacramental union, an unbeliever can really imagine there is an efficacy from the death of Christ for them, yet which, as unbelievers, they have no warrant to believe. Rhetorically, they have no warrant to imagine that Christ died for them--as pertaining to the efficacy of his death. In a similar vein Clifford states:

Once it is seen--judging by the opening words of the statement--that Calvin is opposing the Lutheran theory of consubstantiation, an otherwise problematic statement makes sense beside his numerous universalist statements. He is virtually asking how unbelievers (or anyone else for that matter) can feed on a crucified Christ simply by eating and drinking consecrated elements; for they themselves were not actually crucified as Christ was. Calvin is simply ridiculing the idea that unbelievers feed on Christ by feeding on mere symbols.¹⁴⁶

Boersma's third theme is the will of God. Here he notes that in Calvin there was a duality in the divine will, that is, though in God, the divine will is unified and one, to us, it appears diverse.¹⁴⁷ Boersma concedes that in terms of the revealed will, God wills the salvation of all. However, what is of interest is that Boersma, in the process of his discussion he cites Calvin on 1 Jn 2:2, where he concedes that Calvin held to Lombard's sufficiency/efficiency formula. However, Boersma does not interact with the implication of his own concession, which is unfortunate. His fourth theme is common grace. He affirms that Calvin subscribed to the doctrine that God loves all men, as their creator-Father and so also wills the salvation of all men.¹⁴⁸ Boersma also follows R.B. Kuiper by noting that many indirect benefits of the atonement accrue to all men, as a designed result of the atonement. I contend that Boersma engages in an almost irrelevant detour on the indirect benefits of the atonement which nonetheless were secured by Christ. Boersma is also following the common grace arguments of Herman Kuiper at this point.¹⁴⁹ All this is true, but irrelevant. Boersma nowhere cites Calvin to sustain Kuiper--so while all that Herman Kuiper says is true, it does not help us here.¹⁵⁰

Concluding remarks: here my intention will be to select only a few of Boersma's more germane arguments and points from the remainder of the article.¹⁵¹ Boersma notes that Calvin held to a unity of the redemptive work, as he has argued, but after this there is a tension in that alongside this particularism there is a divine will and love, more general, which would have all men saved. He asserts that of this tension, Calvin never attempted to dissolve it.¹⁵² The problem is that Boersma has only relocated the very tension he had identified (created?). Now it is not in the person and work of the Son (as alleged), but in terms of tension between the person and work of the Son versus the will of the Father.¹⁵³ And by way of a long summation, Boersma concedes that Calvin at times limits the universal intent of the atonement to bring it in line with his emphasis on the unity of God's work due to his decree. However, he then very problematically asserts that in terms of the 'wasted-blood' passages, Calvin "did not mean to make a statement about the actual extent of the atonement..." For, argues Boersma, Calvin probably only meant to stress the responsibility of pastors, "who might

¹⁴⁴ Curt Daniel, "Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill" (Ph.D diss., University of Edinburgh, 1983), p., 819

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p., 822.

¹⁴⁶ Clifford, *Calvinus*, p., 14.

¹⁴⁷ Boersma, pp., 344-49.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., pp., 349-350.

¹⁴⁹ Herman Kuiper, *Calvin on Common Grace*, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1928).

¹⁵⁰ Boersma, p., 351.

¹⁵¹ Here Boersma is difficult to analyse because of his back and forth argumentation, asserting one thing, then apparently negating it, then reasserting it. I confess I find it is difficult to reproduce the flow of his arguments accurately.

¹⁵² Boersma, p., 350-1.

¹⁵³ It is this very sort of move that led Beza to juxtapose Christ as man against Christ as God.

become instrumental in the destruction of souls for whom Christ's death was *meant to be*.¹⁵⁴ There is irony here for sure. Regarding Heshusius, Boersma argues that Calvin in the context of this discussion stresses the limitedness of the atonement, that is, it is not for unbelievers.

What is more, while the *all* of 1 Tim 2:5 for Calvin is all sorts and kinds of men, Boersma grants that *all* for Calvin, in reference to Rom 5:18, is all without this qualification. Calvin, he says, therefore, did not always follow the rule of thumb determined by 2 Tim 2:5. One wonders how this one verse can rightly said to determine a "rule." Boersma does give us some insight when he notes that for Calvin, God is said to be reconciled to all when he invites all to himself. Yet, he says, rightly, God is not said to be actually reconciled to all: "...only, as far as the gospel offer is concerned, God *shows* himself reconciled."¹⁵⁵ He then argues that given Calvin's inconsistent and ambiguous use of terms like "world" and "all," no consistent or precise Calvinian view of the atonement can be identified.¹⁵⁶

Boersma finally concludes with this very telling statement:

If the above argument is correct it is Calvin's view that *Christ's work of redemption, as a whole, was (only in a sense!) meant for all, and is only applied to the elect*. By using this description Christ's death is not separated from the rest of his redemptive work. Some of the words have been placed between parentheses because Calvin is not always consistent on the point, at times accepting universal intent, while more often asserting that this is not the real way of speaking.¹⁵⁷

My immediate response is to now wonder what was the point? But that aside, clearly Boersma is more prepared to accept that Calvin did at times ascribe to the work of Christ a more universal intent and scope. Yet he incorrectly to imagined that Calvin in this was inconsistent. He and others err by wrongly conceiving Calvin to be inconsistent with himself, when the real problem, for us, is that he was not always explicit enough for his modern readers. He, I would argue, assumed a shared presuppositional base, which, as far as Calvin was concerned, meant that his comments would have been explicable and intelligible to those who shared this same grounding framework. If one assumes the Medieval Synthesis, with its duality of divine intention with respect to the reference points of the atonement, his apparently paradoxical statements make sense. However, if one tries to read into Calvin the idea of a singular divine intentionality with regard to the reference point of the atonement, then and only then does Calvin appear contradictory, and then and only then must his reader engage in mental gymnastics in order to make Calvin *fit* this post-Calvin, Protestant Scholastic model.

To conclude this section: it is better, in my estimation, to take Calvin's numerous statements regarding the universal extent of the atonement at their face value. Given that for Calvin, the world of Jn 3:16 is the whole world, and that this being so, Christ came into the whole world to seek the salvation of all men, and given that this *sending* is an expression of God's love for all men and his willingness to save all, then the subsequent idea that Christ indeed died for all, in some sense, makes the most perfect sense against this backdrop. To state this another way, Calvin's two-fold love of God, coupled with his two-fold will of God would most naturally lead to a two-fold work of redemption. Add to this that Calvin did accept the Medieval Synthesis regarding the extent of the atonement, and that he did operate in this exegetical and theological tradition. Calvin's particularism, in typical Augustinian manner, comes to play when election meets atonement. Here then Calvin will use the metaphor of Christ reaching out to all, but only efficaciously grasping the elect.

Indeed, if, for example, Calvin did hold that the world of Jn 3:16 was the elect, and if he denied any sense of a universal saving will and love of God then his universalistic statements regarding the death of Christ would and should be seen as anachronistic, and one would be warranted to seek for some sort of harmonisation (as opposed to simply positing that Calvin blatantly contradicted himself, which is the least probable solution available).

¹⁵⁴Boersma, p., 352, [emph., mine].

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p., 354.

¹⁵⁶Ibid. This is my paraphrase of Boersma.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., p., 354-5 [emph., Boersma's]. I would want to know how Boersma can speak of Calvin allegedly 'more often asserting that this his not the real way of speaking.'

Calvin developed his understanding of the person and work of Christ along the bifurcation--so to speak--of the dual intentionality on the part of God, the two-fold will of God, as Calvin would have said it. The problem only arises when the Protestant Scholastics import and operate by certain assumptions not present in Calvin. Their grounding assumption is that there cannot be within God any inefficacious intentionality.¹⁵⁸ The Protestant Scholastics denied that we can describe the revealed will as a volition in any sense; not so for Calvin. I would argue that Dabney worked to bring us back to Calvin on this point when he re-introduced the idea of active principles within God, which do not efficaciously bring about what is "desired." I believe we need to rethink the nature of the duality of the will of God, and re-allow the language that describes God's revealed will as a form of intentionality, which is not efficacious, but is, nonetheless, a motivating principle (or in Dabney's terms an active principle) within God. This motivating principle is also described theologically as a desire or a wish. It is this motivating principle--or propension of benevolence as Dabney would say¹⁵⁹--which is part of the cause for the Father sending the Son into the world and for the Son dying for the world, sufficiently.¹⁶⁰ In terms of Calvin, himself, I would argue that many are trying to make the various statements of Calvin "fit" a (later) model of penal satisfaction which itself is foreign to Calvin, instead of identifying Calvin's own understanding of penal satisfaction.¹⁶¹ Calvin's redemptive, categories, therefore, were broader than ours are today. Lastly, we need to finally accept what Calvin truly taught and consequently acknowledge that some of his followers turned aside from his original teaching.

part 3

Moses Amyraut¹⁶²

Before I move on to discuss Richard Baxter's argument in detail I wish to trace out a brief excursus into the theology of Moses Amyraut, otherwise known historically as Moise Amyraldus. Amyraut's theology is complex. There is the popular definition of course, which characterises his position as 4-point Calvinism. The historical definition has always been that for Amyraut, Christ died for all men, to make all men savable. He died to secure no single person's salvation.

¹⁵⁸Trying to find a baseline cause for the difference between Calvin and the Protestant Scholastics on this point is, indeed, dangerous. There is a complex interplay of ideas operating here, for example: Federalism and its interaction with the Protestant Scholastic notion of what God can and cannot wish for. Did one shape and cause the other? Or were they both grasped logically together, and seen as mutually reinforcing and co-limiting the other? I do not know.

¹⁵⁹R.L. Dabney, "God's Indiscriminate Proposals of Mercy," in *Discussions: Evangelical and Theological*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth, 1982), p., 313.

¹⁶⁰As I read Dabney, this is the very reason why he attempts to develop his "active principles" approach, because he, himself, holds that the world of Jn 3:16 and 2 Jn 2:2 is the world of all men, not just the elect; see his *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), p., 525. He has one interesting argument that I would like to just touch on. He states: "In Jn 3:16, make 'the world' which Christ loved, to mean 'the elect world,' and we reach the absurdity, that some of the elect may not believe, and perish," (p., 525.). What he means is that world and whosoever are coterminous. They refer to the same unit of people. Such, if it is the case that "God so loved the elect," then it follows that "whosoever [of the elect] believes will be saved, yet whosoever [of the elect] does not believe will be damned. I think he is right here. The orthodox wrongly assume that the "whosoever" is broader than the elect-world. Yet, it is God so loved the world, that whosoever, of *that* unitary entity believes, will be saved (and so forth). Regarding 1 Jn 2:2, see his comments on p., 528 where he argues for a universal reading of world.

¹⁶¹Of course, the problem here is our unwillingness to concede that there may have been more than one legitimate theological paradigm of penal satisfaction existing within historic Reformed theology.

¹⁶²My following analysis of Amyraut leans heavily on Armstrong's work. I must confess at the outset that my following brief presentation is less than perfect. My aim is to minimally sketch Amyraut's position. There is too much complexity for me to capture in the limitations of this paper. My hope is that I have not misrepresented Amyraut.

The efficacy and the particularism of the atonement comes into play when the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of the atonement to some. This is the popularist definition of Amyraldianism. Added to this is the further complication of the Amyraldian order of the decrees. In contradistinction to the supralapsarians, Amyraut seems to have devised his order of the decrees as they reflect the historical unfolding of God's redemptive activities. Thus, as Warfield popularises, the Amyraldian order of the decrees follows the general outline of decrees to create, to permit the fall, to send Christ into the world to die for all men, to electingly apply the benefits of the atonement to some by the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit.

At the more technical level, George Smeaton says:

Not content to affirm, with the canons of Dort, that the intrinsic value of Christ's death was infinite, and capable, had God so pleased, of being extended to all mankind, they maintained that, along with a sufficiency of value, there was a certain destination of Christ's death, on the part of God and of the Mediator, to the whole human race. This theory owed its origin to Cameron, a learned but restless Scotchman, Professor of Theology at Saumur. He propounded the theory of hypothetic universalism; that is, God wills the salvation of all men, on the condition of faith. Cameron declared that Christ died for no man simply, but on the condition that we who are in the world should be delivered from the world, and engrafted into Christ.¹⁶³

After this, explications of Amyraldianism become more and more problematic. Smeaton adds the complex issue of the decrees of God. He says that for Amyraut affirmed two decrees of God respecting the work of Christ, one particular, one general. The particular decree is based on God's foreknowledge, who foreseeing none would believe of their own strength, decrees to send the Holy Spirit to effectually apply the benefits to some now elected.¹⁶⁴ The general decree regards the sending of Christ to die for all men, upon the condition of faith. Smeaton also chides this system for assuming a duality in the intention and work of Christ: he was to satisfy for all men, and yet also satisfy merely for the elect.¹⁶⁵

Smeaton, in a rather caricaturing manner, notes:

As a reconciling system, and an incoherent one, it aimed to harmonise the passages of Scripture which at one time seem to extend Christ's merits to the world, and at another to limit them to the church; not to mention that God is supposed to be disappointed in His purpose.¹⁶⁶

Smeaton discloses that Amyraut in his *Treatise on Predestination*, said that Christ died *equally* for all, which resulted in the Synod of Alecon's admonishment that Amyraut refrain from asserting that Christ died equally for all. Smeaton sums up:

...the atonement was never described [in Amyraldianism] as carrying with it its own application. On the contrary, this was secured by another mode, as follows: Christ died for all, on the condition of faith; and man being incapable of this, God, by ANOTHER DECREE, purposed to give faith to some.¹⁶⁷

Unfortunately, this "definition" of Amyraldianism is deficient. While it is admitted by all parties that Amyraut did state that Christ died "equally" for all, what is often neglected is the fact that at the very same Synod of Alecon, Amyraut

¹⁶³George Smeaton, *The Apostles' Doctrine of the Atonement*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), p., 540.

¹⁶⁴"Now" in the sense of the logical ordering of the decrees, not as they outwork in time.

¹⁶⁵Smeaton, p., 541.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., p., 542, [emph., Smeaton's]. Smeaton can say that the atonement, as he sees it, carries with it its own application, because essentially for him, the atonement has that basic characteristic of a debt payment, which automatically purchases an item or remits a debt. Commercial theories of the atonement, by definition, always downplay or under emphasise any aspect of conditionalism.

asserted very clearly that he held to the formula that Christ died sufficiently for all, but efficiently for the elect.¹⁶⁸ This concession changes everything. Regarding the issue of conditional decrees, Armstrong notes that by this terminology he meant no more than “the will of God as revealed in his Word.” Further, the idea of conditionality was used by him anthropomorphically.¹⁶⁹ One could say that God decreed to send Christ into the world to die for all men sufficiently, yet it was never intended by that same decree, to save all men by that universally sufficient death. It is not that there is an ineffectual decree here, properly speaking. The terminological issues here hang on a pinpoint. If there is a slight misunderstanding at the point, then great conceptual chasms are created in a twinkling of an eye.

As Smeaton himself caricatures, we see the major theological and psychological hinge-point upon which the “orthodox” grounded their assumptions and rejections of all things Amyraldian. In terms of explicating the ideas present in Amyraut, it may be better for the modern reader to, firstly, not speak of a conditional decree, but of a decree to provide a redemption for all men upon the condition of faith. Thus, Christ, his person and works, offers himself, and his work, to all men conditionally. In regard to God being disappointed, the modern reader must himself acknowledge that in certain biblical instances, God, himself, laments, that men did not repent and turn from their wicked ways (Eze 18:31 and Ps 81:13). If we do speak of God being disappointed, surely we must understand this by way of anthropomorphism; else God is truly to be seen as that Aristotelian pillar, as the extreme theological impassibilists have contended.

This entire debate also turns on a deeper point. If we imagine that “Calvinism” was a monolithic theological entity, unalloyed and singular in its theological development, then we will fail to appreciate what is happening here at a deeper level. However, if we can see that Calvinism was a complex evolving system of thought, even in the 15th and 16th centuries, then we will be more sensitive to the problems. Most of the “orthodox” accept that Calvin was not a supralapsarian. Most will accept that it was something primarily introduced by Beza. Granting this, then it’s not hard to accept my next point. In Beza, we find new theological categories not present in earlier theological expressions. We now find categories like the logical ordering of the decrees. Decretal categories, as it were, became a new form of theological coinage. These categories became a new way of expressing “Calvinism.” What is more, while it is noted that most of the then “orthodox” rejected supralapsarianism, they retained the categories; they only modified them somewhat. Now, the mainstream became infralapsarian. The problem is that these decretal categories now became the “window” into Calvinism.

Amyraut, I would posit, used these same categories, while yet identifying another deficiency within them; not the structure of the categories, as viable tools, but the content only. Thus, he modified the categories, these exegetical and theological windows, in order to be truer, so to speak, to the actual biblical landscape. The problem is that the categories themselves blind and distort the image of the biblical landscape at every point. In speaking of the decretal ordering, he bound and entrapped himself in their very own inherent limitations. Thus, today, we have Warfield, following along the same path as dictated by the idea of “ordered decretalism,” condemning Amyraut exactly because in the very limitation of an “ordered decretalism” Amyraut’s ideas are reduced to a deceptive minimalism. And so Amyraut apparently concluded that Christ died for all men, equally, without any intentionality of effectually saving anyone in particular. After this, God’s election is then manifest in the selective application of the redemption by the Holy Spirit, of some and not all.

The real problem with ordered decretalism is not the concept of ordering them--as Dabney argues--but their very conceptualisation in the first place. As windows, as tools, they blind as much as they inform. Both infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism paint a strictly particularistic picture that blinds the theologian to true Scriptural Universalism. The Amyraldian order, as commonly presented, blinds the theologian to the true interplay between Scriptural Universalism and Scriptural Particularism. John Frame is right when he argues that ‘ordered decretalism’ should be basically abandoned, only being retained for its limited pedagogical usage.

¹⁶⁸Brian Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p., 92.

¹⁶⁹*Ibid.*, p., 93.

The point of key importance is that of Federalism. As I have argued in my previous paper, Federalism became a powerful theological and exegetical tool through which all things, theological, systematic and biblical, were mediated. But inherent in the Federalism that came to dominate early 16th century Calvinism was a strict particularism. Again, Federalism became the terminological coinage of all theological discourse. And so once again, Amyraut, like Baxter and Boston later, sought to combine a more biblical Scriptural Universalism with Federalistic categories. The attempt to create a new ‘synthesis’ was no small task. For here was made the attempt to combine the older Augustinian constructs of election and atonement--The Medieval Synthesis--with the new complex of Federalism. What complicates this attempt is the reality that classic Federalism was high or strict Federalism. This was the only conceptual model available in the market of theological exchange in the 16th century. Anything that sounded like a denial of that Federalism was seen as a form of deviant Calvinism.¹⁷⁰ What was called for was a new synthesis. Yet, it was not until Boston presented his synthesis that anything other than the “received” orthodoxy was permitted or entertained.¹⁷¹

Against this backdrop, Amyraut attempted to construct his own version of Federalism. Amyraut, following his mentor, John Cameron, distinguished between the covenant as *foedus absolutum* and the covenant as *reciprocis conventionibus constant*.¹⁷² This latter covenant was called the *foedus hypotheticum* by John Cameron. The former is an unconditional covenant, and the example used is that covenant between God and Noah. The latter is a covenant which is established upon a reciprocal agreement. It is this latter covenant that Amyraut considered the true object of theological inquiry as it was the basis of the gospel promises and promulgation. This covenant was also further divided into two aspects. The first being the stipulation of the obligation, and the second being the promise of reward upon fulfilment of that obligation.¹⁷³ Further, in terms of the working out of the plan of redemption, for Amyraut there were three covenants identified in Scripture. His first corresponds to the orthodox covenant of works with Adam. The second, however, is a more special covenant God made with Israel and is called legal. The third is the gracious covenant which is set forth in the gospel.¹⁷⁴ At this point, Amyraut differed from the now classic orthodox distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, which the latter includes within it the apparently legal covenant with Moses and Israel. Covenantally, then, Amyraut held that the legal covenant was subservient to the gracious covenant. Throughout his conceptualisation of Covenantalism, Amyraut followed the historical-redemptive model of biblical theology as opposed to the more speculative systematic model of pre-Cocceian Federalism. In terms of contracting parties, for the natural covenant, the parties are God and Adam; in the covenant of law, the parties are God and the nation Israel; and for the gracious covenant, the parties are God and all mankind.¹⁷⁵ Further, in the first two covenants there was no element of God’s efficacious enablement of the legatee performing the obligations of the covenant. This only finds expression in the gracious covenant. Therefore, following this redemptive-historical model, Amyraut considered that true Scriptural Universalism came into the foreground in that no longer were the redemptive dealings of God restricted to the nation of Israel. It is to be kept in mind, that for Amyraut, this historical development did not mean the gracious covenant was not revealed to Adam after the fall; indeed it was, though in an obscured manner.¹⁷⁶ It does seem then that for Amyraut, the covenant of grace was operative co-temporally within the legal covenant, which worked to effect the full disclosure of Christ, who was to come.

Through this covenantal grid Amyraut expressed his concepts of the redemption of Christ and the wills of God, decreed and revealed. For, as an expression of this covenantal framework, Amyraut taught that the election of God manifests itself in the efficacious divine intentionality to save the elect through the means of an effective atonement. Conversely, as an expression of the revealed will, we see divine intentionality, albeit inefficacious, to save all men, through the means of the universal sufficiency of the atonement.¹⁷⁷ Armstrong says:

¹⁷⁰This reaction of distrust was also due to the failure of the “orthodox” to see Calvin as he truly was.

¹⁷¹This was because Boston was able to speak the language of the orthodox, constructing his terminology to fit their rigorous demands.

¹⁷²Armstrong, p., 143.

¹⁷³Ibid, pp., 143-4.

¹⁷⁴Ibid..

¹⁷⁵Ibid., p., 146.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., pp., 153-4.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., pp., 158-87.

Amyraut then concludes that Calvin's interpretation shows that "the Word of God... presents His mercy to us to be considered in two ways," and upon this twofold mercy depends a twofold will. With this twofold will as his basis, Amyraut has constructed his covenant theology, the distinction between the *foedus absolutum* and the *foedus hypotheticum*, indeed the outline of the whole of his theology. And he appeals to Calvin for the source of that distinctive approach.¹⁷⁸

It is important to note that the will of God to send Christ into the world and to subsequently offer the work of Christ to the human race is a conditional will. It is not an absolute will. Armstrong cites Calvin, following Amyraut, as saying: "We hold, therefore, that God does not will the death of the sinner inasmuch as he calls all men indifferently to repentance and promises that He is prepared to receive them, on condition that they earnestly repent."¹⁷⁹ Following this, Armstrong identifies the next significant element in Amyraut's thinking. In terms of the persons of the Trinity, it may be said that the Father conceives the plan of redemption, the Son executes the work of redemption, and the Spirit applies the benefits of this redemption. And then, importantly, it is to be noted that for Amyraut, the atonement, considered in itself, does not carry within it, "the means by which it is appropriated."¹⁸⁰ This appropriation is effected by the Spirit. This is one of the chief contentions of the orthodox who held that actual faith was one of the fruits purchased by the atonement.¹⁸¹ So then, for Amyraut, at one level, satisfaction has been obtained for all men, conditionally. It is presented to the world with the condition that those who would receive it manifest the condition.¹⁸² Amyraut's particularism comes to play in the economic role of the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who, in accord with the Father's plan applies the benefits of the work of Christ to the election of God.

Further, Amyraut:

The sacrifice that he has offered for the propitiation of their offenses has been equally for all. And the salvation that he has received from His Father in order to communicate it to men in the sanctification of the spirit and the glorification of the body is destined equally for all, provided, I say, that the disposition necessary in order to receive it is also equally present.

From this Armstrong notes:

Here we see not only that the sacrifice of Christ is a sufficient price for the sins of the whole world, a statement which most of the orthodox would have endorsed, but also that He *intended* to die for all men, a position wholly untenable for the orthodox.¹⁸³

The problem in all this is, "Where is the locus of particularism in Amyraut's schema?" Having acknowledged the Medieval Synthesis, and unless he was being deceptive, he must have placed the locus of particularism, at least to some degree, in the work of Christ, in the very intentionality of Christ, for the Synthesis maintains a self-consciousness on the part of Christ to obtain an efficacious redemption for the elect. However, in terms of the application of the redemption, Amyraut seems to place the particularistic stress on the selective application of redemption by the Spirit. This latter stress has been the factor in giving rise to the Amyraldian decretal ordering, placing the locus of particularism solely in the application of redemption to some by the Holy Spirit. As of yet, I cannot see where Armstrong conclusively discusses this point. What Armstrong does stress is that, for Amyraut, the proper topic for our theological inquiry should be only

¹⁷⁸Ibid., pp., 186-7.

¹⁷⁹Cited by Armstrong, p., 189.

¹⁸⁰Armstrong, p., 209.

¹⁸¹As we will see below, Baxter denies this and shows why this cannot be so.

¹⁸²As noted above, this need not imply free will, only human responsibility. For it is the same way as the orthodox maintained that all men are required to repent and believe. They are to respond to the call of the gospel, as pertaining to their duty, in the appropriation of salvation, which faith and repentance as seen as the *sine qua non* of salvation, and which could still be demanded and required of all men, even though none by themselves, unaided, can meet the conditions.

¹⁸³Armstrong, p., 211.

what is revealed, that is, the work of Christ, as it expresses the revealed will, and the conditional covenant.¹⁸⁴ And this does seem to be something to which Amyraut was fairly faithful.

Now to sum up this section. Firstly, we do not have to agree with Amyraut at every point. My intention here was to do something to clear away the popular mythology regarding Amyraut and his system, showing something of its complexity. Amyraut, I would argue, clearly tried to integrate that Scriptural Universalism which he found in Calvin and the Bible with the theological schema of Federalism. It's as if Calvinism, now wedded to Federalism, is a system of thought struggling to adjust itself and find the most correct expression. But this struggle is painful, haphazard, irregular, and bumpy. What is more, Amyraut shows us the mine-field of complexity here. For Amyraut, the difficulty arises in the problematic placement of particularism within his system. His covenantal language is also another enigmatic area. While Baxter does locate particularism within the intentionality of Christ, in his person and work, yet, as we shall see, the difficulty arises in his use of terms like conditional redemption. To our trained Owenic ears, this sounds wholly incongruous. Herein is the Reformed struggle to find the best theological expression for the biblical categories.

Richard Baxter

Of Richard Baxter, it can be said that he was a very complex thinker and theologian. Given the complexity and breadth of his thinking, I will limit my interaction to his doctrine as set out in his book: *Universal Redemption of Mankind*,¹⁸⁵ published after his death in 1694. This book, along with certain other titles by Baxter, essentially contains a critique of Owen's *Death of Death*. Baxter, in his *Universal Redemption* presents a sustained rebuttal of Owen's arguments. What I will do is present an outline of Baxter's thought from this one work. There are strengths and weaknesses in limiting myself to just one title. The strength is that one work can receive a more thorough explication. The danger is that one can then only present a superficial presentation of Baxter's position overall. There is another detail to be noted. This book is saturated by many Latin expressions and idioms that Baxter does not translate. For the non-Latin scholar, this is a difficult text to work through. What I will do, therefore, is to reproduce the arguments more as they are expressed in their non-technical forms. My hope is that I am able to faithfully reproduce the flow of his thought in the main. Further, I will also spend a little time noting some of Baxter's background ideas. For this I will rely on Hans Boersma's work: *A Hot Peppercorn*.¹⁸⁶

In terms of theological and conceptual background, it will become evident again that in the thought of Baxter, as with Amyraut, there was a serious attempt to combine Federalism with Scriptural Universalism. But unlike Amyraut, Baxter retains a clear focus on the Medieval Synthesis as the defining structure of his doctrine of the person and work of Christ. What is more, Baxter engages in a further polemic against the arguments of the Protestant Scholastics, specifically his arch-nemesis, John Owen. Baxter self-consciously and repeatedly labels Owen and those of his (new) tradition, as the new-comers, who have brought new and novel ideas respecting the atonement, its value and its extent.¹⁸⁷ He calls them the more rigid divines.¹⁸⁸

Boersma identifies some key historical precedents which formed the background for Baxter's thinking. The first thinker to come to mind is Amyraut, yet Baxter, himself, claimed that his theological expressions were not derived from Amyraut, rather Amyraut confirmed some of his conclusions.¹⁸⁹ Surprisingly, Baxter claimed for support no less than

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p., 202. There are echoes here of Luther's God revealed and God hidden, wherein only the former is the proper object of inquiry.

¹⁸⁵Richard Baxter, *Universal Redemption of Mankind, Stated and Cleared by the Late Learned Mr Richard Baxter*, (London: John Salsbury, 1694).

¹⁸⁶Hans Boersma, *A Hot Peppercorn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy*, (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993). All following references to Boersma are taken from *Peppercorn*, unless otherwise noted.

¹⁸⁷Baxter, pp., 134 and 142.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., p., 136.

¹⁸⁹Boersma, p., 197-8. Baxter claimed that he had not yet read anything of Amyraut at the time of writing his *Universal Redemption*.

William Twisse. Twisse, in the setting forth of his high Calvinism, still maintained the two-fold will distinction. And so, God wills, by precept, that some of all kinds of men be saved. Furthermore, when it is said that God desires the salvation of all Israel, this must be understood only as an anthropopathism.¹⁹⁰ Here now is the issue of most importance, for in terms of the benefits of the redemption, it may be said that Christ procured pardon conditionally for all--and here he agrees with the Arminians--while other benefits are procured unconditionally and absolutely, for the elect only.¹⁹¹ In terms of 1 Jn 2:2, while Twisse holds that the world is world of the elect, he does concede that "Christ died to obtain salvation for all and every one who believe in him."¹⁹²

Another significant source for Baxter's ideas is John Ball. Ball wrote a valuable treatise on the Covenant of Grace which was heavily relied upon by many of the Westminster theologians. Ball, in that work, adopts the language of a conditional covenant. At this point, Boersma does not make explicit whether Ball thought this conditional covenant was in some sense made for all, or whether it is merely proffered to all conditionally.¹⁹³ However, Ball did hold that Christ's death is sufficient for all, yet effective for some. And while he sought to maintain that Christ did not die equally for all, with a purpose and intent to save all, he does say that in some (other) sense Christ died for the reprobate. For even the false prophets of 2 Pet 2: 1 were in a sense bought by the blood of Christ.¹⁹⁴

From Hugo Grotius, says Boersma, Baxter drew ideas regarding the atonement, itself, in that it was not a straight-forward commercial transaction, a sort of one-to-one *quid pro quo*. That is, did Christ suffer the exact same punishment as was threatened by the law, the *idem*, or did he only suffer so much, the *tandundem*?¹⁹⁵

Boersma notes a number of key elements within Baxter's thinking. First is Baxter's distinction in the will of God. Baxter is completely committed to the two-fold will distinction.¹⁹⁶ With a two-fold will of God as a theological basis, Baxter is able to reject Owen's monist theology. That is, Owen, following the Aristotelian maxim "that the end in action is the first in intent," argued that the glorification of the elect is the singular object of God's saving volition. Boersma summarises Owen's thinking: "The glory of God is the only supreme end... Any other end such as man's salvation, is only intermediate and subservient to the glory of God."¹⁹⁷ With respect to the death of Christ, Owen's monist teleology comes into sharp focus. Citing Owen, Boersma states: "'The main thing upon which the whole controversy about the death of Christ turneth' is the question 'about the proper end of the death of Christ.'"¹⁹⁸ This is an important point. This sort of monist teleology is what provided the impetus to Beza's supralapsarianism. The infralapsarians were able to respond to this in counter to the supralapsarians by affirming that there is apparent diversity in the creative-elective ends of God. They would argue that we cannot assume a simple straight-forward line of movement from creation to fall, to election-redemption. Yet at this point, the infralapsarians adopted the very way of thinking they rejected in the lapsarian contexts.

The third key element in Baxter's thinking, says Boersma, is Baxter's concept of the Covenants of Redemption and Grace, or as the Continentals term it the *Pactum Salutis*.¹⁹⁹ I noted something of this stress on the Covenant of Redemption in Durham's comments, when he argued that the work of Christ is delimited by the Covenant of Redemption²⁰⁰ Baxter, it seems, is less concerned with making the Covenant of Redemption the grounding hinge upon

¹⁹⁰No doubt, in line with the Protestant Scholastics, and against the position of Dabney and Murray, this anthropopathism is merely a metaphor for a bare complacency with God that men be saved, and in no real sense expresses a volition or active propension.

¹⁹¹Boersma, p., 196-7.

¹⁹²Ibid., p., 197.

¹⁹³Given the theological context of the time, I think Ball meant it in the latter sense.

¹⁹⁴Boersma, p., 207. Boersma does not identify what that sense is.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p., 201.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p 212.

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰See my *Saving Thomas Boston*, p., 13.

which all of God's redemptive dealings move. For him, the Covenant of Redemption has more to do with the decree of God to save, or the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of Christ.²⁰¹

The next important element according to Boersma, is the charge by the Protestant Scholastics that the claim that Christ died for all men entails that God's purposes can be frustrated and voided. To this, Baxter counters that God's purposes would only be voided if it were his purpose to actually effect the salvation of all men and this failed to come to pass. From this, Boersma rightly notes that for Baxter, Christ died sufficiently for all, yet efficiently for the elect only. Boersma notes that Owen rejected the traditional understanding of the formula. He identifies Owen's position in that it only holds good if the sufficiency is abstracted from any divine intent, and so made hypothetical: If God had intended the ransom to be made for all, it would then, and only then, be properly sufficient for all.²⁰² And so, citing Clifford, Boersma tells us that in Owen's mind, the atonement is only sufficient for those whom it was intended to be sufficient. Again, it must be remembered that this is how the Protestant Scholastics generally redefined the formula.

In the light of this redefinition, many today seek to identify Calvin's own position, and/or reject the teaching of Baxter. Next, if the atonement is sufficient for all, then it must be also affirmed that in some sense there was a payment made for all: "Baxter maintained that if Christ's death is a sufficient price for all, it must necessarily be a price for all."²⁰³ Moving logically along, it then becomes true that this being so, then it can be said, it must be said, that in some sense Christ did die equally for all, claims Baxter. In the sense that Christ's death displays Christ as legislator. However, in regard to Christ, the elect are saved in accord with the eternal predestination of God. At this juncture Christ did not die equally for all.²⁰⁴

In the following brief analysis of Baxter's *Universal Redemption* all of these ideas, and more, will be discerned.

Universal Redemption

This is one of the most unnecessarily prolix books I have read. The book is divided into essentially three parts. Chapters 1-2 contain something like introductory remarks. Chapters 3-4 contain a battery, long and wearisome, of propositions. The remainder of the book a defense of those propositions with more long and wearisome rebuttals to objections. Given the very prolix nature of this book, I have decided to break down some of the key assumptions regarding the nature and extent of the atonement and covenant, as Baxter so understood them. Then I will delineate some of his counter objections to Owen and the Protestant Scholastics, namely their exegetical claims.

One of the first things Baxter confronts, is his affirmation that there are multiple ends to the atonement. The atonement cannot be reduced to one singular end, with all things subservient to it in a straight-forward manner. There are also secondary ends which are an expression of God's approbation and delight.²⁰⁵ To this is added that for Baxter, Christ, in reference to this atonement, has the *end* (goal) as he is legislator, which bring to all certain men certain proffered and conditional mercies. Then there is the *end* (goal) as he is absolute Lord, executing the divine decree, which brings to the elect eternal mercy and salvation.²⁰⁶

A theology of multiple ends allows Baxter to affirm, firmly and repeatedly, that the work of Christ,

which procured immediately by his satisfaction [*vis.*, *that all should be saved from that legal necessity of perishing, and that God should remit his right of punishment, and that the advantage which his justice had*

²⁰¹Boersma, p., 213.

²⁰²Ibid., p., 216. Again I am paraphrasing Boersma.

²⁰³Ibid., p., 217.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p., 218.

²⁰⁵Baxter, p., 9.

²⁰⁶Ibid., p., 20.

against them, into the power and dispose of the Redeemer;...] And that full recovery given which Christ afterward maketh by the giving out of his grace and benefits.²⁰⁷

Speaking a little later, Baxter also asserts that there is in God a two-fold will. By this he means no more than Calvin did that in terms of our perception and finitude, we perceive diversity within the will of God. Yet within God the will is wholly unified.²⁰⁸ This dualism is integral to his entire thinking in this book. For example, he affirms the normal scholastic distinction between the will of *signi*²⁰⁹ and the will of *beneplaciti*. The former is the will of sign, otherwise known to us moderns as the revealed will. The latter is the will of good pleasure, otherwise known to us as the decretive will.²¹⁰ However, Baxter goes on to distinguish the preceptive will as an aspect of the will of sign. In terms of the will of *beneplaciti*, he also connects this with the will of decree.²¹¹ He partially ends here by settling on the terms of God's legislative will which is juxtaposed to the decretive. He makes another important distinction within the will of God, that of the antecedent and consequent will. Here he carefully notes that he speaks not of the decrees of God, but of the will of Christ in this relation as he is the ruler of the world and the church.²¹² By this he connects the antecedent will with the will of the legislator which proposes to men what they ought to do, in the universal expression his governance. By the consequent will, he means that "that second part of government, which finds man obedient or disobedient and is commonly called *judgement* and *execution*."²¹³

Baxter goes on to explain:

And when we say that by his antecedent acts and will Christ gives pardon, justification and right to glory, equally to all; we mean that as legislator and promiser, he has antecedently made an universal act of oblivion or Deed of Gift conditionally pardoning, &c... and no farther than conditionally pardoning any. And when we say that he consequently justifies and saves none but true Christians, and in that sense died for no other according to his consequent will, we mean that as judge of mankind he will give justification and salvation to believers, and to no others nor ever intended to do otherwise.²¹⁴

That by antecedent-consequent will he does not mean it in the traditional Arminian sense which reduces the *decretive* will into this construct, wherein God decretively, yet ineffectually, wills something, but foreseeing its counter or non-eventuality, plans in response, or as a consequence to that.²¹⁵ Later he will also deny that there can be a conditional decree, but there can be a conditional will. He says that Christ purchased salvation for all men conditionally. Regarding the decretive will, he explains it, as I have above, that we can only properly say that God decrees to demand that faith and repentance be the conditions of salvation. And here he will cite Twisse as affirming that none have disagreed with this.²¹⁶

With respect to the atonement, Baxter affirms with the "schoolmen" that Christ died for all sufficiently, but not for all efficiently.²¹⁷ Baxter asserts that Christ paid a price that was sufficient for all.²¹⁸ Baxter will strongly affirm that in no

²⁰⁷Ibid., p., 27. Emph., Baxter's, as with contents of the brackets. I have chosen to remove some of the capitalization and archaic spelling for the sake of reader-ease.

²⁰⁸Ibid., p., 31.

²⁰⁹In terms of the Scholastics, the will of sign is that will whereby God signs to us what he expects of us and/or what he himself will do.

²¹⁰Baxter., p., 28.

²¹¹Ibid., p., 29.

²¹²Ibid., 32.

²¹³Ibid.

²¹⁴Ibid., pp., 32-3; see also p., 371.

²¹⁵Turretin, himself, allows for the use of this terminology, though with careful qualification; *Institutes*, vol., 1, pp., 226-231.

²¹⁶Baxter, p., 65.

²¹⁷Ibid., p., 133-4.

²¹⁸Ibid., p., 60.

sense under this formula can it be said that for some Christ died in vain; for that sufficient death for all is the ground of his universal dominion as Lord-redeemer. However in terms of the decree, he died not for all. Baxter even says that Christ did not desire to save all effectually.²¹⁹ Further, this universal sufficiency establishes the conditional covenant, in which he gives himself to all.²²⁰ What is clear here is that in the very self-consciousness of Christ, indeed in his person and work, Baxter can locate the necessary biblical particularism, operating alongside an equally biblical universalism. Here there is no ambiguity which we found in Amyraut. Further, in opposition to Baxter, the new school of divines, he notes, no longer held that Christ died sufficiently for all. Here he chides them for redefining the formula as meaning only that the atonement is sufficient to have been a price for all, hypothetically.²²¹ On the contrary, he argues if it “Christ’s death be a sufficient price for all, then it *is* a price for all.”²²²

Having presented his argument regarding the sufficiency of Christ’s death for all, what flows from that by way of result now concerns this paper. Firstly, Baxter teaches that by the universally sufficient redemption of Christ, all the legal obstacles that prevented our salvation, even the salvation of the world, are now removed. As Baxter would say, there is no necessity for our perishing; apart from the decree of God, that is.²²³

In another direction, repeatedly, Baxter will assert that a conditional pardon has been procured for all.²²⁴ This entails a conditional redemption²²⁵ and forgiveness of sins, though not actual.²²⁶ Following the same logic, he will assert that Christ acquired a conditional justification for all, though not actual justification.²²⁷ At first glance, this language seems strange to us, I think what Baxter is doing is following the logic of the bible’s own terms. If it is true that Christ redeemed all men, in the sense of the sufficiency of Christ’s work, then what is the nature of redemption? that becomes the question. For redemption, by definition, entails forgiveness, satisfaction, atonement, and so forth. I would argue that Baxter is trying to develop theological terminology and categories which can do justice to, and accurately represent--as far as possible--the very biblical implications and categories.

When one speaks of redemption made for all, conditional or not, one must deal with Owen’s powerful “double jeopardy” argument. That is, if Christ suffered for the sins of all men, he was punished in his own person for their sin, how is it that God can exact punishment from the non-elect for those very same sins? At this point, Baxter disagrees with Owen. Owen saw the work of Christ almost essentially through the interpretative grid of commercial language. Thus our sin is (overly) likened to a debt that needs to be repaid. And so the argument is that if the debt has already been paid for all men, then how can God ask the non-elect debtor to make another payment? Baxter suggested that if, in our case, we as sinners had to pay the debt then we would have to pay the exact *idem* of what was required. However, if another, if an innocent person, should offer to pay, then the supreme judge may accept the payment on whatever terms it pleases him.²²⁸ Yet in terms of the value of Christ’s suffering there is a payment of value, *tandundem*. Baxter: “Christ paid not therefore the *idem* but the *tantundem* or *equivalens*, not the very debts which we owed and the law required.”²²⁹

Later, Baxter also cites Ball as saying:

There is a twofold payment of debt: One thing altogether the same which was in the obligation; and this *ipso facto* frees from punishment, whether it be paid by the debtor himself or by his surety. Another of a thing not altogether the same which is his in the obligation, so that some act of the creditor or governor must come unto

²¹⁹Ibid., p., 425.

²²⁰Ibid., p., 63.

²²¹Ibid., p., 134.

²²²Ibid [emph mine].

²²³Baxter., pp., 26, 36., 107, 135, 387.

²²⁴Ibid., pp., 92, 96, 98, and 100.

²²⁵Ibid., 388.

²²⁶Ibid., p., 41.

²²⁷Ibid., p., 100.

²²⁸Ibid., p., 81.

²²⁹Ibid., p., 49.

it, which is called remission: in the case of deliverance does not follow *ipso facto*, upon the satisfaction. And this is the kind of satisfaction of Christ.²³⁰

In this context, Baxter acknowledges his own debt to Grotius by agreeing with his claim that in the debt paid by Christ, the demands of the law are relaxed.²³¹ For Baxter, it is not that Christ stood in our place, and in the place of all men, and paid the exact debt that was due to all of us. Apart from the discussion of debt, exact payment, and double-jeopardy issues, the “problem” is circumvented when it is realised that the redemption for all is acquired for all conditionally, not actually. It is true that for Owen, he maintained that even the sin of not meeting the condition of faith was part of that debt paid for by Christ in behalf of all. Therefore, he would say, none can be damned, for every debt has been dealt with. Against this, Baxter maintained that Christ did not die for the non-performance of that condition.²³² Yet here Baxter’s argument unravels somewhat because he relies on his law-grace distinction. For him, all men are bound by the covenant of works, which Christ conditionally satisfied. Yet the belief that is required in order to secure the benefits of redemption is a new law-work of grace.²³³ This argument holds if one accepts Baxter’s dichotomy between the old law covenant and new law covenant. If one does not, then it seems that Owen’s polemic remains in tact.

To respond to the dilemma, we must go back a few steps. If 2 Pet 2:1 is taken at its terminological face value, then there are some who go to hell who have been redeemed by Christ. This redemption cannot be actual, lest we now deny the doctrine of the eternal security of the saints. It must, therefore, be conditional in some sense. But the language is not merely that this redemption was somehow abstractedly available to them, but that it has been effected, already, for them. This is the hinge of the matter. If the language of 2 Pet 2:1²³⁴ was that somehow these reprobates had denied what was merely available for them, then there would have not been a problem. But the text describes this redemption as something already logically and chronologically accomplished for them. Therefore, if we have reason to take 2 Pet 2:1 in this latter sense, and if Owen’s dilemma does have any teeth, we must struggle to find a middle path which can bring unity to two apparently diverse truths. Of course, one option would be to simply deny the soteriological aspect of 2 Pet 2:1, which is what Owen did; but as will be shown below, this is a difficult move to make.²³⁵ Given the force of 2 Pet 2:1, it would be better to either reject Owen’s dilemma as deficient, or maintain that here we find an instance of a biblical paradox. Or again, we might posit that even of the sin of unbelief, for Christ died conditionally, with respect to all men, but yet, faith is still demanded as the instrumental means of salvation from all men; such that whosoever does not display the necessary condition is damned. What is more, this condition, Baxter holds, is not an impossible physical condition.²³⁶

This now leads to the next key thought for Baxter. Baxter, unlike Owen and the Protestant Scholastics, maintained that faith is not directly purchased by the blood of Christ for the elect. He says, “faith is a fruit of the death of Christ, (and so is all the good that which we do enjoy): But not *directly* as it is *satisfaction to justice*.”²³⁷ For Baxter, faith, while it is a fruit of the redemption wrought by Christ, it is a “remote” gift, given by Christ as Lord, not as legislator simply considered.²³⁸ And by way of counter-examples, he cites other gifts, such as the gift of gospel preaching, of miracles, of tongues, of apostles, of evangelists, and so forth. None of these is considered a direct or necessary purchase of the work of Christ. They are only more remotely gifts given on account of Christ.²³⁹ Here Baxter is on firmer ground, for the key

²³⁰Ibid., p., 85.

²³¹Ibid.

²³²Ibid., p., 383.

²³³This is Baxter’s Neo-nomianism making an appearance.

²³⁴And Rom 14:15 and 1 Cor 8:11-12, as well.

²³⁵To highlight a point here, it is the case of whether or not we want to be faithful to a system theology or to a biblical theology. Owen will argue that the *prima facie* reading of 2 Pet 2:1 contradicts his theological system, therefore the verse must be re-exegeted. By itself, this method is not always. Baxter, on the other hand, wants his system to harmonise with his biblical theology, as he reads it. Therefore he will modify his “system” terms to attempt some sort of accommodation.

²³⁶Baxter, p., 57.

²³⁷Ibid., pp., 42, 425-6, and 430.

²³⁸Ibid., p., 426.

²³⁹Ibid.

proof-text adduced to show that faith has been directly purchased for the elect by Christ is Phil 1:29. The relationship between the grant to believe and Christ is not exactly stated. And given the syntax, if it can be affirmed that our suffering for Christ is not a direct purchase of the atonement, then neither is the grant to believe. Thus, one cannot say that faith was directly purchased for all those whom Christ redeemed. Rather, says Baxter, faith is a gift which is an added *donum*, yet still inseparable and grounded in the work of Christ. For Baxter the necessary connecting link between faith in Christ and the work of Christ is the decree of God.

Next to be considered is Baxter's discussion of the free offer of the gospel and our warrant to believe. In his initial propositions, Baxter states: "...it will follow that no man could have any true ground to believe or accept Christ if he knew not that he is one of those to whom he is universally offered, and conditionally given; and consequently for whom he satisfied."²⁴⁰ For Baxter, there must be a universal sufficiency if there is to be a sincere gospel offer.²⁴¹ He argues that it is not acceptable to simply assert that the bare command to repent and believe is adequate to warrant faith.²⁴² He asserts that no man can believe that Christ has power to save, "that first believes not that he satisfied for him."²⁴³ In response to the high Federalist claim that Christ is only willing to save those for whom he also died, Baxter counters:

Supposing that he satisfied not for any man, he is not sufficient or willing to save that man though he should believe, how can it be said that by the sufficiency of his ransom he is able to save them, for whom it is no ransom? Indeed the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction is the principle object of that part of faith which consists in assent.²⁴⁴

What lies behind this question is the orthodox claim that a person need not know that Christ died for them, or that his death was sufficient for them before they believe, or in the act of initial saving faith. The knowledge that Christ died for them or that his death was sufficient for them will result *if* they believe.²⁴⁵ To this Baxter repeatedly asserts that this is not adequate. He asserts that the orthodox are bound in a quandary. If the death of Christ was not made sufficient for all, then the fact that any given man, in his initial saving faith, believes it will be sufficient for him, if he believes, will not make it sufficient for him.²⁴⁶ At this point, I think Baxter is on weaker grounds. The orthodox need only retort with something like, 'his believing shows that it was sufficient for him after all.' Where Baxter is on stronger ground is when he tackles more directly the question of warrant. For the orthodox, no one can know that God is well-disposed towards them, or in fact anything in terms of themselves, in particular. He can know that God wants to save sinners, generally, yet abstractedly from himself. No one can know before faith that God wants any particular person to be saved. In essence, then, the orthodox insisted on a sort of leap of faith. Baxter is fairly right when he says that the orthodox must insist that the unbeliever "must rest on that which he knows not to be sufficient for him."²⁴⁷ Knowledge of the correctness of the leap can only be ascertained after the leap. The warrant to make such a leap is the abstracted and bare commands and invitations which are hypothetically set forth in orthodox preaching.

Against this, Baxter argues that in some manner, the individual must know that God is well-disposed towards him, that God wants him in particular to be saved, and that there is a death that was made for him. Here we see the pre-echoes of the very debates that later consumed Boston.²⁴⁸ Baxter: "...I think I may conclude, that they that deny universal satisfaction by Christ's bloodshed, do leave men no ground for their first special love to Christ as redeemer."²⁴⁹ It seems to me that Baxter has hit upon a valid point here. The orthodox are reduced to calling men to believe first in an abstraction and a hypothetical. In terms of those who doubt, Baxter is on stronger pastoral grounds. For whereas

²⁴⁰Ibid., p., 57.

²⁴¹Ibid., pp., 115-6.

²⁴²Ibid., p., 114.

²⁴³Ibid., p., 115.

²⁴⁴Ibid., p., 116.

²⁴⁵Ibid., p., 140.

²⁴⁶Ibid.

²⁴⁷Ibid., p., 169.

²⁴⁸That is, the question of faith entailing assurance.

²⁴⁹Baxter, p., 151, see also pp., 152-3..

Cunningham, especially, can only advise the doubter to believe first, then know with assurance later, Baxter can offer a form of assurance that Christ does desire their salvation, and in this he images the Father's love to them. If it were posed that ultimately, Baxter must concede that in terms of any given person, it may be that they are not elected, and so the efficacy of redemption will not be communicated to them, he, too, is committed to a leap of faith. It does seem that in terms of warrant, simply considered, he is on richer and more solid ground. Add to this, he may assert, with Calvin, that one is not to pry into the secret decrees, but look to Christ as he is mirrored in the gospel.

To begin to wrap up Baxter, I will now spend some time looking at his analysis of certain key passages from Scripture. My intent here is not to exegete these verses in detail, but to present something of an outline of Baxter's proffered responses to Owen and the orthodox on these texts. I will limit myself to a discussion of 1 Pet 2:1 and Heb 10:26.²⁵⁰ These verses were chosen because they fit the context I have established in my discussion of Calvin on unlimited atonement. The hope is that by presenting explication here, more light will be thrown on Calvin's own understanding of the verses as they are used in the "wasted-blood" references.

2 Peter 2:1: Of this verse there are two main elements to the exegetical approach taken by Owen²⁵¹ and other orthodox. Firstly, Owen stresses the fact that the Greek here is *despotes* which signifies not Christ as the mediator, but Christ as Lord, as sovereign God.²⁵² The second key argument, Owen adduces, is the fact that where *agoradzo* is normally used in reference to Christ as mediator, the price of the purchase is always stated.²⁵³ For example, we are "bought" by the blood of the lamb. The third key argument is that Owen thinks it's more likely that Peter means not that they were ransomed by the blood of Christ, but rather that they were temporarily delivered from the pollutions of the world.²⁵⁴ Owen makes this argument by comparing this temporal deliverance with the temporal deliverance of Israel in the Old Testament.

Against this Baxter notes that even though *despotes* is used, it is used of Christ as saviour-mediator. For in verse 20, they have known the *Saviour* Jesus Christ.²⁵⁵ It is not absolute Lord apart from his mediatorial office, but in and with that office. Baxter also adds that in the parallel account of this, Jude 4 identifies that they denied their master (*despotes*) and Lord Jesus Christ. In response to the lack of price mentioned in 2 Pet 2:1, therefore, it must be that *agoradzo* here is not a blood-bought redemption, but something else, Baxter cites Rev 14:3, where the 144 000 are said to have been bought from the earth, and yet here no price is mentioned. Thus, we are not to imagine that this redemption was not soteriological.²⁵⁶ Regarding the argument from analogy from the OT, Baxter asks: "what of that?"²⁵⁷ He asks again, were not those Old Testaments false prophets part of the "typically redeemed people, so they are truly redeemed"? He goes on: "That the typical redemption out of Egypt was not only a type, but also a fruit of Christ's redemption, in its moral being considered."²⁵⁸

²⁵⁰Because of the complexity of Baxter's discussion on Jn 3:16, I will pass by this verse. Oddly enough, Baxter does not discuss Rom 14:15 or 1 Cor 11:8.

²⁵¹And lots of unsound rhetorical arguments which I will not tackle here.

²⁵²John Owen, *The Death of Death*, p., 250.

²⁵³*Ibid.*, p., 251.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.* Owen bases this last point on the Old Testament, wherein it was said that some were temporarily delivered from the world.

²⁵⁵Baxter, p., 315.

²⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p., 320.

²⁵⁷*Ibid.*

²⁵⁸*Ibid.* One can also apply this to Long's attempt to connect 2 Pet 2:1 with Dt 32:6. But here Long has problems. For there in the LXX *ptaomai* is used. Long must weave into that a more inferential connection of *agoradzo*. If Peter had been consciously thinking of using this OT reference in a completely non-soteriological context why did he then not use *ptaomai* making his reference explicit? But that notwithstanding, why could it not be that the 'deliverance' is still secured by Christ as sovereign mediator? Why must his sovereignty exclude his mediatorial role? For surely, the sovereignty of Christ is grounded on his mediatorship?

It is also helpful to briefly touch on a modern exponent of these arguments. Gary Long in his little book *Definite Atonement*²⁵⁹ presents his case by asserting a series of rhetorical questions. He argues that nowhere is *despotes* used to denote Christ as mediator, “unless this be the exception.” The problem is that Peter says they denied the *saviour* Jesus Christ. It is hard to imagine that Peter could have made such a distinction between Christ as absolute sovereign and Christ as mediator. Rather it seems that he held both together. Long notes:

2 Peter 2:1 refers to God the Son as sovereign Lord and not as God the Son as mediator. This does not mean that Christ as mediator is not sovereign; rather it is to acknowledge the fact that when Christ is referred to as mediator, one of his redemptive titles, such as lamb of God, is always mentioned, or the redemptive price is made explicit ...²⁶⁰

However, Long’s point is an argument from silence. Just because certain descriptive components are absent one cannot build a case that the subject being described is radically different. Regarding *agoradzo*, Long makes a similar argument. He notes that when it is used elsewhere to denote the redemptive work of Christ as mediator, a price is mentioned, “unless this be the exception.”²⁶¹ The problem is that the converse also holds. Whenever *agoradzo* is used in redemptive contexts,²⁶² but, indeed, talking about Christ as saviour, this would be the only case where it is used non-soteriologically. That would be a serious anomaly. It is more probable that, seeing Peter actually identifies Christ as saviour, he means it in a soteriological sense. To argue that because a price is not mentioned, this redemption cannot be soteriological, is again to argue from silence.

In contrast, Clifford is closer to the biblical truth when he notes:

There is, however, an important point to be made about the use of *agoradzo* which links it with *despotes*. In 1 Cor., 6:20 and 7:23 Paul is highlighting not so much the freedom of the redeemed as their obligations to the redeemer. Freedom from sin’s guilt and power is not freedom to do as they wish; they are now Christ’s property. Although *agoradzo* does not, strictly speaking, mean ‘acquired by ransom’, it clearly presupposes redemption... Therefore, *agoradzo* is used in 2 Pet., 2:1 to emphasize the obligations of the redeemed teachers faithfully to proclaim the truth. Peter is thus stressing Christ’s sovereign right of ownership and the consequent obligations of those who had professed him.²⁶³

This makes better sense and is more true to sound exegetical principles, rather than basing an argument on ‘things not stated.’

Heb 10:26-29: Here Baxter stresses that the writer says of those who trample again the blood of the covenant, there can be no more sacrifice for sins. Baxter’s point is that if Christ had never died for these apostates, how can it be said of them that there now remains no more sacrifice for sins?²⁶⁴ He asks how can there: “remain no more ransom for them when they were never ransomed at all?”²⁶⁵ he continues a little later:

But if it be acknowledged (as it must be) that the text means, there is no sacrifice for sins of these apostates; then it plainly intimates that there was once a sacrifice for their sin till they by rejection deprived themselves of the benefit of it.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁹Gary Long, *Definite Atonement*, (no place: Backus Books, 1988), p., 71.

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, p., 72.

²⁶²That is, when it is not talking about buying a garment or a field for example.

²⁶³Clifford, *Atonement*, p., 159. This is where the drift of modern scholarship is heading in terms of explicating the most likely intent of Peter here.

²⁶⁴Baxter, p., 334.

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*, p., 335.

²⁶⁶*Ibid.*

Later he grants that these apostates were only partakers of the general common operations of the Spirit: “that they had true special saving faith, regeneration or sanctification, I affirm not.”²⁶⁷

To conclude this treatment of Baxter, if the *prima facie* reading of these two texts is accepted, it does seem that the terminology Baxter invokes takes on a more plausible character. For example, it is not that there was a redemption available to the false professors of 2 Pet 2:1 but that they denied something that had actually been accomplished for them. The same would seem to hold in the case of Heb 10:26. The apostates had rendered void a sacrifice that was in some sense made for them. Given this, and the fact that an actual redemption actually saves, we are left to find words to describe something of an unactualised redemption. Here the mind must struggle. To say, then, that Christ made a conditional redemption for all is Baxter’s attempt to bring the various datum of Scripture together. Baxter is driven by the logic of the sufficiency-efficiency formula and by the demands of what the text very apparently says at its face value level. He knows that there is an effectual redemption. That cannot be denied. Yet he wants to somehow describe an ineffectual redemption, which even though it is ultimately ineffectual, is nonetheless real and which must be meaningfully described. The point is, if Scripture speaks of a redemption for all, in some sense, which we may designate conditional, given that terms like pardon, forgiveness, and so forth, are theological cognates of redemption, Baxter merely extends the logic. Thus, he can speak of a pardon which has been conditionally secured for all, and a forgiveness which has been conditionally secured for all. From this, he simply says, in a short-hand fashion, that Christ has conditionally pardoned all, that he has conditionally forgiven all. This sounds odd to us, but if his assumptions regarding general redemption of Christ are correct, then these subsequent inferences are sound.

There are two problems which we as readers of Baxter may fall into. We may reject what he has to say because our ‘system’ of theology has not the sufficient categories to contain it, indeed, our theological system may reject it. To do that, though, one must go “all the way,” as it were, and follow the exegesis of Owen and Long, for example, completely devoiding 2 Pet 2:1 of any soteriological import. We must also recast the seemingly obvious implication of Heb 10:26 (and 29). Rom 14:15 and 1 Cor 8:11-12 must now be understated. ‘World’ must now be theologically contextualised to mean elect, and ‘all’ must be disallowed to mean absolutely all. The point is, the high orthodox position actually comes at a great price. It runs against the normal face value reading of so many texts.

The other problem is more subtle. It is that we may allow ourselves to feel so incongruous with the terminology, such as, conditional forgiveness, because we are unable to penetrate its meaning exhaustively, we will neglect its import. Clearly it is difficult to grasp how it can be said that Christ took the sins of the whole world upon himself, conditionally,²⁶⁸ because of the way we have been trained to think about the substitutionary nature of Christ’s death. However, such a difficulty does not necessarily make it wrong. Perhaps Calvin’s genius was that he never attempted to make certain aspects of his theology explicit. Yet there is a way of describing the universal aspect of Christ’s work that does not ring incongruous to our ears. When one adds all the various statements from Calvin together, the picture clearly seems to be that for him, he viewed the unlimited ransom of Christ as a payment which paid, as it were, all the debts of all men. It effectively discharged all the claims of the law against all men. However, the application of this benefit is conditional. Unlimited redemption does for Calvin what the removal of all legal obstacles does for A.A. Hodge: It removes the necessary condemnation of the law against all men,²⁶⁹ by perfectly satisfying all its claims upon men.²⁷⁰ However, the application of this benefit is conditioned upon faith.²⁷¹ For sure, to our Owenic dispositions this is objectionable. I

²⁶⁷Ibid., p., 342.

²⁶⁸Baxter, p., 137.

²⁶⁹A.A. Hodge, *The Atonement*, (London: T. Nelson and Sons, 1868), p., 227 and 330.

²⁷⁰C.f., Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol 2, pp., 470-473, and Shedd’s *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol 2, pp., 437, 440-1 and 464.

²⁷¹In this paper I have not touched upon Calvin’s teaching of a conditional application of Christ’s redemption, that will be the subject matter of future papers.

do think, though, that these concepts are present in Calvin's thinking, given his descriptions of the conditional revealed will of God, and of a redemption for all, already accomplished in some sense.²⁷²

Conclusion

In the end, the question comes to this, "Who was actually more faithful to Calvin? Baxter, Amyraut or the Protestant Scholastics as represented by men like Owen?" I would argue that in terms of conceptual content Baxter and Amyraut were. It is clear that the content, indeed, part of the very heart of Calvin's teaching, was denied by the Protestant Scholastics. Yet it is also clear that in terms of terminology, there is a shift away from Calvin by all sides. All sides are now trying to explain Scripture in the light of new concepts and categories. *Covenant* was a powerful category that came to dominate the Reformed landscape. This is especially true for Amyraut, following Cameron. It is less true for Baxter who did not stress covenantalism as much (in this work at least). Covenant notwithstanding, Baxter also clearly exhibits the language and phrases of the day.

The intent of these papers has been to show that there was, indeed, a drift away from Calvin in the theology of the Protestant Scholastics. The thought has been to demonstrate this drift by inductively detailing the very divergent exegetical traditions. As I showed in my previous papers, the Protestant Scholastics, remapped, as it were, a new exegetical tradition with regard to Jn 3:16, Mt 23:37 and 2 Pet 3:9. This paper has sought to extend the review by examining Calvin on such verses as 1 Cor 8:11-12, Rom 14:15, and 2 Pet 2:1, showing how they formed a certain theological foundation or backdrop to his so-called "wasted blood" passages. It really does take an exercise in gymnastics to turn Calvin's particular assumptions on their heads. Comparing old and new exegesis from the high orthodox camp, one can see the shift. Like the other verses, these, too, have been remapped, and a new exegetical tradition has been laid down. Further, it is also apparent that men like Baxter, who made up the minority of the Reformed world in the 17th century, were truer to Calvin's exegetical tradition than were the high Federalists. Theologically, the intent of this paper has then been to present a case that the post-Calvin Calvinists also redefined certain theological formulations which cannot be found in Calvin.

I argue that Calvin operated within the Augustinian medieval exegetical and theological tradition, and from *that* perspective should he be contrasted to the new tradition established by Beza and others. It is wrongly assumed that Calvin had made a more radical break with the Augustinian predestinarian model. People are illegitimately attempting to read into Calvin the later conceptual models. Lastly, whether or not we agree with Calvin, is beside the point. We must at least honestly acknowledge what he taught and openly admit the changes wrought within Calvinism by the later Calvinists. We may or may not agree with Calvin, but at the very least we should cease trying to make him fit the later Protestant Scholastic mold.

²⁷²Calvin's language of universal redemption, which has been accomplished by Christ, makes explicable Calvin's constant remark throughout the corpus of his writings that God is reconciled to all men. Normally this is taken as meaning that God is placable and ready to be reconciled. It may be that Calvin took this further than others have hitherto understood.

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