

# THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Email: [Jrob1517@aol.com](mailto:Jrob1517@aol.com)

Website: [www.trinityfoundation.org](http://www.trinityfoundation.org)

Telephone: 423.743.0199

Fax: 423.743.2005

## The Banner of Truth *versus* Calvinism

Marc D. Carpenter

One of the most influential and prolific organizations within Calvinistic circles is The Banner of Truth Trust. In addition to its magazine, *The Banner of Truth*, it has published a host of books by past and present professedly Reformed authors. Any new book by The Banner of Truth Trust is sure to go to the top of the Reformed best-seller list. In fact, many have come to equate this organization with true, solid Calvinism and receive the writings and publications without question as the Gospel truth. A closer inspection will show differently. Not only do those at The Banner of Truth Trust promote hypo-Calvinism, but they have also waged a calculated war against Biblical Calvinism with tactics one might not expect from those who profess the name of Christ.

### *The Banner Promotes Hypo-Calvinism*

Iain Murray published the first issue of *The Banner of Truth* in September 1955. In the eleventh issue, he wrote an article titled, "The Free Offer of the Gospel Viewed in Light of the Marrow Controversy." As we saw in the March *Trinity Review*, the Marrow Men departed seriously from orthodoxy in their claims that Christ is dead for all humanity, God loves all humanity, and God desires the salvation of all humanity as evidenced in the offer of the Gospel. Murray quoted and then defended the Marrow Men. He quoted from Thomas

Boston's *Works*: "Many do not consider, nor believe that Christ is knocking at the door of their hearts for admission, and therefore they do not bestir themselves to receive him. . . . Christ is willing to come into every heart. Why does he demand open doors, but because he is willing to enter?"<sup>1</sup> He quoted from John Flavel's *Works*: "This expression [*Rev. 3:20*] extends the gracious offer of Christ, and brings in hope to every hearer . . . as if Christ should say, I will have this offer of my grace to go round to every particular person; if thou, or thou, or thou, the greatest, the vilest of sinners, will hear my voice, and open to me, I will come into their souls."<sup>2</sup> He quoted Obadiah Sedgewick: "Thou wilt confess one day, I might have had mercy. I was offered Christ and grace. I felt him knocking by His Spirit; but I slighted Him, grieved Him and rejected Him, and now it is just with God to shut the door of mercy against me."<sup>3</sup>

In attempting to show how this differed from Arminianism, one of Murray's statements was: "Arminians hold that God loves all men equally and alike; the Marrow-men affirmed that the universal expression of God's benevolence and compassion contained in the Gospel offer was not the same as His electing love."<sup>4</sup> This is a very common hypo-

<sup>1</sup> Iain H. Murray, "The Free Offer of the Gospel Viewed in Light of the Marrow Controversy," *The Banner of Truth*, July 1958: 10-11.

<sup>2</sup> Murray, 15.

<sup>3</sup> Murray, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Murray, 12-13.

Calvinistic way of introducing the concept of differing loves in God; however, when one stops to think about what it means, it makes no sense. Think about it: God does not offer the Gospel to the reprobate out of electing love, but He offers the Gospel out of a general compassion to the reprobate? What kind of love would offer something without the concomitant giving of the ability to receive it? In his chapter entitled "Spurious Calvinism," John Gerstner said that

such a "love," on God's part, so far from being love, would be the refinement of cruelty. As we have already seen, offering a gift of life to a spiritual corpse, a brilliant sunset to a blind man, and a reward to a legless cripple if only he will come and get it, are horrible mockeries.<sup>5</sup>

Then again, to those who hold to the theology of paradox, the fact that it makes no sense is the beauty of it.

Gerstner also exposed the Marrowist notion that God loves the reprobate while he lives (and offers salvation to him out of that love); and then hates him if he dies in rebellion:

If that is the attitude of the God who changes not, why would He come to hate them forever in hell for what He loves them in this world: If God loves men now it must be *God* who repents when He comes to hate them after their death. Since we know that "God is not a man . . . that he should repent" (*Numbers* 23:19), one of two things must be true—either God must hate reprobate sinners now or God must love reprobate sinners forever. It is inconceivable that an unchanging God loves impenitent sinners now and hates these same impenitent sinners after their death.<sup>6</sup>

Murray's view of passive reprobation in this same article is also common to hypo-Calvinists. Active

reprobation, that of God's blinding, deafening, hardening, and turning hearts in wicked ways (*Romans* 9:18; *1 Peter* 2:8; *Proverbs* 16:4; *Isaiah* 6:9-10, 45:7; *1 Kings* 22:20-23; *1 Samuel* 2:25; *2 Samuel* 12:12, 17:14; *Exodus* 4:21; *Joshua* 11:20; *Psalms* 105:25; *Ezekiel* 14:9; etc.<sup>7</sup>) is repulsive to those who would limit God's sovereignty. They would consign reprobation to mere preterition, a mere "passing over" rather than having God be so active and instrumental in the wickedness of men as to harden them for eternal destruction. The well-meant offer and active reprobation cannot co-exist, since in hypo-Calvinism, God is lovingly offering salvation to the reprobate, while in Calvinism, God uses the presentation of the Gospel to further harden the reprobate. Related to this is the whole idea of "permission"—the hypo-Calvinist would say that God only permits evil in leaving people to do as they like and does not ordain and order evil. To this, Calvin replies:

From other passages, in which God is said to draw or bend Satan himself, and all the reprobate, to his will, a more difficult question arises. For the carnal mind can scarcely comprehend how, when acting by their means, he contracts no taint from their impurity, nay, how, in a common operation, he is exempt from all guilt, and can justly condemn his own ministers. Hence a distinction has been invented between *doing* and *permitting*, because to many it seemed altogether inexplicable how Satan and all the wicked are so under the hand and authority of God, that he directs their malice to whatever end he pleases, and employs their iniquities to execute his judgments. . . . Hence recourse is had to the evasion that this is done only by the permission, and not also by the will of God. He himself, however, openly

<sup>5</sup> John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 124.

<sup>6</sup> Gerstner, 130.

<sup>7</sup> Incontrovertible proof of this is found in Gordon Clark's tape on "Predestination in the Old Testament" (available free from Believer's Chapel Tape Ministry, 6420 Churchill Way, Dallas, TX 75230) and in his book entitled *Predestination*.

declaring that he *does* this, repudiates the evasion.<sup>8</sup>

. . . But this subtlety is repudiated by many passages of Scripture, which clearly show that divine interference amounts to something more than prescience. . . . In like manner, what is said of permission is too weak to stand. God is very often said to blind and harden the reprobate, to turn their hearts, to incline and impel them. . . . The extent of this agency can never be explained by having recourse to prescience or permission.<sup>9</sup>

Iain Murray and The Banner of Truth Trust were apparently so offended at God's absolute sovereign providence that, when they published a book by another author on God's sovereignty, they totally eliminated his chapter on reprobation (as we will see).

In the fourteenth issue of *The Banner of Truth*, Murray published a sermon by John Bonar that reeks of Marrowism:

As certainly as you are lost—as certainly as you are condemned and perishing—so certainly are you of those for whom as such, salvation is provided, and to whom as such the invitation of God is sent. Yes, Christ is God's gift to mankind sinners. The cross is God's ordinance for the salvation of men, and Christ is dead for you to come to—for you to live by. . . . Thy God hath found thee out, not with words of condemnation, but with words of mercy. His words are fresh and full of love . . . they are drops of the compassion of God. . . . Haste, then—escape,—grasp the hand of Christ yet outstretched to save.<sup>10</sup>

In 1968, an article appeared by John Murray entitled "The Atonement and the Free Offer of the Gospel." Murray stated "that there is a love of God . . . in which non-elect persons are embraced, and a love that comes to its highest expression in the entreaties, overtures and demands of gospel proclamation."<sup>11</sup> The reader is again referred to Gerstner's comment on a "love" that entreats but does not give the ability.

Over the years, *The Banner of Truth* has continued to publish its hypo-Calvinism. Recently, the rhetoric has gotten a bit stronger, as it has pointed an accusing finger at those who would eschew their hawking of Jesus. In 1994, David Gay wrote a two-part series for the magazine entitled "Preaching the Gospel to Sinners," in which he claims that "there is a kind of incipient hyper-Calvinism abroad," quotes John Murray who said that while "avowing the *doctrine* of the free offer, they have not been successful in bringing it to bear upon men with spontaneity and without any reserve," and says that "we are failing to preach the gospel in a soul-saving way. . . . And our failure lies both in the content of our sermons and in their style and delivery."<sup>12</sup>

Gay, in effect, said that there is no true Gospel preaching without the offer. He is even more bold in the second article: "If Christ and salvation are not freely offered to sinners indiscriminately, is the gospel being preached at all?"<sup>13</sup> So what kind of preaching do Gay and the Banner of Truth Trust promote as *true* Gospel preaching? Gay says,

The point is: Does God actually *desire* the salvation of sinners? Does he *want* sinners to be saved? And further, Does God *desire* the salvation even of those who are reprobate? . . . I assert that this is the heart of the matter. *Does God desire the salvation of all men?* The answer is, Yes! Therefore we must, in our preaching, declare indiscriminately to all our hearers

<sup>8</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Eerdmans, 1989), Book I, Chapter XVIII, 198-199.

<sup>9</sup> Calvin, Book I, Chapter IV, 267.

<sup>10</sup> John Bonar, "The Universal Calls and Invitations of the Gospel Consistent with the Total Depravity of Man, and Particular Redemption," *The Banner of Truth*, February 1959: 20.

<sup>11</sup> John Murray, "The Atonement and the Free Offer of the Gospel," *The Banner of Truth*, July-August 1968: 29.

<sup>12</sup> David Gay, "Preaching the Gospel to Sinners: 1," *The Banner of Truth*, July 1994: 23-24.

<sup>13</sup> David Gay, "Preaching the Gospel to Sinners: 2," *The Banner of Truth*, August-September 1994: 42.

that God desires to see them saved. Further, we are preaching the gospel to sinners properly, only when we are convinced of the truth of such a desire in God and say so very clearly. We can only persuade sinners to be reconciled to God when we are persuaded that God not only delights in their salvation, but he actually *desires* it.<sup>14</sup>

This is the crux of the matter, according to Gay and *The Banner of Truth*. We who are repulsed by this compromise with Arminianism are to be shunned as not preaching the true Gospel.

In the August-September 1995 issue of *The Banner of Truth*, John Brentall made a false accusation against the Protestant Reformed Churches and the British Reformed Fellowship, stating that they do not believe in a universal offer. David Engelsma sent a letter of response, which was published in the December 1995 issue, stating that if the original sense of the word "offer" is used, meaning "presentation," then the PRC believe in the universal offer of the Gospel. He went on to state opposition to the well-meant offer. Iain Murray, in the same issue, responded with this: "The critical issue here, of course, is not the mere use of the term 'offer,' but whether the offer of the gospel is an expression of God's desire that it should be received by sinners. . . . To deny this on the basis of God's eternal decree of reprobation (he has not chosen to save some, therefore he can have no expressions of compassion and desire for them) does not, in our view, harmonize with *all* of the biblical evidence."<sup>15</sup> He goes on to promote his new book, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism* (which will be reviewed next month), saying, in effect, that this is the epitome of hyper-Calvinism.

Engelsma's reply in *The Standard Bearer* minced no words:

If the Protestant Reformed denial of the "well-meant offer" is the hyper-Calvinism

that Mr. Murray makes it out to be, the PRC are guilty of a false doctrine that conflicts with biblical teaching of the universal love of God in Christ for sinners and that puts an end to the promiscuous preaching of the gospel. . . .

If, on the other hand, the rejection by the PRC of the "well-meant offer" is right, the Calvinism of *The Banner of Truth*, as of many confessedly Calvinistic churches today, is fatally corrupted and compromised by the damnable lie of Arminianism, that bringing again of the Pelagian error "out of hell," as the Reformed faith officially (and correctly) judges the Arminian heresy in the Canons of Dort (II, Rejection of Errors/ 3).<sup>16</sup>

In the next section, we will discover that *The Banner of Truth* is so set against the denial of the well-meant offer that they would dare to rewrite history to make a Calvinist's book on God's sovereignty look as if it accommodated the hyper-Calvinist heresy.

In addition to *The Banner of Truth*, two of the members of the editorial board, Erroll Hulse and Ernest Reisinger, publish magazines of their own. Hulse's magazine is *Reformation Today*, and Reisinger's is *The Founders Journal*. Both of these magazines have published articles promoting the lie of the well-meant offer.

### *The Banner Muzzles A. W. Pink*

In 1928, A. W. Pink wrote what is to this day a classic—*The Sovereignty of God*. In twelve chapters and four appendices, Pink clearly and powerfully put forth the glorious truths of God's sovereignty over every aspect of His creation. He met his redeemer in July 1952. By 1959, the book had gone through six printings by the Bible Truth Depot.

In 1961, *The Banner of Truth* Trust printed what they called their "British Revised Edition" of Pink's book. In the preface to this edition, the publishers note that "the contemporary value of the book could

<sup>14</sup> Gay, "Preaching the Gospel to Sinners: 2," 44-45.

<sup>15</sup> David Engelsma, "Does God Desire that the 'Offer' Be Received by All Sinners?" *The Standard Bearer*, 15 January 1996: 173-176.

<sup>16</sup> Engelsma, 175.

be increased by certain minor revisions and abridgements."<sup>17</sup> What were these "minor" changes? THREE CHAPTERS and ALL FOUR APPENDICES were gone! In an unconscionable, sinister move, The Banner of Truth Trust whisked away 44% of the sections of Pink's book; and it is obvious from the content of the censored chapters that it was because these chapters condemned as wickedness what The Banner of Truth Trust held dear. The chapters were: "The Sovereignty of God and Reprobation," "God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility," and "Difficulties and Objections." The appendices deal with the false distinction between decretive and permissive will, the foreordaining of the Fall, and treatments of *John* 3:16 and *1 John* 2:2 to show that there is not a universal love or propitiation. And instead of leaving the remaining text alone, the publishers felt it necessary to include a footnote where Pink put forth the true Calvinist view of *1 Timothy* 2:6, referring the reader to a Banner of Truth book "for another interpretation of this text."<sup>18</sup>

The following from the chapter on reprobation is an example of what was censored; see how Pink pointed the finger right at The Banner of Truth:

The thoughtful reader will naturally ask, And what of those who were *not* "ordained to eternal life?" The answer which is usually returned to this question, even by those who profess to believe what the Scriptures teach concerning God's sovereignty, is, that God *passes* by the non-elect, *leaves them alone* to go their own way, and in the end casts them into the Lake of Fire because they refused *His* way, and rejected the Saviour of His providing. But this is only part of the truth; the other part—that which is most offensive to the carnal mind—is either ignored or denied. . . . He loves one and hates another. He exercises mercy toward some and hardens others, without reference to anything save His own sovereign will.

<sup>17</sup> Publisher's Preface in Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, Revised Edition (1961; The Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), 2-3.

<sup>18</sup> In Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, Revised Edition, 67.

That which is most repulsive to the carnal mind in the above verse is the reference to *hardening*—"whom He will He hardeneth"—and it is just here that so many commentators and expositors have adulterated the truth. . . . We ask our readers to mark well the above language. A perusal of it should show that what the present writer has advanced in this chapter is *not* "hyper-Calvinism" but *real* Calvinism, pure and simple. Our purpose in making this remark is to show that those who, not acquainted with Calvin's writings, in their ignorance condemn as ultra-Calvinism that which is simply a reiteration of what Calvin himself taught—a reiteration because that prince of theologians as well as his humble debtor have both found this doctrine in the Word of God itself.<sup>19</sup>

In his censored chapter on "Difficulties and Objections," Pink said this of universal love:

One of the most popular beliefs of the day is that God loves everybody. . . . So widely has this dogma been proclaimed, and so *comforting* is it to the heart which is at enmity with God we have little hope of convincing many of their error. . . . To tell the Christ-rejector that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience as well as to afford him a sense of security in his sins. The fact is, the love of God is a truth for the saints only, and to present it to the enemies of God is to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.<sup>20</sup>

In his censored chapter on "God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility," Pink said:

Others have acknowledged that the Scriptures present *both* the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man but affirm that in our present finite condition and with our limited knowledge it is

<sup>19</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Bible Truth Depot, 1930), 87, 97, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Pink (Bible Truth Depot Edition), 210-211.

*impossible* to reconcile the two truths, though it is the bounden duty of the believer to receive both. The present writer believes that it has been too *readily* assumed that the Scriptures themselves do not reveal the several points which show the conciliation of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility.<sup>21</sup>

In other parts of the censored chapters, Pink addressed the verses that hypo-Calvinists (and Arminians) love to use and crushed all Arminian interpretation.

"Contemporary value of the book" indeed! These chapters were deleted to make the carnal minds of the hypo-Calvinists more soothed in their misunderstanding and misapplication of God's Holy Word. The Banner of Truth Trust, in a very underhanded way, sought to adulterate the truth of the complete sovereignty of God and pass it off as a full representation of A. W. Pink's views. This is a serious, serious sin.

Did not someone print *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, asserting that there were some who were printing materials by Spurgeon and leaving out his Calvinism? Perhaps a book should be published entitled *The Forgotten Pink*, in which the censored sections of the book are reprinted. The book would certainly expose The Banner of Truth Trust and all hypo-Calvinists throughout history as undermining the doctrine of the sovereignty of God.

### *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism*

The latest missile in Iain Murray's war against Calvinism is his book, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism: The Battle for Gospel Preaching*. In his words, "The book is intended to show the momentous difference between evangelistic Calvinistic belief and that form of Calvinism which denies any desire on the part of God for the salvation of all men."<sup>22</sup> Murray exhumes Charles Spurgeon as his battle-mate and in the process dredges up the dark side of Spurgeon that will

surprise many Calvinists who have read only his Calvinistic sermons. When Spurgeon was talking about Calvinism, he was usually solid. But Spurgeon's sermonizing on the points of Calvinism and his evangelistic appeals to the unregenerate did not mesh. Murray exploits this to the advantage of hypo-Calvinism.

As in any debate against the truth, the best tactic is to condemn some things that should rightly be condemned and then condemn the truth in the same breath. This is an old tactic seen in any introductory social psychology textbook. It is also an underhanded tactic. Murray uses this very craftily as he goes over the four points against hyper-Calvinism. The first three condemn the truly hyper-Calvinistic notions that the Gospel is not to be preached to all indiscriminately, that all are not commanded to have faith, and that the reprobate are not responsible. This is all well and good. But the fourth point concerns the crux of hypo-Calvinism: the love of God toward the non-elect and his desire to save all. Murray calls this "perhaps the most serious difference of all between evangelical Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism."<sup>23</sup> The psychological twist has begun.

In chapter 11, Murray attempts to solidify his position on the last point by giving an excerpt of a sermon from C. H. Spurgeon on *1 Timothy 2:3, 4*. Murray calls it "A Crucial Text" in this battle for Gospel preaching and says that the interpretation of this verse is "one of the principal issues relating to the Hyper-Calvinistic controversy."<sup>24</sup> In other words, if one interprets *1 Timothy 2:4* as Spurgeon does (that "all men" means "all men without exception"), he is a Calvinist; if he interprets it to mean that "all men" means "all kinds of men," then he is a hyper-Calvinist.

The Calvinistic reader might be surprised that Spurgeon took the Arminian view of this passage. But, as we will see, it fits very well into his Arminian evangelical appeals. The following is an excerpt from this sermon:

<sup>21</sup> Pink (Bible Truth Depot Edition), 154.

<sup>22</sup> Iain H. Murray, "John Gill and C. H. Spurgeon," *The Banner of Truth*, November 1995: 16.

<sup>23</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism: The Battle for Gospel Preaching* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 88.

<sup>24</sup> Murray, *Spurgeon*, 149.

You must, most of you, be acquainted with the general method in which our older Calvinistic friends deal with this text. "All men," they say,—"that is *some men*": as if the Holy Ghost could not have said "some men" if he had meant some men. "All men," say they; "that is, some of all sorts of men"; as if the Lord could not have said "All sorts of men" if he had meant that. The Holy Ghost by the apostle has written "all men," and unquestionably he means all men. . . .

As it is *my* wish that it should be so, as it is *your* wish that it might be so, so it is God's wish that all men should be saved; for, assuredly, he is not less benevolent than we are. . . . It is God's wish that the sick should not suffer. Do you doubt it? Is it not your own wish? And yet the Lord does not work a miracle to heal every sick person. It is God's wish that his creatures should be happy. Do you deny that? He does not interpose by any miraculous agency to make us all happy, and yet it would be wicked to suppose that he does not wish the happiness of all the creatures that he has made.<sup>25</sup>

Regarding the first paragraph, Spurgeon is exposed as a poor exegete. Hugh L. Williams, in his excellent article on this sermon, puts forth the Calvinist reaction to Spurgeon's assertion: "This is wrong. The Holy Ghost did not by the apostle write 'all men.' He wrote *pantas anthropous*. Now the question is what does the phrase mean."<sup>26</sup> Williams goes on to show that this undoubtedly means "all without distinction" rather than "all without exception."

Regarding the second paragraph, a natural question arises as to how Spurgeon reconciled his belief that God wishes all to be saved but did not decree them to be saved. As the reader will see, his response is

no different from the hypo-Calvinism of Murray, Stonehouse, and Van Til:

I never thought it to be any very great crime to be inconsistent with myself, for who am I that I should everlastingly be consistent? . . .

He has an infinite benevolence which, nevertheless, is not in all points worked out by his infinite omnipotence; and if anybody asked me why it is not, I cannot tell. I have never set up to be an explainer of all difficulties, and I have no desire to do so. . . .

This is one of those things which we do not need to know. Have you never noticed that some people who are ill and are ordered to take pills are foolish enough to chew them? That is a very nauseous thing to do, though I have done it myself. The right way to take medicine of such a kind is to swallow it at once. In the same way there are some things in the Word of God which are undoubtedly true which must be swallowed at once by an effort of faith, and must not be chewed by perpetual questioning. You will soon have I know not what of doubt and difficulty and bitterness upon your soul if you must needs know the unknowable, and have reasons and explanations for the sublime and the mysterious. Let the difficult doctrines go down whole into your very soul, by a grand exercise of confidence in God. . . .

. . . I am a most unreasonable being when I am most reasonable, and when my judgment is most accurate I dare not trust it. . . . I do not intend meddling with such lofty matters. There stands the text, and I believe that it is my Father's wish that "all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit (MTP)* (Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 26: 49-51.

<sup>26</sup> Hugh L. Williams, "Not So Sure With Mr. Spurgeon or Open the Mouth and Swallow It At Once?" *British Reformed Journal*, April-June 1996: 44.

<sup>27</sup> Spurgeon, *MTP*, 26: 50-51.

Spurgeon wanted his audience to swallow the paradox whole. And, just like other hypo-Calvinists throughout history, he labeled those who do not accept that the Bible contains paradox as rationalists: "Those who will only believe what they can reconcile will necessarily disbelieve much of divine revelation. They are, without knowing it, following the lead of the rationalists. Those who receive by faith anything which they find in the Bible will receive two things, twenty things, ay, or twenty thousand things, though they cannot construct a theory which harmonises them all."<sup>28</sup> Spurgeon's hypo-Calvinist charley-horse must have been quite painful.

This is what Iain Murray sees as a true Calvinistic exegesis of the "crucial text" of *1 Timothy* 2:4. If this "battle for gospel preaching" is to be won, according to Murray, then we must believe and preach that "all" means "all without exception" and we must "swallow it whole." And those who would have the audacity to chew it must be hyper-Calvinists.

Let us see what John Calvin himself had to say about this passage of Scripture:

This passage of the apostle (*1 Tim.* ii. 4) was long ago brought forth by the Pelagians, and handled against us with all their might. . . . I have nevertheless extorted from Pighius this much: that no one but a man deprived of his common sense and common judgment can believe that salvation was ordained by the secret counsel of God equally and indiscriminately for *all men*. The true meaning of Paul, however, in this passage now under consideration is perfectly clear and intelligible to every one who is not determined on contention. The apostle is exhorting that all solemn "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings and all that are in authority." And because there were, in that age, so many and such wrathful and bitter enemies of the Church, Paul, to prevent despair from hindering the

prayers of the faithful, hastens to meet their distresses by earnestly entreating them to be instant in prayer "for all men," and especially "for all those in authority." "For (saith the apostle) God will have *all men* to be saved." Who does not see that the apostle here is speaking of *orders of men* rather than of individuals? Indeed, that distinction which commentators here make is not without great reason and point; that *nations* of individuals, not *individuals* of nations, are here intended by Paul. . . .

But Paul teaches us (continues Georgius) that God "would have all men to be saved." It follows, therefore, according to his understanding of that passage, either that God is disappointed in His wishes, or that all men without exception must be saved. If he should reply that God wills all men to be saved on His part, or as far as He is concerned, seeing that salvation is, nevertheless, left to the free will of each individual; I, in return, ask him why, if such be the case, God did not command the Gospel to be preached indiscriminately from the beginning of the world? why he suffered so many generations of men to wander for so many ages in all the darkness of death? Now it follows, in the apostle's context, that God "would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth." But the sense of the whole passage is perfectly plain, and contains no ambiguity to any reader of candor and of a sound judgment. We have fully explained the whole passage in former pages. The apostle had just before exhorted that solemn and general prayers should be offered up in the Church "for kings and princes," etc., that no one might have cause to deplore those kings and magistrates whom God might be pleased to set over them; because, at that time, rulers were the most violent enemies of the faith. Paul, therefore, makes Divine provision for this state of things by the prayers of the Church, and by affirming

<sup>28</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, in Murray, *Spurgeon*, 124.

that the grace of Christ could reach to this order of men also, even to kings, princes and rulers of every description. But it is no matter of wonder that the more audacity this worthless fellow betrays in wresting the Scriptures, the more profuse he should be in heaping passages on passages to suit his purpose, seeing that he does not possess one particle of religion or of shame which might restrain his headlong impudence. . . .

. . . And as to your usual way of citing that passage of the apostle Paul, "That God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*I Tim.* ii. 4), how vain a prop that is to put under your error to support it, I think I have shown with sufficient plainness already, and that repeatedly. For it is (so to speak) more certain than certainty itself that the apostle is not, in that passage, speaking of individuals at all, but of orders of men in their various civil and national vocations. He had just before commanded that the public prayers of the Church should be offered up for kings and others in authority, and for all who held magisterial offices, of what kind and degree soever they may be. But as nearly all those who were then armed with the sword of public justice were open and professed enemies of the Church, and as it might therefore seem to the Church singular or absurd that public prayers should be offered up for them, the apostle meets all objections, so very natural, by admonishing the Church to pray even for them also, and to supplicate God to extend His grace and favour even to them, for the Church's quiet, peace, and safety.<sup>29</sup>

Is it not telling that Iain Murray did not mention Calvin's exegesis of this passage? Does this not reek of deception? For if Murray were honest, he would have to admit that John Calvin was a hyper-

Calvinist. A. W. Pink, in one of the chapters that *The Banner of Truth* censored, said this: "*I Tim.* 2:4 cannot teach that God *wills* the salvation of all mankind or otherwise all mankind *would* be saved—'What His soul desireth, *even that* He doeth' (*Job* 23:13)!"<sup>30</sup>

The reader may wonder, "If Spurgeon thinks that 'all' always means 'all without exception,' he would certainly go quite astray in other passages of Scripture that say 'all.' What about *John* 12:32, where Jesus says 'I . . . will draw all men unto me'?" Here is Spurgeon on this passage:

The text says that Jesus Christ will draw all men unto himself. Now, all men who hear of Jesus Christ at all are drawn, but they do not all yield. Some of them pull back, and the most awful thing that ever happens to a man is when he pulls back till Jesus lets him go. What a fall is that, when the drawing power is taken away, and the man falls backward into a destruction which he himself has chosen, having refused eternal life, and resisted the Saviour's power! Unhappy is the wretch who strives against his own salvation. Every man that hears the gospel feels some measure of its drawing power. . . . Does not Jesus sometimes tug hard at your conscience-strings, and, though you have pulled back, yet has he not drawn and drawn again? . . . Do not pull back, lest his drawing should cease, and you should perish.<sup>31</sup>

### *Spurgeon: Calvinist or Hypo-Calvinist?*

In a recent issue of *The Trinity Review*, the author lauds Spurgeon as a solid, uncompromising Calvinist. And from the excerpts of Spurgeon in the article, it seems that this was so. This present writer also held that view for a long period of time. But the sad truth has come to light. Spurgeon promoted

<sup>29</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism*, translated by Henry Cole (1856; Reformed Free Publishing Association, n.d.), 104-106, 166-167, 275-276.

<sup>30</sup> Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Bible Truth Depot, 1930), 111.

<sup>31</sup> Spurgeon, *MTP*, 29: 232, 240.

Calvinism as the Gospel; but what was his Calvinism? So far we have seen that Spurgeon believed that God desires that all men without exception be saved—the same view as the Amyraldians, the Marrow Men, and men like Murray, Stonehouse, and Van Til. He believed in paradox. He preached resistible grace. From these discoveries alone, we must conclude that Spurgeon was a hypo-Calvinist. However, if there are any doubters left among the readership, the stunning quotes from Spurgeon's appeals to the unconverted in his sermons should erase all doubt.

Before the reader considers these words of Spurgeon, it is recommended that the words of the Marrow Men be read in order to bring to mind the striking similarities. It is also recommended that the words be considered in the light of the truth of active reprobation and Hoeksema's "Jesus Saviour and the Evil of Hawking Him." Hypo-Calvinism proclaims the falsehood of a universal love of God manifested in a desire that even the reprobate be saved. Thus evangelistic appeals sound just like Arminians: "God is willing to save all of you, if only you will stop resisting His loving, wooing invitations." Implied in this is a god who is disappointed if the reprobate does not come. In light of this, keep in mind the truthful words of John Gerstner: "God, if He could be frustrated in His desires, simply would not be God."<sup>32</sup>

Here is Spurgeon:

The voice here spoken of is *the voice of love*. How wooing are its tones! The Lord in Holy Scripture speaks of mercy and of pardon bought with blood, the blood of his dear Son. O man, he calls you to him, not that he may slay you, but that he may save you. . . . Do not be cruel to almighty love! Be not ungenerous to eternal pity! . . . Personally, I can resist harshness, but love subdues me. . . . Even human love is hard to resist, but, oh, the love of God, who can withstand it? Base is the spirit that can harden itself against the boundless love of God in Christ Jesus. . . .

The voice of God, let me add now, to close this point, ought to be heard because it is a *pleading voice*. . . .

. . . "Harden not your hearts: there is no excuse, for why should you resist love? . . .

. . . The voice is that of the Lord of hosts. Be astonished, O heavens, God is speaking in boundless grace, and the man is hardening his heart in the presence of God! Under the sound of love's entreaties within earshot of mercy's imploring tones, the sinner is hardening his heart. . . .

. . . [H]e feels some drawings to good things, and he pulls back. Grace leads, and the man starts aside with resolve not to follow.<sup>33</sup>

With hands loaded with love he stands outside the door of your heart. Is not this good reason for opening the door and letting the heavenly stranger in, when he can bless you with such a vast extent of benediction?<sup>34</sup>

. . . Come *now*, for to-morrow thy heart may become harder than stone, and God may give thee up. Come *now*, it is God's time; tomorrow is the devil's time. . . . Come *now*; the bowels of Jehovah yearn for you.<sup>35</sup>

You have not only been aroused by conscience, but the good Spirit has striven with you, and have been almost persuaded to be a Christian. Such has been the blessed work of the Spirit upon your heart that you have at times been melted down, and ready to be moulded by grace. A strange softness has come over you, and if you had not gathered up all your evil strength, and if the devil had not helped you to resist, you had by this time dropped into the Saviour's arms. Oh, the riches of

<sup>32</sup> John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 129.

<sup>33</sup> Spurgeon, *MTP*, 26: 439, 441.

<sup>34</sup> Spurgeon, in Murray, *Spurgeon*, 96.

<sup>35</sup> Spurgeon, *MTP*, 7: 152.

the goodness of God to have thus wooed you, and pressed his love upon you! You have scarce had a stripe, or a frown, or an ill word from God; his ways have been all kindness, and gentleness, and longsuffering from the first day of your memory even until now. . . .

. . . Forbearance comes in when men having offended, God withholds the punishment that is due to them; when men, having been invited to mercy, have refused it, and yet God continues to stretch out his hands, and invite them to come to him. . . .

. . . Yet for all that, here you are on praying ground and pleading terms with God; here you are where yet the Saviour reigns upon the throne of grace; here you are where mercy is to be had for the asking, where free grace and dying love ring out their charming bells of invitation to joy and peace! . . .

. . . Dear hearer, whether you know this truth or not, I would remind you that God's patience with you is meant to lead you to repentance. "How?" say you. Why, first by *giving you an opportunity to repent*. These years, which are now coming to a considerable number with you, have been given you in order that you might turn to God. . . . Did not each year of your lengthened life prove that the Lord was saying, "I will spare him, for perhaps he will yet amend and think upon his God. I will give him more light, and increase his comforts; I will give him better teaching, better preaching; peradventure he will repent." <sup>36</sup>

What kind of god does Spurgeon put forth in these excerpts? It is the Arminian god who loves everyone, wants everyone to be saved, pleads with the sinner, and waits for the sinner to respond. What kind of entreaty is "Do not be cruel to almighty love" other than a portrait of the weak, frustrated god of the God-hating Arminians! What kind of god

is one who says, "I will do such and such, peradventure he will repent," other than one who is not omniscient and omnipotent!

It should now not be a wonder why Spurgeon invited the Arminian D. L. Moody into his pulpit (and the hypo-Calvinists in Britain like the Bonars welcomed him, while the Calvinist John Kennedy condemned him and warned others against inviting him to Britain <sup>37</sup>); for Spurgeon and Moody were preaching the same thing. Consider the following appeals:

I would like to tell you that the Son of Man came into this world to seek and save that which was lost, and if you choose to take your place among the lost to-night, you will find that the Son of God, that Jesus is at the very door of your heart knocking for admittance, and that He will save you now. . . .

. . . Some people think the Lord will seek them. They will not come unless the Lord has sought them. They are waiting for Him to seek them out. Now, I would ask if there is a man or woman in this assembly tonight who really believes in his heart "God has not sought for me." Is there any one who can say tonight, "The Son of God has never sought for me!" You have never heard a sermon but you have heard the Son of God seeking for you through that spiritual form. . . . You never heard a portion of Scripture read but the Son of God was seeking your lost soul. . . .

. . . Come to Christ! That is the Son of God coming to you at the midnight hour, pleading with you to accept Him. . . . There is another way in which the Son of God seeks for your soul, and that is by the Holy Spirit that He sends into this world. . . . He sent Him into this world to seek and to save you. . . .

<sup>36</sup> Spurgeon, *MTP*, 29: 196-197, 202.

<sup>37</sup> Hugh L. Williams, "The Forgotten Kennedy: Leader of the Highland Host," *British Reformed Journal*, April-June 1995: 11-21.

... There are hundreds of ways in which the Son of God seeks to save. But I want to say right here, don't any one of you go out saying the Son of God never sought for your soul. . . .

... God invites you to come. He wants you to come, and if you come you can drink. Salvation is just as free as water. When you go to a stream all you have to do is drink, and salvation is flowing at the feet of every sinner, and all he has to do is to drink and live. God offers it to every one. . . . Thank God, there is no price to salvation, it is as free as any gift we can have, and all we have to do is take it. . . .

... He loves you and gave Himself up for you. Can you give a reason for hating Him? . . . God gives Him up to the world; He gives Him up to you. . . . He has given Himself up to you, now take Him. . . .

... The great truth we want to remember is that God loves the sinner. He hates sin, yea, with a perfect hatred; but He loves the sinner. God is love. . . . If you really want to be saved, just come to God, and He will save you. . . . But if you reject His love, if you reject His salvation, do not think that God will receive harlots and drunkards, and sinners, unredeemed, into His kingdom. . . . Come under the banner of love. . . .

... That is what God wants to do. He wants to give you something. He doesn't want anything from you other than your love. . . . Come and taste salvation as a gift. You cannot buy it. The gospel is as free as the air that you breathe, and every man has an invitation to come and take of it. He says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." It is the sinner that God wants. . . . God comes this day to you. Just ask Him to forgive you. . . .

... He sent Him to open the prison doors, and you can all be free if you will. If you are bound by passion, bound by lust, you

can be free. There isn't any one but He wants him to be free. . . . If you will only accept Him He will do this for you. He wants to do it. He wants to save you. . . . He can liberate you; and if you will only take Christ as your Redeemer He will do it. That is what He wants to do.<sup>38</sup>

The above words are those of D. L. Moody. They certainly sound like what Iain Murray and the Banner of Truth people call "true gospel preaching." Thus we come to the crux of the matter. The hypo-Calvinist appeals are not only just as deceptive as the Arminian appeals—they also bring Arminians and professing Calvinists together and claim that both are preaching the true Gospel. This is the agenda that Iain Murray has for Calvinists. In fact, Murray, in his book, *Revival and Revivalism*, applauded the joint evangelistic efforts of the Calvinists and Arminians during what he called "true revivals." He even went so far as to say that one did not need to believe in predestination in order to evangelize: "Secondary truths had been sometimes wrongly treated as though they were fundamental. . . . It is not that every point of so-called Calvinistic belief is equally vital to the prosecution of evangelism and the conversion of sinners. Belief in predestination, for example, will comfort Christians but it is not a prerequisite for evangelism. Nor is preaching on the extent of the atonement essential for evangelism."<sup>39</sup>

Spurgeon believed this as well. Although he said that Calvinism is the Gospel, he obviously did not believe it in practicality, since he did not see Arminianism as a different gospel whose proponents were anathema (*Galatians* 1:6-9): "A man may be evidently of God's chosen family, and yet though elected, may not believe in the doctrine of election. I hold there are many savingly called, who do not believe in effectual calling, and that there are a great many who persevere to the end, who do not believe in the doctrine of final

<sup>38</sup> Dwight L. Moody, *To All People* (E. B. Treat, 1877), 32-35, 209, 320, 332, 334, 385, 391, 402, 405.

<sup>39</sup> Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 360, 363. For a review of this book, see Marc D. Carpenter's review in the *British Reformed Journal*.

perseverance."<sup>40</sup> Spurgeon unknowingly condemned his own preaching when he said:

In the pulpits of Methodists we are to be found continually preaching just the same doctrine as we do at the Tabernacle, and we receive no protests, but a great deal more of loving regard than we deserve. Our heart has often been melted by the warm-hearted congratulations of Wesleyan friends who have gloried in the Gospel which we have proclaimed. . . . We equally hold by the atonement, the fall of man, regeneration by the Spirit of God, and justification by faith—and we do not leave these points to be moot questions among us; hence we are both driven and drawn into closer contact, and the result is at present, and will be still more so in the future, that we learn of one another. We catch the Wesleyan fire, and they do not close their eyes to our light.<sup>41</sup>

Contrary to this view, John W. Robbins put forth the truth when he said, "The order of salvation is a crucial matter, a life and death matter."<sup>42</sup> Those who believe in the Arminian order of salvation (faith precedes regeneration) do not know the Gospel, because the order of salvation is what distinguishes Christianity from every other religion. We are not to be joining with them as brothers.

Van Tilian John Frame does not believe that Calvinism is the Gospel: "I am confident that Reformed believers are, in general, of one heart with their Arminian brothers and sisters."<sup>43</sup>

We also see professedly Reformed individuals like J. I. Packer considering Roman Catholics as brothers (and because Arminianism and Roman

Catholicism are twin bastards from the same harlot, it is not a big step from Arminianism to Romanism).

So with hypo-Calvinism, the "secondary" doctrines are put aside and replaced with blasphemous appeals, hawking Jesus Christ. These professing Calvinists happily get into bed with the whore church, not realizing that they are the instruments to deceive the simple. And even if they do not cooperate with Arminians, their appeals to sinners are of the same substance as Arminianism, and thus the same warnings against Arminian decisionalism can apply to hypo-Calvinism. Let us resist and expose this corrupt gospel and proclaim the glorious sovereignty of Almighty God.

<sup>40</sup> Spurgeon, in Murray, *Spurgeon*, 111-112.

<sup>41</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, "The Present Position of Calvinism in England," *The Sword and the Trowel*, February 1874: obtained from the Spurgeon Home Page on the World Wide Web.

<sup>42</sup> John W. Robbins, "Social Action and Evangelical Order," *The Trinity Review*, January-February 1982: 1.

<sup>43</sup> John M. Frame, *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1995), 212.