

Chapter Seven

"Memories and Reflections"

*From Geoffrey Thomas,
Alfred Place Baptist Church, Aberystwyth, Wales.*

During my first year at Westminster Seminary 1961-62, Professor Murray did not lecture the junior class, but I had many opportunities to see him, to hear him at the College chapel and to talk with him at the dinner table.

The Professor of Systematic Theology, I observed that first year, was a man of tremendous affection. I was soon to see him playing in the snow with the children of the cook, pulling or pushing their sledge and throwing snow-balls with them. He loved children. Once, years later, when he and I were walking down a narrow pavement in Aberystwyth a small boy came kicking a large football towards us with his eyes glued on the ball. As he attempted to pass us Mr. Murray stuck out his foot and took the ball away with him, dribbling it along the pavement. The small boy stood transfixed at the sight of this elderly gentleman in black hat and coat disappearing with his ball. Then at the top of the pavement Mr. Murray turned around, smiled slyly at him and deftly kicked the ball back. As we resumed our walk, the slightly breathless professor said, 'I used to enjoy a game of football when I was a boy!'

How often when walking across the campus with his students did he link arms with them! And if a student got married it was generally this professor he would invite to preach at his wedding. I remember one snowy winter afternoon going to such a wedding where Mr. Murray was preaching. 'Marriage is a creation ordinance' were his opening words. How many children of former students are named after him!

He enjoyed a good story. He would occasionally eat with the students, and when the president of the dining club would ask him at the close of the meal, 'Do you have a story for us tonight, Mr. Murray?' we were not usually disappointed. I recall the tale of a man who suffered from bells in his ears and lights before his eyes and went for treatment to all the leading medical specialists but without success. They were all baffled. One day, while nursing his despair, he went out to buy a new shirt and ordered a 14 1/2 neck. 'Oh sir,' said the assistant, 'you need a size 15. If you wear a 14 1/2 you'll get bells in your ears and lights before your eyes!'

However, any irreverence in humour he deplored. Once a list of rules was posted up on the college notice-board and after each rule some student had written in pencil various textual references from the Bible. Mr. Murray seeing this showed his immediate displeasure and without delay obtained an eraser from the Faculty library in order to rub out the offending references. 'There is a place for humour but this is not the way.' On another occasion a student with an artistic touch drew a series of cartoons with a monk as the central character, making references to various incidents on the campus. Professor Murray was not amused and took the cartoons down. When Karl Barth came to lecture in Princeton in 1962 a number of students went across to hear him and one evening Professor Murray and Dr. Van Til went over. There followed the meeting of the famous protagonists, Barth and Van Til. In the car on the return journey reference was made to the way in which Barth had sought, at some points, to amuse his audience. 'I did not laugh,' Mr. Murray commented tersely.

At the close of the evening meal at the Seminary we had our nightly service and sang a psalm together; there, when John Murray was present, we saw something of the tremendous vigour and enthusiasm with which he sang the praise of God. Who did not find himself singing Psalms more heartily after singing them alongside our dear professor?

Again, the grace of humility adorned him under all circumstances. There are many instances of this which I can recall but perhaps one occasion, in particular, stands out in my memory. On his second visit to Aberystwyth he was due to speak at the University Christian Union on the Saturday evening. When the meeting commenced the president welcomed him and told the students that they could hear Mr. Murray preach the next day at my church -- Alfred Place Baptist. 'No!' came a stentorian voice from the corner. The nonplussed student looked at Professor Murray, 'You are not preaching at Alfred Place tomorrow?' 'No,' he replied emphatically. When Professor Murray returned to our home where he was staying he asked my wife, 'Is Geoff expecting me to preach here tomorrow?' 'Yes,' she said. 'Oh, I didn't know that,' he said. 'Will it be all right?' she asked anxiously. 'Oh yes,' he said, 'but don't tell Geoff anything about this, or don't tell him until I am gone on Monday. I don't want him to worry about it, and when you tell him, you laugh about it.' So when I returned later that Saturday night from a preaching engagement in England nothing was told me of the incident and on the Sunday morning we went off to the services together. Later we were so impressed at the response of Mr. Murray to this situation; he was more concerned about my reaction than his own inconvenience in not being properly informed about the meetings. He had been ready to come over 500 miles in his seventies simply, as he thought, to speak to a group of students on a Saturday night!

I remember meeting him in a corridor at the Seminary and his telling me how in the previous week he had received a cable from Scotland informing him that his brother had died. I commiserated with him, dreading receiving such a telegram myself. As I was leaving him he called me back. 'You're a Welshman, aren't you? And you like music? Here is a new psalm tune we sang for the first time yesterday.' And he sang it to me, beating time with his finger and remarking, 'That's a lovely tune, isn't it?' At times you could find yourself on the spot as he sought help from you, as, for example, when he asked for your understanding of some verse of Scripture. I recall how on one occasion I waffled as he asked why I thought our Lord said to Mary, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father,' whereas He said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger!' He was wary of students who constantly sought from him the meaning of various texts, especially if he discovered that these texts had been given them by another professor for the preparation of a sermon before the homiletics class!

How willing he was to admit it when he was wrong! Once he failed to turn up for a lecture on Covenant Theology and after waiting for some 20 minutes we wandered off. Professor Murray had never missed a lecture before and when we told another member of the Faculty that Professor Murray had failed to arrive for a class he exclaimed, 'It must be the last days!' Punctuality was for the professor a basic virtue. The next lesson, when he appeared, how crestfallen he was! In thirty years of lecturing he had not done such a thing before and he could not understand how it had come about. He was replete with apologies. On another occasion he was travelling from Scotland to Shrewsbury where I was to pick him up. I had given him a timetable of the train service; he had also inquired and had come up with a different time of arrival in the station. He had acknowledged the difference in correspondence and I was careful to arrive at the station at *his* time, 20 minutes before my own information of its time of arrival. In due course the train came in 20 minutes later. As the professor got off, and I went up to greet him, his first words were, 'You were

right about the time'!

Whatever he did was characterized by thoroughness. At the ground-breaking ceremony at the commencement of the new library at Westminster he took the shining spade in his hands and with practiced skill thrust it deep into the ground, then he moved around to an angle of 90 degrees and thrust it in again, and then another 90 degrees and again almost buried the blade, finally completing the square with another thrust to lever up a gigantic sod of earth to the wild applause of the students. 'You could tell he was raised on a Scottish croft,' someone muttered.

His love of the Lord's Day was a lesson to us all in the diligent keeping of the fourth commandment. Once a student came to him as he stood outside the church after the morning service with the question, 'Marked our papers yet, Mr. Murray?' Professor Murray looked away. The student repeated the question. There was the same lack of response. He would not talk of such things immediately after the close of the worship, for he was anxious to keep the things he had just learned fresh in his mind. But lest there should be any misunderstanding he would compensate the student the next day by an arm through his as they walked across the campus.

Of course, Professor Murray was first and foremost a lecturer in Systematic Theology. Our text book was Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology*. All lectures at the Seminary began with prayer. Mr. Murray never asked anyone else to lead in prayer, but in words of holy tenderness he worshipped God, at times lifting the class to the gates of heaven. I especially remember his praying at the opening class at the start of a new session following a great tragedy. Bob Zweig, a class-mate and now a missionary in the West Indies, was travelling in his Volkswagon Minibus with his wife at the wheel when a dog suddenly ran into the road. To avoid it she swerved into the side of a bridge and was killed. Mrs. Zweig was within a month of expecting their first child. Professor Murray's prayer on that occasion with Bob back in class was filled with mystery at the inscrutable ways of God and concern for the bereaved student.

The lectures were earnest, moving declarations full of the exposition of the Word. The Professor taught all branches of theology, commencing with revelation and the inspiration of Scripture, then the knowability, nature and attributes of God, the divine decrees, creation, providence and miracles, the origin and nature of man, the fall, the plan of salvation, Christ's offices, the atonement, Christ's humiliation and exaltation, the *ordo salutis*, the means of grace, the second advent, resurrection and judgment. He also lectured on the Westminster Confession of Faith, Sanctification, Old Testament Biblical Theology, Christian Ethics, the Person and Work of Christ, the Epistle to the Romans, and Covenant Theology. He lectured slowly and with deliberation; one was expected to take down almost every word and all the students did so. One was expected to memorize as much of the material as possible for the examinations and certainly the exegesis of all the key verses in the original languages. In contrast with the custom at other lectures no questions were asked during the lecture itself. Once a converted Marxist of vigorous temperament commenced his studies at the Seminary. In the opening lecture of Mr. Murray's class he was as vociferous in his questioning as he had been at other lectures. When Professor Murray asked him to stop asking any more questions until the class was over he cried, 'I've got as much right to be here and speak as you have.' Professor Murray thereupon closed his lecture file and left the classroom. The student never interrupted again. Sometimes interruptions were more humorous. Once during a class there was a sudden roar as an earth-moving vehicle -- known as a Caterpillar -- accelerated not far from the Seminary boundary. The lecturer ignored it but when it recurred, yet more loudly, he broke off with the question, 'What's that?' 'A Caterpillar,' was the immediate

reply of one student. 'A *caterpillar!*' exclaimed the astonished professor, whose knowledge of agricultural machinery did not extend to this type of equipment!

I once asked him a question, after the class ended, on the New Testament teaching of every Christian witnessing for his Saviour. Was there a verse that taught this? He thanked me for the inquiry, saying he enjoyed getting questions like that to think about, and he would tell me within a few days. Later in the week he came to me after a lecture and gave me a piece of paper with these textual references written upon it: Acts 8.4; 18.26; 1 Cor. 1.5, 17; 1 Cor. 2.1-5; 1 Cor. 4.15; 1 Cor. 11.4, 5; 2 Cor. 3.8-12; compared with 1 Cor. 4.13; 2 Cor. 5.12, 18, 19; 2 Cor. 8.7; Eph. 4.15, 29; Eph. 5.11; Eph. 6.17; Phil. 1.14-18; 1 Thess. 1.8; Titus 2.3, 4; 1 Peter 3.15. I have that piece of paper before me now. I also have the examination paper set for the end of the first half of the second year, January 15, 1963, 9 a.m. It reads:

Three hours. All questions to be answered. No Bibles to be used.

- I. Set forth the Roman Catholic view of man's primitive condition. Criticize the same.
- II. State briefly what is meant by *total depravity* and set forth the biblical basis of the doctrine.
- III. (a) State summarily the Evangelical Arminian view of the plan of salvation.
(b) Discuss fully the meaning of *proegno* in Romans 8.29.
- IV. Show what may be elicited from Galatians 3.17-22 to establish the unity of the Covenant of Grace.
- V. Expound the subject of the *mode* of the incarnation.

I am crestfallen when I consider how much theology I have forgotten during the last twelve years! Professor Murray's lecture notes are still consulted and treasured. Will a larger public now have this superb teaching made available for it to consult? Like all his books and sermons his lectures were written out in full with his fountain pen and black ink.

When several of us younger ministers gathered around him one Sunday evening and asked him what books he recommended for us to study he replied, 'Warfield!' He held him in very high esteem, although they had never met. When our graduating class was having its final banquet in May, 1964, all 40 or so staff and students spoke in turn. Professor Murray's counsel to us was that we specialize in the midst of all our labours in one particular aspect of theology or church history. We might spend some decades in this kind of special reading and it could be that the topic we chose might one day become the very centre of debate and concern in the Church. We would then be in a position to give significant help to our fellow-Christians.

To Professor Murray's great satisfaction, three former students, Norman Shepherd, Robert Strimple and John Frame, who all hold him in high esteem and share his high views of the Reformed Faith, now occupy his former position at Westminster Seminary. The graduates of the Seminary in a fine gesture two months before his death sent Professor Norman Shepherd over for a week to see him. He brought a beautiful colour album of photographs of the recent expansion of the Seminary. During the war there had been fewer than two dozen students at the Seminary.

Today there are over 300. In our last conversation 8 days before he died we talked of the Seminary and his concern that it should continue faithful to the Westminster Confession and the ideals of the men who had founded it. He also inquired if Westminster Chapel had called a minister yet.

In every recollection of him my remembrances are sweet. I think of his scholarship and wisdom, his warm friendship and ready counsel, his faithful teaching. More, it is without sentiment that I can say I love the remembrance of him dearly, and it is with sorrow that I know that in this world I shall not see his face or hear his voice in prayer, praise or preaching again!

I regret that his influence could not have been more widespread in Britain. We do not grudge the contribution which he has made to the testimony of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in America but I wish that the profoundness of his insight and teaching had made more impact or been more widely recognized in its importance for the Church in Scotland and Wales and England. We desperately need men who can stand as he did for exactness in the study of the Scriptures and for a deep reverence for its high doctrines.

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***From Dr. Calvin D. Freeman,
Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.***

For some reason I like to feel that I knew Mr. Murray better than anyone else. This of course could not be true, but there is a sense in which it might be. I literally grew up with Mr. Murray and cannot remember a time when he was not a regular 'guest' in our home. As far as memories go back, that is how far my memories of Mr. Murray go. While I do not remember this, he must have squeezed and kissed me as a baby in the same way that I remember him doing the same to countless other children.

It is not really fair to speak of Mr. Murray as a guest; he was really a member of our family. Each Lord's Day, for as long as I can remember, he attended my father's church and then came home with us to spend the day. And then we would go again to church at night and often he would have a snack with us after church. As a rule, during the week, he would be around at least once for dinner. The usual procedure after dinner was for him to send me to the store for ice-cream. This was quite an occasion in those days. He would take a crisp dollar bill from his wallet, put it in my hand and emphatically direct me to the store to buy a quart of ice-cream. It was part of his manner to seem very strict even in an act of obvious kindness.

I use to watch Mr. Murray on the Sabbath. He would get his Bible, and hold it out open in front of his face as he leaned back on his chair; I never got the impression that he was reading. He seemed rather to be focused on one particular passage or verse. He would sometimes compare it with his Greek Testament and then focus back on the King James'. His ability to meditate in the quiet of our home seemed to be interminable, for we children were taught to respect Mr. Murray's preference for Sabbath quietude.

That is not all he did on the Sabbath. After dinner my brother and I got a long lesson. Mr. Murray would teach us for at least an hour, sometimes two, and then we were allowed out for our walk. It is funny, the things I remember. One thing I shall never forget relates to when he was talking

about Jacob's death [Gen 49.33]. 'And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, *he gathered up his feet into the bed*, and yielded up the ghost and was gathered unto his people.' I can hear him stressing the point of Jacob's composure; quiet, confident and with apparent strong assurance he gathers up his feet into his bed and dies. It was just as if he were lying down for a night's sleep. Nothing more! I can hear Mr. Murray say those very words just as clearly as if he were with me now. I often thought since, that with the same kind of composure Mr. Murray himself would die.

Strange how I would also remember his talking about the word *Mesopotamia* in connection with Abraham. 'I don't believe there is another word that has the same sound and beauty', he would say. He said the word again and again. Also the word *magnanimous* he liked and once explained its meaning. I believe it was in connection with Abraham's character.

The memory verses I learned for Mr. Murray each week were well chosen. I did not realize at the time that many of them were the Messianic Prophecies. I understood of course the Messianic nature of Isaiah 53, but I did not understand that he was taking me through a sampling of progressive revelation when he started with Genesis 3.15, '... it shall bruise thy head ...' and then to Genesis 9.25-27, '... Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ... God shall enlarge Japheth ... and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem ...'; and then Genesis 12.1-3, 'I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.' Each prophecy elaborates a little more on the line from which victory over Satan would come. Nor did I realize that he was drilling into me the necessity of faith when we learned Genesis 15.1-6 and the episode of Abraham's test in Genesis 22. These words linger in my mind to this day, and I remain indebted to him for having compelled me to learn them.

Mr. Murray's teaching on Sabbath afternoons, his life, his presence, left an indelible mark on my life. Even some of his mannerisms and ways I have unconsciously adopted. I was teased about this by his family in Scotland many years later when I visited there. The need for being meticulous, for being concerned about the minutest 'details', even the prepositions, of Scripture became a part of my whole way of life, a part of me, largely because of Mr. Murray's drilling me so carefully in my formative years. As much by his example as by his words he impressed upon me a true reverence and respect for Scripture. Mr. Murray really believed that the Bible was the Word of God -- no question about that -- and you could sense it in his every breath.

I have been jotting down a whole list of memories about Mr. Murray; since I heard of his illness and death, my mind has been flooded with flash-backs. I see Mr. Murray here, I hear him there, his warm hand-shake I can feel; much more important his prayers. We would kneel for family devotions, and how I remember his earnest tone, and then at the close the prayer as he rose from his knees saying, '... and all for Christ's sake, Amen.' I remember his reaction to the barking of our dogs which sometimes happened as we prayed. 'It seems', he once said, 'that the devil gets into those dogs in order to interrupt our prayers.'

One reason I feel I know Mr. Murray better than many is that I have seen him not only through the eyes of a young child, not only through the eyes of one growing up as a teenager and college undergraduate, but also I have known him in the formal capacity of student to professor. There is really no need for me to set forth anecdotes about my student experiences with him at Westminster since there are many of his former students who could do the same with ease. One thing, however, I do want to say which will bring some insight into Mr. Murray as teacher. Those who

knew him were aware that there were certain things for which he had no patience. One of those things was irrelevance. I have good reason to believe that this is one reason why he was reluctant to allow discussion in class. He was afraid of digressions and of getting away from the subject. He felt that each point should be considered in its place, one at a time, and any intrusion into that order was to him a distraction. He also felt that the dictation method of teaching was itself a very important learning device. Hearing the words and writing them down, he thought, were very important means of driving an idea into the mind. I never did completely agree with him on this point, but in retrospect I can see some wisdom in his method, and I must confess I can still hear his lectures ringing in my ears. At the same time many were deprived, as I was *not* because of my long association with him, of knowing how beautifully and thoroughly Mr. Murray could answer questions. The secret that some never learned was to ask the question and then wait. It took a while for him to warm up. He would begin slowly, thinking as he went, and if left uninterrupted would continue for half an hour to an hour, sometimes more. The answers were given with humility, with appreciation, often with a sense of indebtedness to you for having asked the question. He seemed to use your questions to stimulate his thinking and was appreciative for 'thinking about things he might not otherwise have considered.' At the time of the execution of the Rosenbergs for treason, I questioned him on the propriety of capital punishment in such a case. 'I'm glad you asked that question, Calvin. That's something I never really gave any thought to.'

I wish I could have taped some of his eloquent responses to my questions. Once, as I recall, he gave me a rather complete exposition of Romans 14 in response to a question on Christian liberty. He could wax eloquent on that subject, and he would also expound in that connection 1 Timothy 4. The idea of requiring abstinence from alcoholic beverages was for him a doctrine which came from 'the very pit of hell' because it attacked by inference the very character of Christ. Regarding responsibilities in marriage as noted in 1 Corinthians 7 and the Roman Catholic view of Mary's virginity, I remember his very words: 'If Mary remained a virgin, she was a wretch indeed.'

I cannot reproduce in exact form all that Mr. Murray told me, but I can remember with vividness a question I asked concerning Psalm 139, verses 21 and 22: 'Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies.' I could not understand how it was that God could hate when he is also the God of love. The usual answer to that question is that God hates the sin but loves the sinner. Mr. Murray recoiled from that explanation by pointing out that the sin and sinner cannot be set apart, that the sin is itself an expression of the sinner. [cf. *Matt* 15.19, '. . . out of the heart proceed evil thoughts . . .']. Moreover the text clearly says 'I hate *them* . . .'. Mr. Murray was a great one for sticking to the text. He was not going to resolve the issue by changing the text to suit the explanation. What he said in essence was this: hatred and love in the Scriptural sense are not mutually exclusive ideas; it is possible both to love and to hate at the same time. As a matter of fact, hate in the Biblical sense can actually flow out from love. It is because God loves that He can abhor and detest them for their rebellion. His 'hatred' carries with it the desire for the sinner's repentance. It is in the sense of detestation that God hates, not in the sense of desiring to destroy or take revenge. God loathes them for their rebellion but at the same time loves them and wishes for their repentance. This fits in well with what we read in Ezekiel, Chapter 33, verse 11: 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' God detests *them* but takes no pleasure in their death. He pleads with them earnestly, 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?'

By letter, I told Mr. Murray during the last weeks of his life that I wanted him to know that he was

my truest and dearest friend. I thanked him for this friendship, for his help through the years from childhood until now. I do not think despite the fact that all of us must struggle against the insincerity which unconsciously pervades our lives, that I have been, or ever will be, more sincere than I was when I wrote those words. No one has been kinder to me, no one more helpful, and certainly no one has had the impact on my life that Mr. Murray has had. He was an integral part of my very existence. With his departure, I have lost not only my dearest friend, I have lost a part of myself. No one else like him to whom I can go for answers to the difficult questions! How often I have thought even recently, 'I'll have to write Mr. Murray about that!'

It would be fitting now to say something about how Mr. Murray reacted at the time of my mother's torturous illness and death. He looked me straight in the eye and softly told me in the hospital as he grasped my hand, 'Remember, Calvin, the Lord doeth all things well.' Mr. Murray was saturated with Scripture and almost could not speak except with King James' phraseology. He was the epitome of strength at such difficult times; he did not readily show his feelings of sorrow. On the Sabbath after my mother's death he preached a sermon on the text 'It is appointed unto men *once* to die . . .'. He made a big thing of the word *once*. How he could seize upon one word in Scripture and milk it dry! We need only go through death once. Perhaps it is ironical that Mr. Murray's words at that time are the very words which bring me comfort now. I am glad that Mr. Murray had to endure that experience only once. He now lives in a place where there is 'no more death . . .!'

He said something else to me and other grieving friends at the time of my mother's death. 'You may miss her', the words were emphatic, firm and clear, 'but she does not miss you.' Very typical of Mr. Murray to say something like that! What a unique way of making clear a truth of Scripture and applying it so dramatically to the occasion, '. . . she does not miss you.'

I know there are scores of people who knew Mr. Murray and who knew him well. We will most assuredly miss him. But I am equally convinced that he will not miss us!

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John Murray as a Teacher

***From Professor Henri Blocher,
Faculté de Théologie évangélique, Vaux-sur-Seine, France.***

There seems to be a certain congeniality between the French and the Scots. The only book by Professor John Murray which is available in a French translation is the treatise on *Divorce* -- a most useful study in these days, sad to say; yet this Frenchman has found that Professor Murray's way of theologizing was of special worth to him; as one called also to plough the field of Dogmatics, he has found in Professor Murray's work a precious model.

Two features, among many, stand out with exemplary force, and cause me to thank the Lord for Professor Murray as a gift to the Church. First, Professor Murray's total imperviousness to theological fashions or fads; what strength there is in his unalterable soberness! Second, his constant care in resting all systematic constructions on fine, sensitive, rigorous exegesis. In his exceptional synthesis of Dogmatics and philological study, I love to see the blessing of the true

hermeneutical circle: all the parts in the light of the whole, the whole of Scripture in the light of all its parts. May God raise others to teach us like Professor Murray in docility to the Word, and to the words, of Revelation!

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*From Professor Allan Harman,
Reformed Theological College, Geelong, Australia.*

As a teacher Professor Murray exemplified so many of the qualities we see in his published writings. Above all he was an expositor of the Biblical text who constantly in his teaching emphasised the need to study exhaustively what was written in Holy Scripture. In teaching Systematic Theology he habitually approached any topic by considering the main texts which were relevant to the discussion. After careful exegesis he then proceeded to systematise the teaching of the passages. Theology was no abstract discipline to him but one which was rooted in the teaching of Scripture. At times one may have thought that a particular point could have received less elaboration but he was always trying to bring every pertinent aspect of truth to bear on the question. As he himself once expressed it, some parts of our study may seem as dry as dust but we have to remember that we are dealing with gold dust!

All his lecture work was prepared meticulously and he was master of his subject. He himself said that when he came to Princeton as a student he knew little Greek. That is not how his students remember his knowledge of Greek! It was all too clear from his lectures the wonderful grasp he had of the Greek New Testament, and the same applies to his knowledge of the Hebrew Old Testament. This knowledge was made the servant of his theology and it was wonderful to hear him expounding the Scriptures in the original languages. While it was the truth which gripped one, yet the method by which he approached a passage was a lesson in itself. His use of language was always precise, and in the realm of theological vocabulary he was constantly seeking the best expression for the particular concept.

Professor Murray would never answer questions quickly. In class he would stand in characteristic pose looking at the clenched fingers of one hand as he meditated on the question. At times he would even delay giving an answer until the next day. This was entirely characteristic of him, for he never wished to give a quick answer, which, though satisfying the questioner, he might afterwards realise was incorrect. In this connection I remember him being asked by a student at dinner one night why he had not written more earlier in his career. For several minutes he continued with his meal and then said quite abruptly, 'Because I did not want to have to withdraw what I wrote!' And that expresses so much of the care with which he approached Scripture teaching, for he never wished to advocate a position which was not grounded on Biblical foundations.

Another aspect of his teaching which always impressed me was his concern to follow through his thinking on a topic and come to a definite conclusion. This was as true of topics raised in personal conversation with him as of matters which came up during the course of lectures. Sometimes I would find him taking up a topic again which I had discussed with him a week or two before. Often I had carried the matter no further, but he would tell me the conclusion he had come to, and then would trace out the lines of thought which he had followed.

Never did Professor Murray differ lightly with past or present Reformed theologians, but he was never afraid to dissociate himself from views which he regarded as incorrect. He was always re-thinking positions in the light of the Biblical evidence and on various points differed even from Calvin! In this respect he was no slavish imitator of other theologians, but was willing to take an independent line if he felt the evidence required it.

For many of his students the times spent with him in personal conversation were perhaps the times they cherish most. He was ever ready to discuss theological questions and a good deal of Reformed theology was imparted in this way. At times he would raise some problem with which he was wrestling, and try to get others to help solve the difficulty.

Looking back upon his influence on myself I have to say I found him an inspiring teacher. This was not because of the freshness of his approach, or the novelty of interpretation, but because his theology was seen to be grounded on Biblical exposition and undergirded by his understanding of the Biblical theology of Old and New Testaments. That must be the test of any Systematic Theology, and is the reason why so many successive classes of students cherish the memory of hours spent in his classroom.

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***From Walter J. Chantry,
Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.***

The news of Professor John Murray's death prompted a mixture of joy and sorrow in the hearts of all saints who knew him, joy that he is with his Lord at rest from his labours, sorrow that in such troubled days the mighty of the Lord should leave the church militant. The announcement also brought a surge of memories to the minds of his students.

For three years (1960-63) it was my great privilege to sit as a student of Professor Murray at Westminster Theological Seminary. While under his instruction my mind was captivated by the various doctrines which he propounded as a master. My heart was warmed as the professor led in prayer at the start of each class. Zeal for the truth of the Lord was stirred. Often I left his lectures longing to be able to do something to make known the riches of God's Word which I had just heard.

After entering the ministry, my appreciation of Professor Murray identified itself with no particular doctrine. My first impressions of many aspects of theology were made by his teaching. Many other truths were profoundly confirmed through his lectures. But something else had occurred during these years with Professor Murray. An attitude was instilled. Habits were forged on the anvil of his lectures. Three qualities in particular are the indelible marks this man of God made upon my soul.

Fear of God dominated Professor Murray's classroom. Though he was a cheerful gentleman with a good sense of humour, there would never be levity when speaking of the Lord and His Word. Each period began with prayers from the professor's lips which brought all into the presence of an awesome God. Each subject was handled in a dignified and solemn manner which conveyed deep reverence for the Almighty. Professor Murray breathed the attitude that all things in his lectures were holy and majestic. Not a study of the fear of God, but the professor's visible and audible

manifestation of that fear became a main lesson for his young disciples.

Careful, almost painful, effort to *state truth with precision* was another hallmark of our teacher. One who attended lectures could sense the struggle for exactness in communicating theology. It was a forceful example of fidelity to God's Word, instilling a love for accuracy in declaring the same.

Finally Professor Murray was *an exegetical theologian*. Discussion of each doctrine began with lengthy exegesis from the original languages of those texts central to its study. Only after the Word was scrutinized would a doctrine be formulated, and then with specific appeal to exegetical material. Never would he discuss a doctrine philosophically or logically with mere allusion to 'proof texts'.

Reverent, precise exegesis was our daily fare in Professor Murray's lectures. Thus he fed our souls with that which is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. And thus he *showed* his pupils how to study theology and how to feed solid meat to their flocks. Some students wished that Professor Murray would adopt more popular methods of class instruction. But in his methodology were to be found some of his greatest lessons: fear of God, faithfulness to the Word, precision in the communication of truth.

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***From Dr. Norman Shepherd,
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The pastoral ministry was the first love of John Murray, but in the good providence of God most of his ministry was spent as a teacher of theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. It was mainly as a teacher and later as a senior colleague on the faculty that I learned to know and to respect him. His recent death gives all of us occasion to reflect on the man and his ministry, and to rejoice in the fact that God has been pleased to bestow such gifts upon his church in this day. The memories crowd in, memories bearing on the many and varied facets of his life. Some of these are too personal to share. I would like to use this opportunity, however, to reflect, if only briefly, on John Murray as a theologian.

I recall discussing with Professor Murray on one occasion the sudden and unexpected death in 1937 of J. Gresham Machen, the leader of authentic Presbyterianism in the battle against liberalism. Machen poured his life into the establishment of Westminster Seminary and into the newly formed Presbyterian Church of America (later called the Orthodox Presbyterian Church). Just at the point when he had at last the freedom to begin serving God in a hospitable rather than hostile environment, Machen was taken from the scene. Professor Murray suggested the thought that in the wisdom of God many men were then compelled to step out and assume responsibility for doing what they might otherwise have depended on Machen to do for them.

Toward the end of his earthly life our Lord said to his disciples, 'It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you' (John 16:7). We would not have reasoned that way; our inclination would have been to keep Christ with us. But that would have meant a severe limitation on his ministry. With the advent of the Spirit in power, the church not only becomes more intimately bound to her

Redeemer, but also extends her borders to the ends of the earth.

In a different sense we must also say that it is good for gifted teachers to be taken from us. Not only Machen, but also Edward Joseph Young and Ned Bernard Stonehouse were taken before the end of their life's work, humanly speaking. The church and the cause of Christ could not miss these men -- but it did; it had to. The Spirit reminds us that He is not dependent on this or that man, nor should we who remain be dependent on them. John Murray did not think of any man, least of all himself, as indispensable to the welfare of the church. In Christ he had the freedom to remain at his teaching post, but also the freedom to leave as he did in 1966. His death was not untimely and we can only rejoice that he was able to bring his earthly life to conclusion discharging ministerial responsibilities as a preacher of the word of God. It was because the pastoral office was his first love that his services in the theological seminary were so valuable.

After Professor Murray left the seminary I would occasionally be asked whether I was replacing him on the faculty. I am indebted to the words of a former Latin professor for the answer to that question: truly great teachers are never replaced; others may teach the same courses, but great men are not replaced. We must be thankful for the gifts given to men who have served the church well, and pray that the Lord of the harvest will give to his church in the days ahead precisely those gifts necessary for the work that has to be done.

In Professor Murray we perceived depth of Christian, indeed Reformed, piety without morbid or sticky sentimentality. Here was warmth of affection coupled with zeal for truth and integrity. He taught us many things, and in many ways, sometimes without our realizing it.

Professor Murray regularly worshipped at Knox Orthodox Presbyterian Church located for many years in the Kensington section of Philadelphia, some 50 minutes by automobile from the seminary. One time, five of us who were students arranged to ride with him to the morning service in his familiar green Plymouth. We were under way only a few minutes when the driver posed the question: How does nature teach us that it is a shame for a man to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14)? We began to reflect on the question, offering answers with varying degrees of conviction and plausibility. We were at Knox Church before Professor Murray could contribute his own answer, but he expressed genuine appreciation for what he had heard and learned, and for the stimulus to his own thinking. He did not appreciate aimless chatter on the Sabbath. It occurred to me as we waited for the service to begin that we had been lovingly but forcefully instructed *how* to "observe an holy rest" from our "own works, words, and thoughts about (our) worldly employments and recreations" on the Lord's Day.

The instruction could also be more direct. On another occasion several of us were standing with Professor Murray by the bulletin board in Machen Hall in which at that time virtually the whole seminary exclusive of the library was housed. As we talked informally, a mother and her four-or-five-year-old son came up to us. It was the spring of the year, and the boy had carefully decorated an Easter egg for Professor Murray and now wanted to make the presentation. We watched as the good man accepted the gift with hearty thanks reinforced with a hug for the child. Pharisees that we were, as soon as mother and child were out of earshot, we pounced on the teacher (in a nice way, of course). How could one who was opposed to the observance of religious holidays accept the gift of an Easter egg? Was this not compromise with principle? His answer: 'Receive all things with thanksgiving, asking no questions for conscience sake'. He walked away with the egg, leaving us devastated and properly rebuked.

This informal instruction was carried on not only by deed, but also by word. During my student days, Professor Murray lived on the third floor of Machen Hall ('Murray Heights'), and ate most of his meals with the student dining club. We learned much from this 'table talk' and also from the late night conversations in the kitchen of Machen Hall where he enjoyed either very weak tea or just hot water with a little milk. If he had given a question asked of him some previous thought, he was ready to share his wisdom. If not, he would delay the answer for days, sometimes even weeks. This could be annoying for those of us with less aversion to 'instant exegesis', but it was rewarding. Our teacher was incidentally reminding us 'that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment' (Matthew 12:36).

A somewhat more formal setting for teaching was afforded by the Sabbath School of Knox Church which met after the morning service. Professor Murray would teach the adult class for 20 or 30 minutes at a time. His series on Romans, interrupted by periodic absences from Philadelphia, stretched over many years as he at the same time laboured on the Romans commentary. About 1959 he was working through Romans 11. It was fascinating to see him being driven by the text to envision a future restoration of ethnic Israel comparable in scope to her casting away (vss. 12, 15). Vss. 26 and 27 provided a key which opened up for him an entirely new understanding of large tracts of Old Testament prophecy. He was in this way led eventually to a mild post-millennialism, and thus in the direction of the eschatological orientation of the older Princeton theologians. The series on Romans ended about 1965 or 1966, and significantly enough, he immediately began the exposition of the Acts of the Apostles.

It was in the classrooms of the Seminary, however, that Professor Murray's teaching gifts came to fullest expression. His brief but solemn opening prayer always had a profound impact, an impact not dissipated by the academic lecture that followed. He embodied the unity of piety and learning commended in the Seminary's charter: 'believing that religion without learning, or learning without religion, in the ministers of the gospel, must ultimately prove injurious to the Church.' Professor Murray could contribute to the Seminary's goals so ably because he exemplified what the Seminary was designed to do: 'Westminster Theological Seminary is to form men for the gospel ministry, who shall truly believe, and cordially love, and therefore endeavour to propagate and defend, in its genuineness, simplicity, and fullness, that system of religious belief and practice which is set forth in the (Westminster) Confession of Faith, and Catechisms . . . and which is involved in the fundamental principles of Presbyterian church government, and thus to perpetuate and extend the influence of true evangelical piety and gospel order.'

Once Professor Murray began to lecture, we rarely interrupted with a question. It happened no more than perhaps four or five times in the classes I attended. To be sure, we were 'the silent generation' of the 1950's. But beyond that, through experience Professor Murray had come to anticipate the important questions and he dealt with them in the lectures. It was more appropriate and rewarding for us to listen, to absorb, and to meditate on what our teacher had to say; to be led rather than to lead. The lasting impact of these sessions testifies to the wisdom of his preferred pedagogical method. We came away from his classes satisfied. Obviously there was not time for Professor Murray to say all that could be said on a given topic, and we received intimations from time to time that he had yet much to say with respect to the practical application of doctrine. Nevertheless, we were given a foundation on which to build, and a base from which to deal with new questions as they arose.

Multitudes who did not have the privilege of attending his classes have benefited from his teaching through his books and articles. Each bears the distinctive Murray stamp of grounding in the careful exegesis of Scripture, thoroughness of argumentation, and precision of formulation. We used to say that the only bibliography in his books was the Scripture index. We sincerely meant it as a compliment, but it was not entirely true. His writings evidence acquaintance with a wide diversity of theological literature both older and contemporary. More striking, however, is the fairness and care with which he analyzed and criticized the writings of others.

Many have thought that John Murray would have served the church well by furnishing a new, up-to-date, and scripturally oriented systematic theology textbook. Murray himself seemed to think that Benjamin B. Warfield should have undertaken the project, doing for the American Reformed churches what Herman Bavinck had done for the Dutch churches. Warfield was the man with the comprehensive grasp of the field and the literature coupled with a fine literary sense. Murray did not want to break with the Princeton tradition and so continued to assign Charles Hodge's *Systematic Theology* to his students. In our minds, however, the lecture notes were far more significant than Hodge, not only for passing texts, but also for grounding us in the system of Reformed doctrine.

The theology which John Murray taught was in every respect thoroughly Reformed. The model for his work was John Calvin, and his interest in Calvin found concrete expression in a course on the theology of Calvin. The course consisted of lectures on the *Institutes*, Books I and II in particular. The *Institutes* were oriented to the Apostles' Creed and were therefore, as 'instruction' in the Christian faith, essentially a sophisticated catechism. Calvin was first of all a theologian of the Scriptures as well as a commentator on the Scriptures, and his theology was in the service of the life of God's covenant people. The same can be said of the theology of John Murray. The careful kind of exegesis exemplified in his commentary on Romans undergirded his theological labour and explains why his theological reflections were so fruitful and so helpful. Like Calvin, he did not preface his theology with a well-wrought-out philosophical system.

Although an adherent and faithful expositor of classic Reformed doctrine, John Murray was not a 'scholastic' theologian. He remained true to the principles of Calvin. He was therefore inevitably a vigorous opponent of the older theological liberalism, when, for example, early in his teaching career he offered a course on the theology of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. For the same reason he also vigorously opposed the neo-orthodoxy of men like Karl Barth, as evidenced by his review of Barth's *Christ and Adam* [*The Westminster Theological Journal*, XX/2 (1958), 198-203]. I recall that in the course on the theology of Calvin one could almost taste his exasperation with the scholastic, neo-orthodox reconstructions of Calvin put forward by Edward A. Dowey of Princeton Theological Seminary in his *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* [cf. Murray's review in the *The Westminster Theological Journal*, XV/2 (1953), 164-170].

John Murray taught not only systematic theology but, earlier in his career, also biblical theology as a distinct discipline at Westminster, using Vos's *Biblical Theology* as a text. He taught an elective course not only on the Theology of Calvin but also on Covenant Theology with a long historical segment. His biblico-theological study, *The Covenant of Grace*, continues to be influential. A covenantal consciousness in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, most of whose ministers were trained at Westminster, doubtless contributed to making this ecclesiastical environment the most congenial for him throughout his life in spite of his difference with the vast majority in the denomination on the application of the regulative principle of worship.

Reformed theology as Murray understood it and taught it was neither rationalistic nor pietistic; it was covenantal. Lacking covenant consciousness, liberal and neo-orthodox theologians will regard his theology as biblicistic, fundamentalist, and obsurantist, while some evangelicals will regard it as academic, intellectualistic, and perhaps even joyless. In point of fact, it is consistently exegetical and oriented to the history of redemption. His own testimony is unmistakably explicit in his two-part article, "Systematic Theology", in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, XXV/2 (1963), 133-142, and XXVI/1 (1963), 33-46: 'Systematic theology is tied to exegesis' (p. 44). 'Systematics becomes lifeless and fails in its mandate just to the extent to which it has become detached from exegesis' (p. 42). 'Biblical theology is indispensable to systematic theology' (p. 41). 'The fact is that only when systematic theology is rooted in biblical theology does it exemplify its true function and achieve its purpose' (p. 45).

Professor Murray's reputation is not built upon the fact that he taught us theological novelties. He taught us Reformed orthodoxy, but he taught it out of the Bible, and in doing so taught us how to be Reformed theologians. His legacy is therefore not another textbook of Reformed theology, not a finished product, but something far more important, a way of doing theology, and a task to be accomplished. At this juncture, in the good providence and wisdom of God, this is precisely what the Reformed community needs. The previously mentioned articles on systematic theology are a programme for action. 'As it is true that *ecclesia reformata reformanda est* so also is it true that *theologia reformata reformanda est*. When any generation is content to rely upon its theological heritage and refuses to explore for itself the riches of divine revelation, then declension is already under way and heterodoxy will be the lot of the succeeding generation' (p. 141). With the profoundest respect for the past, Professor Murray is teaching us to look forward to the future, and that means to Christ who is both the author and the finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

The most moving series of lectures for me and for many who attended his classes was the series on the believer's union with Christ: Christ is us, and we in Christ, in vital union by the power of the indwelling Spirit. We were always aware, too, of his love for the Psalms and for their use in worship to express subjective apprehension of the Redeemer and his benefits. New Testament piety reaches no greater height, he would say, than to exclaim with the Psalmist: 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever; the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance'. From John Murray, the church of the New Covenant has learned to join heart and voice with the Precentor of the General Assembly of the firstborn in praise and confession:

Thou wilt me shew the path of life:
of joys there is full store
Before thy face; at thy right hand
are pleasures evermore. [Psalm 16:11]

"Memories and Reflections" from Iain Murray, *John Murray: of Badbea, and Westminster Seminary*, Philadelphia (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1975).