

# Substitution and HUPER

## A Big Doctrine and a Little Word

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### 1. Introduction

One of the most important doctrines of the Word of God is that of the substitutionary or vicarious character of the death of Christ. This doctrine states that Christ died in the place of the sinner. It is not enough to say that Christ died for the benefit of the sinner.

To illustrate the difference as normally presented, we borrow from Charles Baker ([1, J, p. 339]). Suppose a policeman is killed while protecting a citizen. Clearly, his death benefits the citizen, however in no way was he the citizen's substitute.

Another illustration of this difference is given by Mr. Baker ([1] p. 339): If one person pays another's fine, he is in no way his substitute. The one who is benefited still stands guilty before the law. (It would appear to me that there would not be this difference in a capital case,) (Note: Numbers in brackets *refer* to the References in the back of the article.)

Without substitution there is no salvation, as Lewis Sperry Chafer put it ([4], vol, III, p. 130), "To reject this truth is to reject the plainest doctrine of Scripture, to reject the gospel, and the only righteous ground on which God may exercise grace toward the lost,"

One would expect that the scriptures would be full of direct proofs of such an important doctrine, While we fully believe that there are many such proofs, a surprising number do not believe this.

### 2. The Teaching of Sir Robert Anderson

For example, Sir Robert Anderson has a whole chapter on substitution in his book The Gospel and Its Ministry ([2], chapter VII). In this chapter he essentially denies direct proof of this doctrine. He states ([2], p. 95), "To speak of Christ's dying instead of us, or as our substitute, is to adopt the language of theology, not of Scripture, and we must take care lest we use the words in a sense or a connection inconsistent with the truth, The teaching of Scripture is that He died for sinners (there is no emphasis on the preposition), and that, on believing, they become identified with Him in that death".

In a footnote on the same page, he states, "I need not say that substitution is an extra scriptural expression".

Unfortunately, this book by Sir Robert Anderson has had an impact on a number of people. Yet in some ways it is a dangerous book.

Before proceeding we should ask just what the teaching of Sir Robert Anderson is.

While we contend that there are inconsistencies and confusion in what is said, one basic thread is clear. Sir Robert Anderson contended that Christ did not die as the substitute for any person. He further claimed that Christ became the believer's substitute at the instant of salvation.

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On such a central issue as this, we might wonder what arguments he used. Sir Robert Anderson claims to offer, first a positive statement of the truth upon this subject, as it is unfolded in the types of the Old Testament and in the doctrinal teaching of the New," ([2], p. 88),

He then proceeds to base his argument on his understanding of types and his understanding of the Greek word huper. He does not give direct support from the New Testament although the above might lead us to expect that. Instead he tries to argue from his position in favor of what we call Unlimited Redemption.

### a. Types and Sir Robert Anderson

The subject of types is very interesting and important. It is full of many illustrations of the truth of God, but, a type must never be the primary basis for a doctrine. We must first learn the doctrine precisely and then the type becomes an illustration, Too often, a type is interpreted a certain way and this is then the basis for some (possibly strange) doctrinal position.

Such reasoning is wrong. We must search the scriptures for their teaching on a subject. Only after such a foundation are we in a position to study the types related to that doctrine. Sir Robert Anderson's argument from types is clearly presented ([2], p. 91) where he states:

"And the way to follow aright the teaching of the types is to regard their historical sequence as marking their moral order. We thus learn the different aspects of the death of Christ, and the divine order of the truth concerning it.... According to the analogy of the great day of atonement, the twofold aspect of the great day of atonement, the twofold aspect of the same offering is presented by two victims, the one being killed, the other sent out of sight."

This is clearly argument from type. The fact that he presents it first is dangerous in any teaching. The fact that he states, as we quoted above, that, "substitution is an extra scriptural expression," shows that this is his only argument. And, that is scary.

While it is not our purpose to pursue the matter here, suffice it to say that we do not accept Sir Robert Anderson's explanation of types.

In summary we state that proper doctrine is the basis of the study of types; the study of types is not the basis of proper doctrine.

### b. the word huper and Sir Robert Anderson

Certainly, any reader familiar with God's Word would wonder what Sir Robert Andersen does with such basic passages of scripture as Romans 5:6-8.

He states ([2], p, 95 footnote) that the Greek word for instead of is anti. He claims that:

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"the word huper no doubt may have the same force as 'for' in English. But in either case such a meaning is exceptional and forced; and in our own language we should in that case pronounce the word with emphasis, and print it in italics. A full and careful consideration of every passage where the word occurs will satisfy the student it is never so used in the New Testament, , , , I need not say that substitution is an extra scriptural expression."

This author is one student who has carefully studied every such passage and is convinced that the above quote represents serious error from the pen of Sir Robert Anderson. So serious is it that this author could not in any way recommend it.

We will first look briefly at several important errors in his treatment and then we will turn to the issue regarding huper and its meaning.

### c. Problems in His Treatment

Before proceeding with proof that Sir Robert Anderson is wrong, it instructive to note some internal inconsistencies and immediate problems in his argument.

Truth has at least two important properties. One is internal consistency and the other is conformity to known truth.

We divide this part of the inquiry into the following!

1. His (Sir Robert Anderson's) treatment of the sin-offering,
2. His concern over effectual redemption
3. Anti
4. Doctrine and Precision

### (1) the Sin Offering

Sir Robert Anderson clearly states ([2], pp. 89-90) that the victim in the sin-offering gave his life instead of the offerer. And, he asserts, this is clearly substitution.

To this we quite agree. However; this would seem to totally destroy his understanding of huper. The sin-offering pictured Christ as laden with the sins oil an individual (see Lev. 4).

There is no question that Mt. 26:28 refers to the sin-offering yet anti is not used. The contention ([1,2]) that without anti, substitution is not in view really suffers for peri is used in this verse.

In Gal, 1:4 we have the work of Christ for the sins of believers. There is no thought in this passage of anything but substitution. The word huper is used in Gal. 1:14. Similar references are in Eph. 5:2, 25-27 where the contexts forbid a non-substitutionary interpretation. The reader might study all places where huper occurs. Other unmistakable references to the sin-offering where huper is used include Titus 2:14 and I Pet. 2:21-24 (huper is in verse 21).

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It is interesting that Sir Robert Anderson sees substitution in 1 Pet. 2:24 ([2] p.92) but fails to read verse 21. This inconsistency alone shows his argument can't stand.

### (2) Effectual Redemption

It would appear that the more blessed a truth the more it is hated and maligned.

Sir Robert Anderson states {[2], pp. 97-98):

"But to speak of the death of Christ as having this substitutional relationship to the sinner, apart from the change which takes place on his believing, and thus to make his pardon appear to be an act of justice in such a sense that it ceases to be an act of grace, is wholly unwarranted and false. If there be those on earth whose case is beyond the scope of the work of Christ, it is not in the power of God to save them; and thus redemption has failed of its first and highest aim, which is not the saving of the sinner, merely, but the restoring to God His sovereignty compromised by sin. But if the death of Christ be substitutionally instead of the unbeliever, his conversion may alter his condition spiritually and morally, but it can in no wise affect his judicial state: he is saved in fact and of right, whether he believes or not, In either case, grace is in chains, and not enthroned." (Emphasis his).

So there you have it. He hates the doctrines commonly nicknamed "Calvinism". He doesn't understand them but he hates them.

Notice first that he has totally changed the meanings of some important words. When we speak of a sovereign God in connection with salvation we mean (and all in history have meant) that God saves whom He wishes. He is in charge. He not only makes the rules--He makes the choices. Sir Robert Anderson has twisted this to mean that you make the choice.

When we (and others) speak of grace enthroned we refer again to God doing it all because we couldn't do anything. (Even faith is a gift from God.) However, when he speaks of grace enthroned, he means that our choice is enthroned. This is not grace at all.

Such twisting of the clear meanings of words is always indicative of deception. It is a trick used theology by liberals and other opponents of truth. After all, every person in church knows that the reformers enthroned grace in their doctrine of the sovereignty of God. To deny these truths is to be aligned with Roman Catholic theology. The trick, if you don't believe these truths, is to redefine them. It is a mean and disgusting trick and must be rejected by all.

The teaching of grace enthroned is that the sovereign triune God did the following by His grace alone!

1. The Father chose certain people.
2. The Son died in their place.
3. The Holy Spirit regenerates them, giving them faith to believe.

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Thus God's work is a work of grace which is made, by the work of Christ, consistent with His justice. It is wonderful and we rejoice in it (Titus 2:11-14). It is a truth concerning which we (Titus 2:15), "speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority".

### (3) Anti

In admitting that anti has the meaning of substitution ([2, p 95 footnote), Sir Robert Anderson destroys his main point. He wishes to state that no passage used anti as huper is used.

He apparently forgot that this preposition in compound forms retains its meaning (see Strong's Exhaustive Concordance word 473). In I Tim. 2:6 we read, "Who gave himself a ransom (antilutron) for (huper) all, to be testified in due time,"

Thus, even if substitution, is not included in huper (and we show later that it is), it is definitely (by his argument) in antilutron = anti + lutron. Hence, the concept of substitution is in I Tim. 2:6, On page 89, [2] Sir Robert Anderson says, "I say this without wishing in the least to pander to the tendency that prevails to map out the Scriptures by hard-and-fast lines like the squares of a chess-board,"

Later in the same chapter he talks of "a full and careful consideration" of certain passages.

The student is left with the impression that it is unspiritual to be precise on this issue except where Sir Robert Anderson chooses to be.

This attitude we heartily reject. Let the student be precise in all truth. The apostle Paul prayed that believers would have a full knowledge of our Lord in understanding exactly truths of Scripture like these very truths (Eph. 1:16-23)

### 3. The Meaning of huper

The standard one volume lexicon in English is that translated by Arndt and Gingrich [5]. Under huper they give as meaning c -- "in place of, instead of, in the name of," and cite 2 Cor. 5:14, 15 and 21. Arndt and Gingrich also state in support of this meaning, ", , , --in papyri very often huper autou to explain that the writer is writing 'as the representative of an illiterate person,"

Even Thayer's Lexicon [6] published before the above papyri were known gave as meaning 3 -- "in the place of, instead of." He does add that this "is more precisely expressed by anti," but admits that Irenaeus used anti and huper interchangeably. Obviously there are a number of "students" whose Greek is far advanced of that of Sir Robert Anderson who believe that the word "huper" teaches substitution. An additional scholar we mention is A. T. Robertson. Robertson's reputation as a Greek scholar was unchallenged (he is now dead).

So convinced was Robertson on this matter that he spent an entire chapter on this subject in a real gem [3] which we heartily recommend to any who love God's Word. He writes:

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"Once quite an argument was made against the substitutionary theory on the ground that Paul in the great passages (cf. 2 Cor, 5 and Rom, 5) employs huper rather than anti... This antithesis between anti and huper was imaginary as a matter of fact. Neither word in itself means substitution. It is a secondary idea in each instance. Anti literally means 'at the end of' and so suggests contrast, succession substitution, opposition, as the case may be Huper means literally 'over' and the context alone can decide the resultant meaning which may be 'concerning,' 'beyond,' 'in behalf of,' 'instead of,' The ancient Greek writers employed anti, pro or huper for substitution as they wished. In the Alcestis of Euripides, where the substitutionary death of Alcestis for her husband is the point of the story, we find huper seven times, while anti and pro together have fewer uses. The substitutionary use of huper appears in ... So then it was never fair to say that the Greek idiom required anti for the idea of substitution. One followed his whims in the matter. For instance, Pausanias (Ruger), Die Propositionen bei Pausanias, p. 12) employed huper twice as often as anti.

Moulton (Prolegomena, p, 165), remarks that huper is 'more colourless' as compared with anti.

"But the papyri, particularly the business documents, show that Paul is following current usage when he prefers huper for the idea of substitution. The instances in the papyri are far too numerous to quote.... Certainly in all these instances the writing is done on behalf of one, but one cannot stop there. Winer (Winer-Thayer, p. 382) rightly says: 'In most cases one who acts in behalf of another takes his place.' This is absolutely true in the case of the recurrent idiom so common in the papyri, where a scribe writes a document in behalf of and instead of one who does not know letters. The scribe writes 'for' one who is not able to write.

Robertson then gives a number of examples where huper means "instead of", Indeed he states ([3], p, 38):

"It is needless to add more. They tell the same almost monotonous story of the substitutionary use of huper.

"when we turn to the New Testament from the papyri there can, of course, be no grammatical reluctance to allowing the same usage for huper if the context calls for it. Theological prejudice must be overruled,"

A number of references are listed where Robertson considers the issues to be clear: John 11:50; Gal, 3:13; Mark 14:24 2 Cor, 5:15; Rom, 5:6, ff; 8:32; Titus 2:14; Heb, 2:9; etc, Regarding these passages, he even states, ". , there is no room left for protest from the side of grammar," Expressions like this occur several times in connection with these passages. On page 41, he concludes, "the presumption is now in favour of the use of huper for the idea of substitution."

What a fantastic parallel! A scribe writes in the place of an illiterate who is helpless: Christ died in the place of totally depraved sinners who are spiritually helpless.

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### Why?

When the truth is so clear, we naturally ask why men would try to avoid it. Robertson clearly asserts the reason is theological prejudice [3]. Exactly the nature of the prejudice he does not give.

Sir Robert Anderson's motives are clear ([2], chapter VII), He wants to tell the unregenerate that Christ died for them. He realizes, however, that it is logically inconsistent to teach that Christ is the substitute for any who die unsaved and go to hell. Several times he states his opposition to a salvation which was, even in the mind of God, settled at the time of Calvary. In short, his opposition to the doctrine of Particular Redemption forms the bases for what he says about huper.

Interestingly enough, Lewis Sperry Chafer who also did not believe in Particular Redemption, did teach that huper conveys the thought of substitution in Rom, 5:6-8, 2 Cor. 5:14-15, 21, Gal. 3:13, et, al, ([4], Vow. III, p, 57.

Unfortunately, much of the view of Sir Robert Anderson is found in Baker's Dispensational Theology, ([1], pp. 340--342). Indeed, typology is even given first as support for the doctrine of substitution.

### 4. In Our Place

Thank God! We rejoice that huper clearly means "instead of, 'in the place of' when referring to the death of Christ.

Thank God! This means that this important doctrine does not rest on some indirect argument of typology but is taught directly and frequently in the Greek New Testament.

Here is a partial list of verses that are clear on the issue:

- "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died in the place of ungodly ones. For scarcely in the place of a righteous man will one die; perhaps in the place of a good man some would even dare to die, But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died in our place" (Rom, 5:6-8)
- ", . . this is (represents) my body which was broken in your place , , , " !(1 Cor.11:24)
- "For the love of Christ constrains us because we are convinced that if one died in the place of all then the all died. And he died in the place of all in order that those who live should no longer live to themselves but to the one who died in their place and was raised," (2 Cor. 5;14,15).
- "For he (God) made him who knew no sin to be made sin in our place in order that we might become the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. 5:21). (The reader might be interested in the fact that many have urged the meaning "sin offering" for the second "sin" in this verse. Thus, even the types of [1,2] would force huper to mean "in the place of" here.)
- "...gave himself in my place" (Gal. 2:20),
- ". . being made a curse in our place . . ." (Gal 3:13).

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- "...given himself in our place..."(Eph. 5:26).
- "...Who gave himself in our place . . ." (Titus 2:14),

### 5. An Effectual Redemption

A clear corollary to the above is that all that is found in the work of Christ was done effectually at the cross.

Yes, it is true that this implies that God from all eternity had in mind a particular people to be redeemed by the blood of Christ. Yes, it is true that this implies the hated doctrine of Particular Redemption.

Yes, it is true that God--praise his name is sovereign in salvation.

But, let us not fight this truth of God--let us love and worship this God of truth.

If you have not trusted in Christ let me add a word to you. Christ died in the place of those whom God causes to trust in Him. If you should die without turning to Christ then this will prove that Christ's death did not help you in any way. Don't expect some preacher's assertion that Christ did everything for you to make a bit of difference. No, my friend, you will be without Christ and without God.

God made Christ who knew no sin a sin offering in my place!

God made Christ--his one and only Son--who knew no sin a sin offering in the place of me--a totally depraved rotten sinner!!!

Hallelujah!

Amen!

### References

1. Charles F. Baker, A Dispensational Theology (1971, Grace Bible College, Grand Rapids).
2. Sir Robert Anderson, The Gospel and Its Ministry (Pickering and Inglis, London)
3. A. T. Robertson, The Minister and His Greek New Testament (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids),
4. Lewis S. Chafer, Systematic Theology (1948, Dallas Seminary Press, Dallas).
5. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature 1957, University of Chicago, Chicago).
6. J. H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (reprinted by A. P. and A).