"FAITH AS THE HAND OF THE SOUL": A REFORMED COMMONPLACE IN THE PREFACES OF THE BĂLGRAD NT (1648)*

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Resumé: Cet article est centré sur un lieu commun de la théologie réformée (la foi comme "le bras de l'âme") qui est présent dans les préfaces du Nouveau Testament de Bălgrad de 1648. Cette notion n'apparaît pas uniquement dans l'oeuvre de Luther, mais aussi dans celle de Jean Calvin, Théodore Beza, Guillaume Perkins et dans la *Confessio* de Cyrille Loukaris publiée en latin (1629) aussi qu'en grec (1633). Une déclaration de confession orthodoxe orientale condamna explicitement l'imagerie reformée utilisée dans les écrits de Loukaris et, de manière implicite, dans les préfaces du Nouveau Testament de 1648. En toute probabilité, la condemnation a fait que les préfaces du Nouveau Testament de Bălgrad soient reçues comme hérétiques par le clergé orthodoxe d'Orient dans les principautés voisines.
Mots-clés: le Nouveau Testament de Bălgrad (1648), théologie réformée, foi, Cyrille Loukaris, Dosithée de Jérusalem

1. Introduction

The presence of Reformed ideas in the prefaces of the Bălgrad NT (henceforth NTB), published in Transylvania in 1648, has not gone unnoticed (Conţac 2011: 31-39), but few of them have been held to close scrutiny. It is the purpose of this paper to focus on one particular Reformed idea which occurs twice in the prefaces of the NTB. Before starting the exposition itself, it should be noted that, in accordance with the OED, by *Reformed* I mean "accepting, espousing, or characterized by the principles of the Reformation" (OED, s.v. *reformed* 2b). In this sense, the term was originally used in connection with any Protestant denomination but now is more commonly used of non-Lutheran churches, especially Presbyterian and Congregationalist ones (OED, s.v. *reformed* 2b).

The particular idea which will engage our attention in the present study – "faith as the hand of the soul" – echoes the religious terminology used by Martin Luther, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, William Perkins, and the *Confession* of Cyril Lucaris, published both in Latin (1629) and translated afterwards in Greek (1633). The simple fact that a Reformed idea occurs in a Romanian NT, intriguing as it may be

* *"La foi comme le bras de l'âme": un lieu commun reformé dans les préfaces du Nouveau Testament de Bălgrad*

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for those interested in the diffusion of Reformed theology across Europe, gains a new importance when we take into account the stern condemnation by the *Confession* of Dositheus (1672) of such theological imagery used to define faith.

2. The "Preface to James" and the "Preface to Romans" in the NTB (1648)

The fragments which contain the curious notion that faith is the hand of the soul are found in the preface to the Epistle of James, and in the Preface to Romans. The texts run as follows (with emphasis added):

> "The Apostle Paul speaks of right faith, which continually results in good works and by which we are justified before God. This *faith is the hand of the Christian man's soul, whereby he grasps Christ*, with all his goods, and makes Him his own" ("Preface to James", NTB, f. 174r)[1].
> "[Romans] says that man is justified only by faith, for *right faith is the hand of the Christian man, whereby he grasps Christ*. And good works are the fruit of faith, which we give to our neighbors" ("Preface to Romans", NTB, f. 205r)[2].

Before we proceed with further comments, it should be noted that the basic metaphor is slightly altered from one preface ("faith is the hand of the Christian man's soul", James) to the other ("faith is the hand of the Christian man", Romans), with the term "soul" mentioned only the first time. But faith is not discussed for its own sake, but only insofar as it effects justification, being itself the means by which men are justified before God ("credinţa cu carea ne îndereptăm înaintea lui Dumnezău").

Out of the numerous passages in which the author tackles the topic of justification, I have selected only one which serves to illustrate both the theological discourse prevalent in the preface of Romans and the author's concern for James, an epistle which some scholars think is at odds, theologically, with Paul's message: "[Romans] teaches that the sinner is justified before God only by the faith which is in Jesus Christ. And thus can man be justified, only by the mercy of God, not by the value of his works, although we are to do good works, without which there can be no right faith, as the Epistle of James says, in chap. 2, verse 17" (NTB, f. 205r)[3].

[1] "Iară Pavel apostol grăiaşte de credinţa dereaptă carea are în toată vreamea fapte bune şi cu carea ne îndereptăm înaintea lui Dumnezău. Că această *credinţă iaste mîna sufletului omului creştin cu carea prinde pre Hristos*, cu toate bunătăţile, de-l face al său" (*Predoslovie a cărţiei lui Iacov Apostol*, NTB, f. 174r, emphasis added).

[2] "Ce pentru aceaia zice, numai pren credinţa a să înderepta, că *credinţa dereaptă iaste mîna omului creştin, cu care prinde pre Hristos*. Iară faptele bune sînt poamele credinţei, carele dăm priiatinilor noştri" (*Predosloviia de Pavel şi de cărţile lui*, NTB, f. 205r).

[3] "[Romani] învaţă pe omul păcătos a să înderepta înaintea lui Dumnezău numai sîngură pren credinţa carea-i în Iisus Hristos. Şi aşia a să înderepta omul, numai den mila lui Dumnezău, nu pentru destoiniciia faptelor, batîr că să cuvine să facem fapte bune, fără carele credinţa dereaptă nu poate fi, cum zice poslaniia lui Iacov, cap al 2-lea, stih 17."

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The mere fact that the prefaces give so much space to the concept of "justification" is in itself a sign that the author was sympathetic to the Reformation and its theology, especially since in traditional Eastern Orthodox theology justification was not of special importance. In the following section of the present paper we will present the evidence which suggests that, at least as early as Martin Luther, faith was thought of as enabling the Christian to "grasp" or "apprehend" Christ and his benefits. Far for being confined to the Lutheran theology, this idea became a staple of Reformed (i.e. non-Lutheran Protestant) theologians and was eventually enshrined in a confessional document published by a very controversial figure, Cyril Lucaris, the fated patriarch of Constantinople.

3. Martin Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* (1535)

Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* (delivered in 1531 and published in 1535) were translated into English in 1575 and again in 1578. Among Paul's writings, this one was arguably Luther's favorite, as he himself confessed: "The Epistle to the Galatians is my epistle, to which I am betrothed. It is my Katie von Bora" (LW, vol. 26, p. ix). The *Lectures* are suffused with remarks which extol faith and its role in making Christ available to the believer. The author insists that "the *Christ who is grasped by faith* and who lives in the heart is the true Christian righteousness, on account of which God counts us righteous and grants us eternal life" (LW, vol. 26, p. 130). Faith not only grasps, it also embraces Christ: "when He has been grasped by faith, we have righteousness and life. For Christ is the Son of God, who gave Himself out of sheer love to redeem me" (LW, vol. 26, p. 177). In contrast to the Reformed theologians, Luther had a low view of works and chose not to ascribe them any value in bringing Christ to the believer:

> "Therefore the more we have performed works, the less able we are to know and *to grasp Christ*. But *Christ is grasped*, not by the Law or by works but by a reason or an intellect that has been illumined *by faith*. And *this grasping of Christ through faith* is truly the 'speculative life', about which the sophists chatter a great deal without knowing what they are saying" (LW, vol. 26, p. 287, emphasis mine).

In some passages Luther will deploy related metaphors in order to make his point. Thus, faith is described as "a gaze" which is fixed upon Christ, the giver of all blessings. This train of thought is continued with the assertion that Christians apprehend Christ by faith.

> "Therefore faith is a constant gaze that looks at nothing except Christ, the Victor over sin and death and the Dispenser of righteousness, salvation, and eternal life. In his epistles, therefore, Paul sets forth and urges Jesus Christ in almost every verse. He sets Him forth through the Word, since *Christ* cannot be set forth any other way than through the Word and cannot be *grasped* any other way than *through faith*" (LW, vol. 26, p. 356).

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Although Luther does not yet call faith "a hand", the language he uses is taken over into the writings of John Calvin and his successor in Geneva, Theodore Beza, paving the way for the imagery which is employed in the works of Reformed authors writing a century later.

4. John Calvin's *Institutes of Christian Religion* (1561)

John Calvin is part of the second generation of Reformers, since his conversion is thought to have taken place between 1533 and 1534, at a time when Martin Luther had already spent more than fifteen years at the forefront of the campaign to effect the Reformation of the Church. Calvin's magnum opus (*Christianae religionis institutio*) was published originally in 1536 and underwent numerous revisions (1539, 1543, 1550, 1559). French and English editions went quickly through the presses and made his thought known beyond the confines of the Latin-speaking intelligentsia of the day.

In the *Institutes of Christian Religion* (as the work was called in the English translation) Calvin includes a substantial chapter about faith and its role in bringing Christ to the believer. However, the Reformer is keen to highlight that faith does not come about by sheer human will, but has its ultimate origin in the promptings of the Holy Spirit (Niesel 1956: 122-123) and in the mercy of God: "The power of justifying which belongs to faith consists not in its worth as a work. Our justification depends entirely on the mercy of God and the merits of Christ: *when faith apprehends these*, it is said to justify" (CALVIN, INST., III.18.8).

Among the merits belonging to Christ and communicated to the Christian are reconciliation of God and sanctification by the Holy Spirit (CALVIN, INST., III.2.1). This process, explained at length by Calvin, could be epitomized in the following quotation:

> "Why, then, are we justified by faith? Because *by faith we apprehend the righteousness of Christ*, which alone reconciles us to God. This faith, however, you cannot apprehend without at the same time apprehending sanctification; for Christ 'is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption' (1Cor. 1:30)" (CALVIN, INST., III.16.1, emphasis added).

It should be pointed out that, in upholding the view that man is justified before God only by faith, Calvin was aware of the criticism coming from the Roman Catholic theologians, who were enrolling the Epistle of James ("faith without works is dead") in the polemic against the Protestants. To such objections Calvin replied that "in James the faith said not to justify is a mere empty opinion", whereas "in Paul it is the instrument *by which we apprehend Christ* our righteousness" (CALVIN, INST., III.17, emphasis added). For Calvin, as for all the other Reformers, mere faith was meaningless precisely because, when considered in

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relation to Christ, faith would not allow a man to be unfruitful or devoid of good works.

The brief analysis presented above is sufficient to illustrate how Calvin inherits Luther's concepts and develops them more systematically, describing a complex interplay between faith, Christ, and the benefits earned by him on behalf of the believer. According to the Genevan leader, salvation has its grounds in the mercy of God, but is enacted when the believer grasps Christ by faith and becomes the recipient of all his merits and gifts (reconciliation, righteousness, holiness).

5. Theodor Beza's *Quaestionum et responsionum Christianarum libellus* (1570)

Among the Reformed intellectuals based in Calvin's Geneva the most influential was arguably Theodore de Bèze (or Theodorus Beza). Converted to the Reformed cause in 1549, most likely as a result of the influence exerted by his teacher, Melchior Wolmar, he moved to Geneva and then further north, where he worked for a while as professor of Greek at the academy of Lausanne. When the Academy of Geneva was founded in 1559, Beza became its first rector and eventually emerged as main exponent of the Genevan Reformation after the death of Calvin, renouncing his position at the Academy and becoming moderator of the Company of Pastors, a post which he held until 1580 (EC, vol. 1, 231-232).

A very prolific and gifted writer, Beza wrote over 75 political, polemical and theological tracts widely read all over in the Reformation camp. He published numerous editions of the Greek New Testament with Latin translations (his own version, in addition to the Vulgate) and numerous notes in which he defended his own renderings over against those of Jerome, Erasmus or even Calvin himself. As it is well known, one of these editions was used by the translators of the NTB (Conţac 2011: 30). Beza's view of justification is presented succinctly in *Quaestionum et responsionum Christianarum libellus* (1570), a catechetical work written for the general public. Although it does not receive ample space within the *libellus*, the idea of grasping Christ by faith is a recurring theme, as evident in the following quotations (with emphasis added):

> "Q 112: Continue, please, and show me what we receive from Christ being spiritually connected with us through faith, as you have said.
> A 112: I respond that all things necessary to salvation flow forth into us from Christ by our *apprehending Him through faith*" (BEZA, 43).
> "Q 118: But faith is said to have been imputed to Abraham for righteousness, not by this obedience of Christ.
> A 118: We are said to be justified by faith, inasmuch as it *apprehends the obedience of Christ* by whose imputation we are declared righteous" (BEZA, 45).
> "Q 119: Still some doubt remains, how your saying that *Christ is apprehended by faith* is consistent with that which you formerly declared, when you affirmed that when *Christ is apprehended by faith* all gifts flow forth into us. But it seems to follow that either faith is

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not a gift of God, or that your latter statement is false. For faith most surely must go before the apprehension, if *Christ is apprehended by faith*" (BEZA, 45).

The excerpts presented above give evidence that Beza was faithful to the teaching of Calvin. In fact, when discussing the relationship between faith and justification, Beza does not innovate, and his answers greatly resemble what we might expect if the work had come from under Calvin's quill.

6. William Perkins' *Commentary on Galatians* (1617)

William Perkins has been called "the first theologian of the reformed Church of England to achieve an international reputation" and "the principal architect of Elizabethan Puritanism" (ERF, 274). After graduating from Christ's College, Cambridge (1581), he became of fellow of his *alma mater* (1584-1595), while also making his name in Puritan circles as a very captivating preacher. A member of the Church of England throughout his life, Perkins was earnestly seeking to bring spiritual renewal in the life of his church. Among the theologians who influenced him were not only Calvin, Beza and Junius, but also Luther, Melanchthon and Tyndale (ERF, p. 274). Although nowadays Perkins is not best remembered as a writer of commentaries devoted to biblical books in their entirety, he did write a commentary on Galatians, most likely designed initially as a series of sermons based on the *lectio continua* of Paul's epistle (Old 2002: 260).

Commenting on Gal. 2:16 (*εἰδότες [δὲ] ὅτι οὐ δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ ἔργων νόμου ἐὰν μὴ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) Perkins writes: "Iustifying faith in true manner is defined thus: *It is a gift, whereby wee apprehend Christ and his benefits*. Iohn 1:12. To beleeue in Christ, and to receiue Christ, are put both for one. Ioh. 6. [...] Paul saith, that the Gentiles did *apprehend the iustice which is by faith, Rom. 9.30*". For Perkins, this apprehension consists, on one hand, in knowing Christ (through the word and the sacraments) and, on the other hand, in applying him and his benefits unto ourselves, by a supernatural act of understanding (PERKINS, 108). After discussing the relationship between faith and justification on fifteen pages, Perkins resorts to more vivid imagery which he uses in order to capture the character of the three cardinal virtues (faith, hope and love):

"Thirdly, hence we learne, that a sinner is iustified by meere faith: that is, that nothing apprehends Christs obedience for our iustification, but faith. This will more easily appeare, if we compare faith, hope and loue. *Faith is like an hand, that opens itselfe to receiue a gift*, and so is neither loue, nor hope. Loue is also an hand, but yet an hand that giues out, communicates, and distributes. For as faith receiues Christ into our hearts, so loue opens the heart, and powres out praise and thankes to God, and all maner of goodnesse to men. Hope is no hand, but an eye that wishly looketh and waiteth for the good things which faith beleeueth. Therefore *it is the onely propertie of faith to claspe and lay hold of Christ, and his benefits*" (PERKINS, 114, emphasis added).

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Using body metaphors, Perkins envisages hope as the eye which contemplates the unseen spiritual realities, faith as the hand which opens itself and grasps them, and love as the hand which imparts generously the gifts received. Contrary to what we might expect, given Paul's insistence on love, Perkins puts an emphasis on faith, which he mentions repeatedly. For instance, in connection with Gal. 3:12, Perkins develops his favorite image bringing in the idea that, in receiving justification and salvation, man is, in relation to Christ, what a beggar is in relation to his benefactor: "The Gospel considers not faith as a vertue, or worke, but as an instrument, *or hand, to apprehend Christ*. For faith doth not cause, effect, or procure our iustification and saluation, but as *the beggers hand*, it receiues them, being wholly wrought and giuen by God" (PERKINS, 171).

One last thing which needs to be said about Perkins is that, in line with the typical Reformed concerns, he is careful to distinguish between "true faith", which consists in grasping Christ and his gifts, and "the poor and miserable faith of the Papists" who are content with merely assenting to the teaching of the church (Riches 2008: 130).

7. The Confession of Cyril Lucaris (1633)

So much has been written about Cyril Lucaris and the confession ascribed to him[4], that a full-length study would be necessary to represent adequately all the positions of those who have commented on this thorny issue. George Michaelides, writing in the first half of the 20th century, surveyed the positions of the Greek scholars, evaluated the arguments in favor and against the Lucarian authorship of the confession, yet refused to give a trenchant verdict on the issue. However, confronted with the evidence in Museum of Geneva, in the form of the original manuscript of the Confession and a duplicate with a legend in Cyril's own hand[5], the reader open to persuasion will find it hard to discount the idea that the handwriting (which so closely resemble Cyril's authentic letters) is a fabrication, especially since the patriarch never sought to deny the rumors positing him as the author of a very controversial document (Michaelides 1943: 129).

But even if Cyril Lucaris did not author himself the confession named after him, it is beyond doubt that the document contains ideas which are incompatible with the Eastern Orthodox doctrine. Chapter 13, the only one which is important for the purposes of the present paper, deserves to be quoted in full, since it defines faith in precisely the same terminology used by Reformed theologians:

> "Πιστεύομεν πίστει δικαιοῦσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων. Πίστιν δ' ὅταν λέγωμεν, τὸ τῆς πίστεως νοοῦμεν ἀναφορικόν, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ δικαιοσύνη τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

[4] *Confessio fidei reverendissimi Domini Cyrilli Patriarchae Constantinopolitani nomine et consensu Patriarcharum Alexandrini et Hierosolymitani, aliorumque Ecclesiarum Orientalium Antistitum Scripta*, Geneva, 1629.

[5] "This copy agrees with the original, written in my own hand... Let no one having any doubts. Cyril, Patriarch of Constantinople".

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ἧς ἡ πίστις, χειρὸς ἔργον πληροῦσα, δραξαμένη, αὐτὴν ἡμῖν εἰς σωτηρίαν προσοικειοῖ, ὅπερ ἐπὶ συστάσει καὶ οὐκ ἐπὶ ζημίᾳ τῶν ἔργων ἀποφαινόμεθα.᾽Επεὶ καὶ τὰ ἔργα μὴ δεῖν ἀμελεῖσθαι, ὡς μέσα ὄντα ἀναγκαῖα ἐπὶ μαρτυρίᾳ τῆς πίστεως πρὸς βεβαίωσιν τῆς ἡμῶν κλήσεως, διδάσκει ἡμᾶς αὐτὴ ἡ ἀλήθεια. ῞Αμα δὲ ἐξ ἑαυτῶν μηδαμῶς ἀρκετὰ εἶναι ἐν τῷ τοῦ Χριστοῦ βήματι παῤῥησιάσαι, καὶ ἐπάξιον αἰτήσασθαι τὴν ἀντιμισθίαν, καὶ σῶσαι τὸν κτησάμενον· τοῦθ᾽ οὕτως ἔχειν μαρτυρεῖ ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ἀσθένεια. ῾Η δὲ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δικαιοσύνη τοῖς μετανοοῦσι προσαχθεῖσα καὶ προσοικειωθεῖσα μόνη δικαιοῖ καὶ σῴζει τὸν πιστόν" (KARMIRES, 567).

We believe that man is justified by faith, not by works. But when we say 'by faith', we understand the correlative of faith, which is the righteousness of Christ, which *faith*, fulfilling the office of the *hand*, *apprehends* and assigns to us for salvation. This we declare in support, not to the prejudice of [good] works. For the truth itself teaches us that works also are not to be neglected, since they are necessary means as a testimony to our faith and a confirmation of our calling. Moreover, that works are not in themselves sufficient to appear before the tribunal of Christ and claim their proper reward and save their author is testified by human weakness. But solely the righteousness of Christ applied to those who repent justifies and saves the believer[6].

The first important aspect to be noted is the opening line, which contains the quintessential principle of the Reformation (justification by faith, not by works). However, the author feels the need to clarify that he actually refers to the "correlative" or "correspondent" (*ἀναφορικόν*) of faith, which plays the role (*ἔργον*) of the hand, grasping (*δραξαμένη*) the righteousness of Christ and assigning (*προσοικειοῖ*) it for salvation. After a brief comment which both asserts and relativizes good works, the author reiterates the idea that man is saved only by the righteousness of Christ applied (*προσαχθεῖσα*) and assigned (*προσοικειωθεῖσα*) to him.

What is even more striking is the fact that both the Confession ascribed to Cyril and the NTB are careful to highlight that good works are important. Whereas the prefaces to James and Romans state that "faith is the hand of the Christian man which grasps Christ", the Lucarian confession emphasizes that faith is similar to a hand which "grasps" the righteousness of Christ with salvific consequences. The difference between the two texts is negligible and gives the impression that the authors of the two texts, who were roughly contemporaries[7], share a common understanding of faith and use essentially the same imagery in order to make the same theological point.

8. The Confession of Dositheus (1672)

As it is well known, Cyril's confession generated a host of reactions across the Eastern Orthodox world. Among the documents which explicitly sought to

[6] Emphasis added. For a complete English translation of Cyril's confession, see ROBERTSON, 185-215. The translation of Chapter 13 included in this paper is a revision of Robertson's version.

[7] In 1648, when the printing of the NTB was finished, Cyril Lucaris had been dead for a decade, having been executed in 1638.

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counteract the teaching ascribed to Lucaris, an important place was held by the Confession of Dositheus of Jerusalem (1672)[8]. The document mirrors and refutes Cyril's confession chapter by chapter, while also providing what in the author's view are the correct theological statements on the topic discussed. As can be seen from the fragment below, canon 13 is devoted in its entirety to an exposition of what true faith is:

> "Πιστεύομεν οὐ διὰ πίστεως ἁπλῶς μόνης δικαιοῦσθαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλὰ διὰ πίστεως ἐνεργουμένης διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης, ταὐτὸν εἰπεῖν, διὰ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῶν ἔργων. Τὸ δὲ τὴν πίστιν χειρὸς ἔργον ἀποπληροῦσαν ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ δικαιοσύνης καὶ προσάπτειν ἡμῖν εἰς σωτηρίαν, πόρρω πάσης εὐσεβείας γινώσκομεν. Οὕτω γὰρ ἐννοουμένη ἡ πίστις πᾶσιν ἐφαρμοσθείη, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἴη ὁ μὴ σῳζόμενος, ὅπερ ἄντικρυς ψεῦδός ἐστιν. Τοὐναντίον δὲ μᾶλλον πιστεύομεν, ὅτι οὐ τὸ τῆς πίστεως ἀναφορικόν, ἀλλὰ τὴν οὖσαν ἐν ἡμῖν πίστιν διὰ τῶν ἔργων δικαιοῦν ἡμᾶς παρὰ Χριστοῦ. Ἐννοοῦμεν δὲ τὰ ἔργα οὐ μάρτυρας τὴν ἡμετέραν κλῆσιν ἐπιβεβαιοῦντας, ἀλλὰ καρποὺς καθ' ἑαυτοὺς ὄντας, δι' ὧν ἡ πίστις λαμβάνει τὸ ἔμπρακτον, καὶ καθ' ἑαυτὰ ἄξια διὰ τῆς θείας ἐπαγγελίας τοῦ κομίσασθαι ἕκαστον τῶν πιστῶν τὰ διὰ τοῦ σώματος αὐτῷ πεπραγμένα, εἴτε ἀγαθὸν εἴτε κακὸν δηλονότι" (KARMIRES, 755-756).
>
> We believe that man is justified not simply by faith, but by faith which works in love, that is, *by faith and works*. As for [the idea that] *faith* fulfills the office of a *hand* which *apprehends* the righteousness which is in Christ and applies it to us unto salvation, we know it to be far from all piety. For faith thus understood would suit everyone, and there would be no one who would not get saved, which is patently false. On the contrary, we believe that it is not the correspondent of faith, but the faith which is within us, which justifies us by works before Christ. We understand works not as witnesses which confirm our calling, but as fruit in themselves, whereby faith receives its effectiveness, and which are worthy in themselves, by the divine promise, so that each believer may receive [the just deserts for] the deeds in the body, either good or bad[9].

According to Dositheus, justifying faith must work in love and thus man is justified by faith *and* works. The idea that faith acts as a hand grasping the righteousness of Christ is dismissed as heretical and contrary to logic, since, if such faith were within everyone's reach, it would presumably lead to universal salvation, which is impossible. After emphasizing that justification comes by works, it commends the latter as necessary and worthy of God's reward at the last judgment. The last sentence in the paragraph is a deliberate allusion to Paul's statement that "all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil" (2Cor. 5:10 NRSV).

[8] For the full text in Greek, see KARMIRES, 734-773. A Romanian translation has been published in "Candela. Revistă teologică şi bisericească", anul LIII-LIV, 1942/1943, p. 173-226.

[9] Emphasis added.

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9. Conclusions

The idea that by faith a Christian "grasps" or "apprehends" Christ and his righteousness is part of the typical religious language used by Martin Luther to describe the process of justification. The same commonplace was given prominence by the Calvinist wing of the Reformation in the 16th and 17th centuries and is a recurrent metaphor in the writings of the major Reformed theologians, such as John Calvin, Theodore Beza and William Perkins.

It does not come as a surprise that the *Confessio fidei reverendissimi Domini Cyrilli* uses similar imagery to describe the role of faith in effecting justification. Regardless of whether Cyril Lucaris wrote the *Confessio* or not, all scholars agree that its content is not typical for Eastern Orthodox theology. In fact, an Eastern Orthodox confession (1672) condemned explicitly the Reformed simile used in the Calvinist confession and, by implication, censured the prefaces of the NTB too. But if the introductory materials found in the NTB contain a heretic idea ("far from all piety", in Dositheus' terms), this would explain why the editors of the Bucharest Bible (1688) only published three short prefaces (introducing the Gospels of Mark, Luke and John) and refrained from publishing the rest. They must have been at least vaguely aware that the prefaces to James and Romans, respectively, are theologically dubious.

Of course, it could be argued that the prefaces to James and Romans are not incompatible with the Eastern Orthodox soteriology if it were shown that the Eastern Church Fathers speak in the same fashion about "apprehending" Jesus and his "benefits" by faith. Until such research is undertaken, we are compelled to conclude that idea of "faith as the hand of the soul" is part of the Reformed vocabulary and its presence in the NTB bespeaks an obvious propensity towards the Reformed understanding of salvation.

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