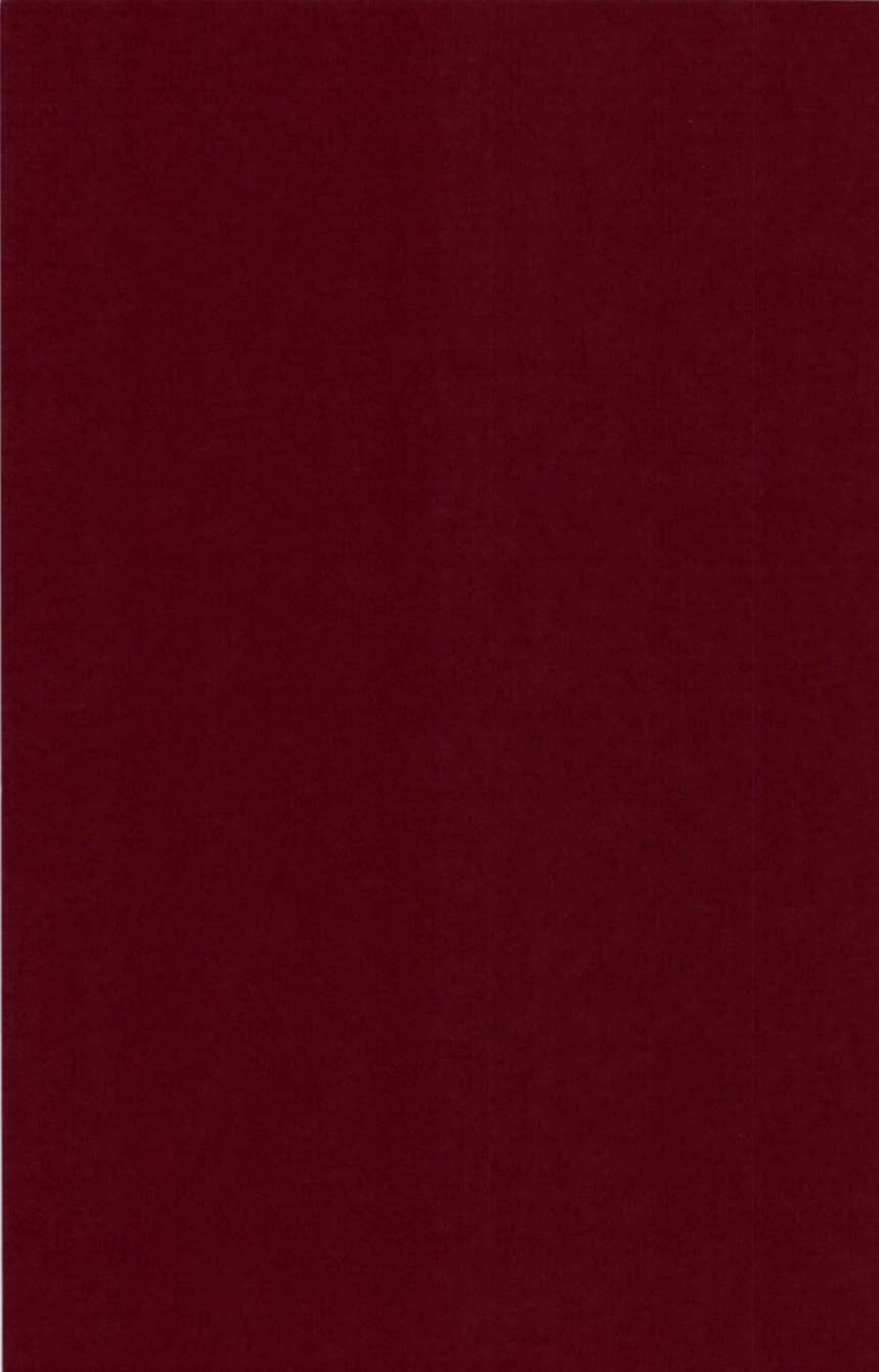


Journal of the
GRACE
Evangelical Society

"Faith Alone In Christ Alone"



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Statement of Faith: "Jesus Christ, God incarnate, paid the full penalty for man's sin when He died on the cross of Calvary. Any person who, in simple faith, trusts in the risen Christ as their only hope of heaven, refusing to trust in anything else, receives the gift of eternal life which, once granted, can never be lost."

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AN INTRODUCTION TO GRACE EVANGELICAL SOCIETY AND ITS JOURNAL

ARTHUR L. FARSTAD

Editor

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Dallas, Texas

The board of the Grace Evangelical Society, and the editorial board of the Society's new periodical, welcome you to the readership of our Journal.

Since there is a proliferation of evangelical organizations and also a number of good evangelical periodicals, the reader deserves to know what is our *raison d'être*—why we exist at all.

I. The Grace Evangelical Society

It is a widely recognized yet nonetheless sad fact among evangelicals that much of Christendom teaches a "different Gospel" from that of the Apostle Paul and the rest of the NT. That is, salvation is seen as at least partly by works and sacraments, and there is rarely any real assurance of the present possession of eternal life. How could there be if salvation is partly of man?

What is less widely known is the still sadder fact that even among many who were accurately denominated "Bible Christians" by a Roman Catholic priest on network television, the old Gospel of grace has become blurred and even distorted. It is this deplorable situation that has created the need for the Grace Evangelical Society.

The Grace Evangelical Society (GES) was founded in 1986. During four years on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ and seven years at Dallas Theological Seminary, Robert Wilkin had felt a tremendous burden to promote a clear proclamation of the Gospel. Shortly after completing his doctorate in NT he began to contact friends who he knew shared his commitment. Dr. Wilkin asked them if they felt there was a need for a networking organization which would bring together Christian professionals and lay people who shared a concern for a clear Gospel proclamation. To a person they all heartily endorsed the idea.

In June of 1986 the first Grace Evangelical Society newsletter was sent out. By November of that year GES was incorporated as a non-profit organization.

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The purpose of GES is "to promote the clear proclamation of God's free salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, which is properly correlated with and distinguished from issues related to discipleship." Various methods are used to achieve this objective. These include the monthly newsletters, the production of this Journal, regional and national conferences, a tape ministry, production of ministry tools such as tracts and follow-up materials, and having representatives of GES speak at churches, seminars, and retreats.

Grace Evangelical Society is neither a church nor a denomination. Rather, it is a parachurch organization designed to encourage and educate churches and individuals concerning the Gospel and the related yet distinct issues of discipleship. GES seeks not only to *talk about* the Gospel, but also to *share* it actively with those who do not yet know the grace of God.

The grace of God has the power to save the sinner in need of a Savior and to motivate the saved to live godly lives and share the good news.

II. The Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Like our Society, the Journal is not one of *general* interest to evangelicals; it is specialized.

We seek to promote in the Journal the truths of the Gospel of grace that are embodied in the statement of faith of the Grace Evangelical Society (see below).

As regards scholarship, we plan to run the whole gamut from practical articles on a popular level, such as how to witness for Christ, all the way to more technical articles on difficult Bible passages and Christian theology, especially in soteriology, the doctrine of salvation. Where translation or manuscript variations touch on the doctrine of grace we can expect to have a few articles on translation or textual criticism.

The one thing, however, that we do *not* wish to do is to clone already existing sound Christian journals. There are a few that we believe are sound on salvation by grace, though not necessarily featuring this teaching very often. In this respect it will be a matter of *emphasis*. We believe there are enough ramifications of grace for a journal to maintain interest, variety, and helpfulness for the entire body of Christ.

For the present, at least, the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society will appear, *Deo volente*, twice a year. It is possible that the Journal may one day become a quarterly.

Special Features

Two areas often sadly lacking in conservative Christian circles are an appreciation of good writing (Christian literature), and an interest in our “roots” (Church history and biography).

We hope to help remedy this lack for our readership as to *literature* by having a department that features grace in poetry, hymnody, short stories, and literary criticism. We welcome fresh (or established) talent to submit articles in any of these genres. Many people enjoy reading or writing in these areas, yet the avenues are not wide or many in number. We welcome writing that is both Christian and creative. So much of evangelical poetry, for example, has not been much above the doggerel level, though there are marvelous exceptions.

It is unfortunate that many evangelicals seem unaware of their great heritage, even of their immediate denominational or doctrinal heritage. Many have never read a Spurgeon or an Ironside sermon, a Chafer article, or a John Donne or Frances Ridley Havergal poem. This is a shame.

To help remedy this situation, each issue of the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society will include a department called “A Voice from the Past.” Great men and women of the Gospel will be allowed, like Abel, to “yet speak,” though departed from this scene.

Such writers as Griffith Thomas, Ironside, Chafer, Havergal, and Moody will appear in this section. Our first “voice” is from a man who has helped many to see the clear gracious message of salvation in the past, through preaching, writing, and teaching. The members of GES are especially indebted to Lewis Sperry Chafer for his emphasis on grace, and for this reason chose him as the first “Voice from the Past.”

Reviews

Each issue of the Journal will conclude with short but hopefully helpful reviews of books and periodicals that are at least somewhat relevant to the Gospel of grace.

Publishers and authors are encouraged to send us books for possible review or at least for listing under “Books Received,” which will appear in our second issue.

Again, welcome to the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society. We believe you will find the Journal both edifying and stimulating—and to some, no doubt, provoking!

We trust God the Holy Spirit will use this vehicle to produce better presentations of the Gospel, more believers with full assurance of sal-

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vation, and yes (in spite of misrepresentations by some to the contrary), more believers actively engaged in such good works as will be rewarded with the Master's commendation:

"Well done, good and faithful servant!"

III. Statement of Faith

For the benefit of giving a permanent copy of the position of the Grace Evangelical Society to all our readers, we here publish the doctrinal statement in full:

THE GRACE EVANGELICAL SOCIETY STATEMENT OF FAITH

Jesus Christ, God incarnate, paid the full penalty for man's sin when He died on the cross of Calvary. Any person who, in simple faith, trusts in the risen Christ as their only hope of heaven, refusing to trust in anything else, receives the gift of eternal life which, once granted, can never be lost.

AFFIRMATION OF BELIEF¹

Salvation

The sole condition for receiving eternal salvation from hell is faith (trust) in the Lord Jesus Christ, Who died a substitutionary death on the cross for man's sin and rose from the dead.² Repentance, rightly defined as a change of mind, is an integral part of this saving faith.³ No act of obedience, preceding or following faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, such as commitment to obey, sorrow for sin, turning from

¹ The Grace Evangelical Society is firmly committed to the fundamental doctrines of the historic Christian faith. Not all of those doctrines are delineated in this statement of faith. A more complete statement may be obtained by writing to Grace Evangelical Society, 6 Llano Drive, Roanoke, Texas 76262.

² "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16-18). "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life" (John 6:47). "So they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household'" (Acts 16:31).

³ "Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

one's sin, baptism, or submission to the Lordship of Christ, may be added to, or considered as a part of, faith as a condition for receiving eternal salvation.⁴ This saving transaction between God and the sinner is simply the giving and receiving of a free gift.⁵

Assurance

The assurance of eternal salvation is based only on the promises God makes in His Word that everyone who trusts in Jesus Christ alone possesses eternal life.⁶ Good works, which can and should follow regeneration, are not necessary to a firm assurance of eternal life even though they may have a secondary, confirmatory value.⁷

Discipleship (Growing in Christ)

The ultimate goal of the Holy Spirit's work in the believer's life is to produce spiritual maturity reflected in consistent Christlike behavior and attitudes.⁸ Therefore, obedience to the Word of God, while not

⁴ "But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness" (Rom 4:5). "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified" (Gal 2:16). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

⁵ "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:8, 9). "Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water'" (John 4:10). "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17).

⁶ "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24). "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5:9-13).

⁷ "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10). "This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men" (Titus 3:8).

⁸ "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are

necessary for obtaining eternal salvation from hell, is the essential responsibility of each Christian.⁹ However, the Bible does not teach that this obedience will be manifested in all believers or to the same degree in all believers.¹⁰ If a believer does not yield to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his experience, failure will result, evidenced by sinful acts or even prolonged disobedience.¹¹

Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-25).

⁹ "And He turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple'" (Luke 14:26-27). See also Luke 14:28-35. "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily" (Col 1:27-29). "Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 6:12-23).

¹⁰ "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:13-14).

¹¹ "Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.' Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor 10:6-13). "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works

Motivation

The believer is assured of salvation from hell, and is eternally secure, since that salvation is based solely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.¹² Therefore, the receiving or keeping of that salvation cannot be an impetus for godly living.¹³ The Scripture, however, does present several motivations for obedience in the Christian life:

1. A powerful motivation for living the Christian life is gratitude to God for saving us by His grace.¹⁴

2. Believers should also be motivated by the knowledge that their heavenly Father both blesses obedience and disciplines disobedience in His children.¹⁵

of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal 5:16-21).

¹² "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28, 29). "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38, 39).

¹³ "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom 12:1, 2).

¹⁴ "For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Cor 5:14, 15). "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal 2:20).

¹⁵ "For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: 'My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.' If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Heb 12:3-11). See also Lev 26:1-45.

3. Finally, every Christian must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, not to determine his destiny in heaven or hell, but to assess the quality of his Christian life on earth.¹⁶ Anticipating either reward or loss of reward at the Judgment Seat should also motivate believers to perseverance and to faithfulness to God's revealed will.¹⁷

¹⁶ "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10). "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work" (Rev 22:12).

¹⁷ "According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is" (1 Cor 3:10-13). "If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Cor 3:14-17). "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (1 Cor 9:24-27). "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28).

Scripture references are from the New King James Version, 1985.

REPENTANCE AND SALVATION

Part 1:

The Doctrine of Repentance in Church History

ROBERT N. WILKIN

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Few issues are of more vital interest to those who believe in heaven and hell than the question of what one must do to gain entrance into heaven. Answers to this question nearly always include a reference to repentance. Throughout church history nearly every theologian has taught that repentance is essential for salvation from hell.¹ However, several disparate understandings of repentance have been advocated. This article will delineate those understandings.²

I. The Pre-Reformation View

From the apostolic fathers until the Reformers, essentially one view of salvific repentance prevailed. Unhappily this view knew little or nothing of grace. A system of works salvation emerged very early in the Church. Amazingly, the first generation after the Apostles distorted the good news which the Apostles had entrusted to their care.³ On the theology of the apostolic fathers Torrance notes:

Salvation is wrought, they thought, certainly by divine pardon but on the ground of repentance [self-amendment before God],⁴ not apparently on the ground of the death of Christ alone. There is no doubt about the fact that the early Church felt it was willing to go all the

¹ Throughout this article the expression "salvific repentance" will be used to refer to that repentance which is necessary to escape *eternal* condemnation.

² This paper draws heavily on my doctoral dissertation. Cf. Robert N. Wilkin, "Repentance as a Condition for Salvation in the New Testament" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1985).

³ See Thomas F. Torrance, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

way to martyrdom, but it felt that it was in that way the Christian made saving appropriation of the Cross, rather than by faith . . . It was not seen that the whole of salvation is centred in the person and the death of Christ . . . Failure to apprehend the meaning of the Cross and to make it a saving article of faith is surely the clearest indication that a genuine doctrine of grace is absent.⁵

Three main aspects of the pre-Reformation view of salvific repentance are apparent.

Initial Forgiveness of Pre-Baptismal Sins Only

The church fathers and their successors believed that salvation began at one's baptism. When someone was baptized the sins which he had committed until that point in life [plus his share of original sin through Adam] were forgiven.⁶ The fathers thus believed that a person would begin the Christian life with a clean slate. Of course, the slate would not remain clean for long. Since everyone continues to be plagued with sin after baptism (1 John 1:8, 10), the Church had to develop a plan whereby post-baptismal sins could be atoned for.

Forgiveness of Post-Baptismal Sins by Repentance/Penance

With such a view of baptism and the forgiveness of sins it is no wonder that people began putting off baptism until they were near death. In that way they could be assured of total forgiveness. The church fathers and their successors dealt with this problem by proposing repentance (i.e., penance) as the cure for post-baptismal sins. At first the early fathers debated whether major post-baptismal sins could be forgiven at all. It was generally agreed that even "mortal" sins could be forgiven; however, there was some disagreement as to how many times a person could repent and be forgiven.⁷ A few leaders, such as Hermas, held that there could be only one opportunity for repentance after baptism.⁸ That view did not prevail, however. The prevailing view of the early fathers was that one could repent and be forgiven on several

⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁶ See, for example, Hermas, *Mandate*, 4. 3. 1, 6; Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*, 2, 5; Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, 15-16; Origen, *Homilies on the Psalms*, On Psalm 37 (38): 2, 6; Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance*, 2.11; Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 1.17-18; Anselm, *De Concordia III: Grace and Free Choice*, 8; and Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, IV: 71-72.

⁷ For example, the two-volume work by Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance*, was his defense against the Novatianists' claim that the church could not forgive mortal sins such as apostasy. Ambrose upheld the established church position that it had the power to remit post-baptismal sins of any magnitude.

⁸ See Hermas, *Mandate*, 4. 3. 6. See also Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance*, 2.10, where he teaches that lesser sins could be repented of daily but not mortal ones. Ambrose held that there could be only one penance for mortal sins.

occasions.⁹ At first they did not specify exactly how many times someone could repent for fear of giving churchmen an implicit license to sin. This, of course, led some people to put off penance until their deathbeds. By the fifth century, in spite of the fear of giving people a license to sin, the Church uniformly specified that a person might repent and be forgiven an unlimited number of times.¹⁰

Repentance Defined as Contrition, Confession, and Performing Prescribed Acts of Penance

The apostolic fathers taught that in order to retain salvation from eternal judgment one had to feel sorry for and confess his post-baptismal sins to a priest and then do whatever acts of penance were prescribed by the priest.¹¹ The Latin Fathers translated, or rather mistranslated, the NT words *metanoëō* and *metanoia* to reflect their theological bias. They translated those terms as *poenitentiam agite* and *poenitentia*, "to do acts of penance" and "acts of penance," respectively.¹² Those mistranslations unfortunately became part of the Old Latin and then the Latin Vulgate versions of the Bible. It was not until the Reformation that those translations were given a serious and widespread challenge.

Summary

Imagine that you were a member of the Church in the fifth century under such a system. Your parents firmly believed these things. You were baptized as an infant. As a young child you were taught the necessity of penance and confession to your confessor priest both by your parents and the priest. By the time you became a teenager you were convinced that salvation was only in the Church and that you had to strive hard against sin if you were going to get into heaven. Oh, how you hoped you would get in! You hoped you were good enough today and that you would stay good enough tomorrow. You hoped you wouldn't die right after committing a mortal sin such as adultery, idolatry, murder, or denying the faith while being tortured.

⁹ See, for example, Clement of Rome, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 7-9; 50-51; 56-57; Polycarp, *Philippians*, 2, 5; and Cyprian, *Epistle 52* (56 Oxford Edition), *Treatise on the Lapsed*, and *The Seventh Council of Carthage*.

¹⁰ See, for example, Jerome, *Letter 122: To Rusticus*, 3; and Augustine, *On the Creed*, 15-16.

¹¹ See Hermas, *Mandate*, 4. 3. 6; Clement of Rome, *First Epistle*, 8-9; and Polycarp, *Philippians*, 2.

¹² See William Douglas Chamberlain, *The Meaning of Repentance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943), 27-28; Edgar R. Smothers, "The New Testament Concept of Metanoia," *Classical Bulletin* 10 (1933): 7-8; Aloys Herman Dirksen, *The New Testament Concept of Metanoia* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1932), 66-67; and John Cecil Anderson, "Repentance in the Greek New Testament" (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1959), 14ff.

You wondered exactly which sins were mortal sins in God's eyes. What if you died after being jealous or envious or hateful and it turned out those sins were big enough to send you to hell? Sometimes you even feared that your confessor priest may not have been strict enough with you when he meted out your penance. After all, there was no set penalty for given sins. What if your priest made a mistake? What if you didn't do enough to atone for your sins? You were terribly frightened of hell and without any assurance of escaping its flames.

Robert Williams well summed up the view of the early Church on salvific repentance when he wrote:

By and large, it was far easier to gain admission to the Church than to re-enter it, once its ideals had in any way been renounced by its adherents. The initiated, through baptism, were given a clean sheet. Whatever evils had previously stained a man's life, it was forgiven and forgotten, as a new adventure in Christ began. It was when the Church had to deal with those who had soiled the sheet after their admission, that difficulties arose. Light offenders were met by different forms of censure, such as temporary exclusion from Holy Communion or varying degrees of penance. In dealing with the mortal sins of idolatry, murder, and adultery, not to mention apostasy, Church leaders differed concerning the form of punishment.¹³

Surely there has always been a remnant of people who knew and apprehended the grace of God in Christ, even in the years between the Apostles and the Reformation. However, the vast majority of people knew nothing of grace. They knew only legalism and pharisaism. There was a serious need for a mass reform of the Church. It was centuries in coming. Indeed, for more than a millennium terrible darkness covered the Church until the Reformation.

II. Reformation Views

The Reformers challenged all three pillars of the Church's view on salvific repentance.

Initial Forgiveness of all Sins, Pre- and Post-Baptismal

Calvin,¹⁴ and to a lesser extent Luther,¹⁵ taught that all of one's sins,

¹³ Robert Williams, *A Guide to the Teaching of the Early Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960), 142.

¹⁴ See Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4. 15. 3.

¹⁵ Luther held to a linear view of conversion. That is, he believed that a person's salvation was not finalized until he died. He taught that one could "lose" his salvation—or better, fail to realize it in the end—if he ceased believing in Jesus Christ and indulged

pre- and post-baptismal, were forgiven when a person became a Christian. Such teaching clearly marked a radical break from Romanism. What would become of the practice of confessing one's sins to his priest and performing the mandated acts of penance? Logically, it would cease in churches which adopted the thinking of the Reformers on forgiveness of sin. As we know, that is exactly what happened.

Penance Unnecessary for Forgiveness of Post-Baptismal Sins

Calvin completely rejected the idea that one must perform acts of penance to atone for post-baptismal sins in order to maintain one's salvation.¹⁶ He taught that Christ's death, once appropriated, finally and completely atoned for all the sins one would or ever could commit.

Luther, however, in light of his linear understanding of conversion,¹⁷ held that while penance itself was unnecessary, one who abandoned his faith in Christ and fell into sin would perish unless he returned to Christ again through renewed faith. Commenting on Jerome's view, the established position of the Church, that penance was "the second plank after shipwreck," Luther wrote:

You will likewise see how perilous, indeed, how false it is to suppose that penance is the "the second plank after shipwreck," and how pernicious an error it is to believe that the power of baptism is broken, and the ship dashed to pieces, because of sin. The ship remains one, solid, and invincible; it will never be broken up into separate "planks." In it are carried all those who are brought to the harbor of salvation, for it is the truth of God giving us its promise in the sacraments. Of course, it often happens that many rashly leap overboard into the sea and perish; these are those who abandon faith in the promise and plunge into sin. But the ship itself remains intact and holds its course unimpaired. If anyone is able somehow by grace to return to the ship, it is not on any plank, but in the solid ship itself that he is borne to life. Such a person is the one who returns through faith to the abiding and enduring promise of God.¹⁸

Luther rejected penance formally. He felt that penance "torture[d]

in a life of sin. He viewed Christ's death as covering all of one's sins, pre- and post-baptismal, as long as one strove to remain in the faith. Of course, such a disclaimer effectively contradicted his claim about the sufficiency of Christ's death and eliminated the possibility of assurance. See *Luther's Works*, vol. 36, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, 1520, 60-61, Marilyn Jean Harran, "The Concept of *Conversio* in the Early Exegetical and Reform Writings of Martin Luther" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1978), and Fred J. Prudek, "Luther's Linear Concept of Conversion" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979).

¹⁶ See Calvin, *Institutes*, 3. 24. 6; 4. 19. 14-17.

¹⁷ See footnote 15 above.

¹⁸ *Luther's Works*, vol. 36, *The Babylonian Captivity*, 61.

poor consciences to death."¹⁹ However, practically speaking he still held to the necessity of something not unlike penance. In order to be saved in the end from eternal judgment, according to Luther, one must endeavor to continue in the faith, both morally and doctrinally.²⁰

Repentance (*Metanoia*) Defined as a Change of Mind

In contrast to the Church's definition of *metanoia* as involving contrition, confession, and the performance of acts of penance, Calvin and Luther concluded that it retained its classical sense of "a change of mind."²¹ Salvific repentance according to Calvin and Luther was a change of mind whereby one recognized his own sinfulness and need of forgiveness and then turned in faith to God to provide that forgiveness in Christ.²² In essence, then, Luther and Calvin viewed salvific repentance as an essential part of saving faith.

Summary

The Reformation introduced a new view of salvific repentance. Calvin taught that all sins were forgiven at the point of conversion, that penance was unnecessary for the forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, and that the NT term *metanoia* referred to a change of mind whereby one recognizes his sinfulness and need of forgiveness in Christ. Luther agreed completely with the last of those points and somewhat with the first two. Those who are burdened for the purity of the Gospel of grace find it disappointing that Luther held to a linear view of salvation and the possibility of forfeiting it by departing from the faith.

The monolithic power of the Roman Church had been broken. No longer would the proponents of grace be limited to a few modern-day Elijahs. The Reformers looked back to Christ and the Apostles rather than the church fathers for their view of salvific repentance and the Gospel. Would their followers retain a high view of grace? Or would they, like the apostolic fathers, lose a proper understanding of grace and depart into a man-made, legalistic "Gospel"?

¹⁹ Ibid., 89.

²⁰ Ibid., 59-61, 89, 123-24! One should also note that the study by the Lutheran scholar Lowell Green (*How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation* [Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1980]) indicates that Luther held to the necessity of a believer persevering in a walk of faith in order to receive final salvation (see, e.g., 260).

²¹ See Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 48, *Letters* (May 30, 1518 Letter to John von Staupitz), 65-70; Calvin, *Institutes*, 3. 3. 1-16; and Dirksen, *Metanoia*, 79-80 and "Metanoete," *The Bible Today* 19 (1965): 1262, 1266.

²² See Calvin, *Institutes*, 3. 3. 5, 18; 3. 4. 1-39; and Luther, *Luther's Works*, vol. 48, *Letters*, 66-67.

III. Post-Reformation Views

The post-Reformation period has seen the continuation of the previously held views and the emergence of new ones.

Contrition, Confession, and Performing Acts of Penance

The Roman view of salvific repentance has continued from the Reformation until the present. The views of Calvin and Luther have continued as well. However, their views have in some cases been modified so that today there are basically three Protestant views of salvific repentance.²³

Turning Away from Sin

Those holding to this view consider salvific repentance to be the actual turning away from one's sins and not merely a willingness or intention to do so.²⁴ They would tell an alcoholic, for example, that in order to become a Christian he would first have to stop getting drunk.

A Willingness or Resolution to Stop Sinning

Others argue that one needs to be *willing* to turn from his sins.²⁵ They would tell an alcoholic that in order to become a Christian he

²³ However, each of these views has two forms. Thus, as we shall soon see, in actuality there are six Protestant views of salvific repentance. It should be noted as well that all of these views teach that salvific repentance must be combined with faith in Jesus Christ for a person to gain salvation from eternal judgment.

²⁴ See, for example, James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 105-114; James Graham, "Repentance," *Evangelical Quarterly* 25 (1953): 233; George Peters, "The Meaning of Conversion," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 120 (1963): 236, 239; Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Moral Teaching of the New Testament* (Freiburg: Herder and Herder, 1965), 25-33; Charles Scobie, *John the Baptist* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 80, 112, 148; A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1912), 832-35; and Eugene La Verdere, "The Need for Salvation: A New Testament Perspective," *Chicago Studies* 21 (1982): 234.

²⁵ See, for example, William Barclay, *Great Themes of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1979), 72-73; Lewis Bookwalter, *Repentance* (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Publishing House, 1902), 30, 43, 53-55; William Douglas Chamberlain, *The Meaning of Repentance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943), 47, 143-44, 216, 222-23; Daniel Fuller, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 151-52; Kenneth Gentry, "The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy," *Baptist Reformation Review* 5 (1976): 57-62, 77; Billy Graham, *The Meaning of Repentance* (Minneapolis: The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 1967), 5-11; George Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 95-106; I. Howard Marshall, *Kept by the Power of God* (London: Epworth Press, 1969), 37-38; J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961), 70-73; Kazimierz Romaniuk, "Repentez-vous, car le Royaume des Cieux est tout proche

would first have to be willing to stop getting drunk. They would stop short of saying that he actually had to stop drinking before he could be saved.

People holding to these first two views might stress to varying degrees the need to be sorry about one's sins and to commit oneself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

A Change of Thinking

Some Protestants suggest that salvific repentance does not involve turning from one's sins or even the willingness to do so. Rather, they argue that salvific repentance is a change of mind whereby a person recognizes his sinfulness and need of salvation and sees Jesus Christ as the sinless Substitute who died on the cross for his sins.²⁶ They thus understand NT *metanoia* in its classical sense.

They would tell an alcoholic that he had to recognize his sinfulness and need of salvation and place his faith solely in Jesus Christ in order to be saved from eternal condemnation. They would avoid giving the impression that the individual had to change his lifestyle or be willing to do so in order to obtain salvation from eternal condemnation.

Variations of the Three Protestant Views

It should be noted that some persons who hold to the three Protestant views of salvific repentance do not necessarily believe that salvation once obtained is secure and inviolable. Some Protestants teach that salvation can be lost due to unfaithfulness subsequent to one's conversion. Such teaching is actually inconsistent with the Reformers' view

(Matt. iv. 17 par.)," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1966): 264; Robert Shank, *Life in the Son* (Springfield, MO: Wescott Publishers, 1960), 324; Bob Stokes, *Repentance, Revival, and the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 10-16, 24; John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (London: InterVarsity Fellowship, 1958), 111-32, and "Must Christ be Lord to be Savior?," *Eternity* 10 (1959): 15, 17; Lehman Strauss, *Repentance* (Findley, OH: Dunham Publishing Co., 1959), 13-19; and Effie Freeman Thompson, *METANOEO and METAMELEI in Greek Literature Until 100 A. D., Including a Discussion of Their Cognates and of Their Hebrew Equivalents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1908), 24-25.

²⁶ See, for example, Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947-48), 3: 372-78; G. Michael Cocoris, *Lordship Salvation—Is It Biblical?* (Dallas, TX: Redención Viva, 1983), 11-12; Milton Crum, "Preaching and Worship: Dynamics of Metanoia," in *Preaching and Worship* (N.P.: Academy of Homiletics, n.d.), 88-89; H. A. Ironside, *Except Ye Repent* (New York: American Tract Society, 1937), 34, 53, 171-76; Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1959), 116-17; Richard A. Seymour, *All About Repentance* (Fayetteville, GA: Clarity Publications, 1974), 33, 46, 62; and Treadwell Walden, *The Great Meaning of Metanoia* (New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1896), 4-9, 79-81, 125, 151.

of depravity and Jesus' once and for all substitutionary death. Some Protestants have, in effect, a Roman Catholic view of salvific repentance—albeit one in which confession to a priest and formal penance are substituted with confession directly to God and an informal system of penance. However, we will call these variant views "Protestant" since those who hold them are members of Protestant and not Catholic or Orthodox churches. In reality, then, there are actually six Protestant views of salvific repentance: 1) turn from sins and keep on doing so to obtain and keep a salvation which can be lost,²⁷ 2) turn from sins to obtain an eternally secure salvation, 3) be willing to turn from sins and then, after conversion, actually turn from sins as a manner of life to gain and keep one's salvation, 4) be willing to turn from sins to obtain an eternally secure salvation, 5) change your mind about yourself and Christ to gain initial salvation and then turn from your sins as a manner of life thereafter to keep that salvation, and 6) change your mind about yourself and Christ to gain an inviolable salvation.

IV. Conclusion

From the early second century until the Reformation one view of salvific repentance prevailed, the Roman position.²⁸ It held that at one's baptism only his prior sins are forgiven and that subsequent sins could only be forgiven by confessing one's sins to a priest and then carefully carrying out the acts of penance which he prescribed.

The Reformation introduced two new views. Calvin held that at conversion all of one's sins, pre- and post-conversion, were forgiven and that confessing one's sins to a priest and performing acts of penance were not needed. Luther held a position somewhere between that of Calvin and the Roman Catholic Church. He believed that confession to a priest and performing acts of penance were not needed to maintain one's salvation. However, while he rejected those formally, he continued to believe that one could fail to obtain final salvation by choosing to indulge in a life of sin.

²⁷ A few years ago I saw the following message on the marquee of a church that teaches this view of salvific repentance: "The Way to Heaven is 'Turn Right and Keep Straight.'"

²⁸ While the Eastern Church's position on repentance was (and is) not identical to the Roman position, it was essentially the same in its major details. The Eastern Church taught that penance was a sacrament designed to provide forgiveness for post-baptismal sins and that penance involves contrition and confession to a priest. For further information on the Eastern Orthodox view of salvific repentance see Frank Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Co., 1923), 358-70, and Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Centenary Press, 1935), 133-34.

Since the Reformation the Roman view has continued and six Protestant views have emerged. We must be very careful not to base our theology on a majority vote of our contemporaries or predecessors. The majority may be wrong—and in this fallen world it often is.

Why, then, should we study the history of interpretation? Because by so doing we are better able to come to and maintain our own conclusions and to interact with others, believers and unbelievers. If, for example, I understand the Roman position on salvific repentance, my witness to Catholics is strengthened considerably.

Which of the views stated is the one correct view of salvific repentance? Future articles in this series²⁹ will demonstrate that the change-of-mind-secure-salvation view is the biblical one. If a person must give up something or even be willing to do so to obtain salvation, then it is not really a free gift. If one must live an obedient life to keep salvation, then it is conditioned upon faith plus works, and grace is nullified. Other views of salvific repentance fail to grasp the gravity of our plight as sinners in the hands of a holy God. Nothing which we can do to try and clean up our lives will impress God. Only the blood of Jesus Christ can atone for our sins. And, the only way to appropriate Jesus' blood is by faith alone in Christ alone. The only thing we need to give up is a self-righteous attitude. We must cease viewing ourselves as good enough to merit salvation and instead place all of our trust on what Jesus Christ did on the cross for us as our Substitute.

No one can work his or her way to God. Yet many try. The only thing people need to do is recognize their complete helplessness and need of a Savior and then put their faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone to save them from their sins. A change of thinking is needed. Once one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, he can be assured, based on the promises of Scripture, that he is and always will be a part of God's eternal family. God has done everything for us except that we must receive the free gift. That is our part.

The Gospel presents the cure for sin and its consequence, hell. The message of the Gospel is extremely powerful as long as it is not distorted. Pure living water will forever quench the thirst of parched souls.

²⁹ Future articles will include: "The Doctrine of Repentance in the Old Testament," "The Doctrine of Repentance in the New Testament," and "How to Communicate the Doctrine of Repentance Clearly."

SECURE YET SCRUTINIZED

2 Timothy 2:11-13

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I. Introduction

Salvation from hell is a free gift received through faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ.¹ The regenerate person is secure in his possession of eternal life from the moment of saving faith because of the faithfulness of God to him.² In stark contrast, true, vibrant discipleship involves a costly commitment of a believer's life, expressed through steadfast obedience to Jesus Christ.³ The enduring disciple is promised special reward in Christ's future kingdom because of his faithfulness to God.⁴

These fundamental truths are proclaimed by the Apostle Paul in 2 Tim 2:11-13. This passage revolves around four problematic conditional clauses (if . . . [then] constructions). In these verses Paul maintains that a believer in Christ is secure in his ownership of eternal life, yet his Christian life will be scrutinized by the Lord and special privilege and reward will be conferred on him only if he is found to have been faithful.

II. Secure Salvation

(2 Timothy 2:11)

Introductory Formula

Every Christian who at times has doubted his own salvation should memorize and meditate on this comforting verse. Verse 11 begins with the introductory formula, "It is a trustworthy statement:" (*pistos ho logos*).⁵ It has often been noted that this attestation, unique to the

¹ John 3:16-18; 8:30; Rom 3:24; 6:23; Eph 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5. Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible.

² John 5:24; 6:39, 40; 10:28, 29; Rom 8:38, 39; 1 John 5:9-13.

³ Luke 14:26-29; Mark 8:34-38; John 8:31.

⁴ Matt 19:27-30; Luke 19:11-27; 1 Cor 3:13-15; 9:24-27.

⁵ Many commentators, noting the structure of the four parallel clauses of this passage, have suggested that they were in fact taken from a Christian hymn or well known saying

Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim 2:11; Titus 3:8) focuses special attention on the series of conditional clauses that follow in vv 11-13.⁶

Conditional clauses are made up of two major subclauses—an “if clause” and a “conclusion clause.” These two subclauses are technically termed the “protasis” and the “apodosis” respectively. This article will proceed by separately considering the *if* clause (the protasis) and the *conclusion* clause (the apodosis) of v 11.

The “If Clause” of Verse Eleven

The conditional clause of v 11 begins with the subclause, “For if we died with Him . . .”⁷ The verb translated “we died with Him” (*synapethanomen*) is in the aorist tense. The aorist tense here may be regarded as culminative in aspect. Dana and Mantey define this category as follows: “The aorist is employed in this meaning when it is wished to view an event in its entirety, but to regard it from the viewpoint of its existing results.”⁸ Specifically, here in 2 Tim 2:11 this verb refers to the believer’s identification with the death of Christ at the moment of salvation.⁹ Paul expresses the same basic idea in Rom 6:5: “For if we

of the day which Paul quotes here and specifically approves by this formal attestation. This is almost certainly correct. Kelly notes, “(The) parallel structure and rhythmic character (of vv 11-13) make it likely that they are an extract from a liturgical hymn, probably familiar to Timothy and the community (cf. 1 Tim 3:16 for the similar use of a hymn); the last (for he cannot . . .) which breaks away from the pattern, may be a gloss added by Paul himself.” J.N.D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 179.

⁶ In a similar way, the Lord Jesus in the Gospels often verbally underscored particularly momentous utterances with the introductory “truly, truly” (*amēn, amēn*).

⁷ This first conditional clause, like the other three to follow, is a first class condition in the Greek text. First class conditions present the if clause as a real supposition. This supposition is a grammatical convention and is not necessarily factually correct. (For a good discussion, see Maximilian Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, trans. Joseph Smith, S. J. [Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1963], 102-104.) The point for our purposes here is that in all four clauses, if the first subclause is factually true then the second subclause (the apodosis—the “then” statement) will also obtain. Note: In the NASB the term “then” in the if/then clauses is not expressed but merely implied. However, it could be supplied by the reader consistent with the grammar of the four conditional clauses in Greek.

⁸ Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 196.

⁹ C. K. Barrett correctly notes “the definite past tense suggests a definite past event.” *The Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 104. Erdman erroneously interprets “death” in v 11 as a reference to actual physical martyrdom for Christ (*The Pastoral Epistles of Paul* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966], 113). Such an understanding ignores the definite past aspect of the aorist tense verb. Paul and Timothy had “died with Christ” prior to Paul’s penning of these words and it is to this past death that he refers. Respected commentators—such as Lock, Jeremias, White, and Guthrie—agree that the death described here is a past event in the life of a believer related to the initiation of his Christian experience. Guthrie’s comments are especially helpful, “The tense of the verb

have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." Similarly, Paul says in Rom 6:8: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him." The verb *synapethanomen* here in 2 Tim 2:11 could perhaps better be rendered "we have died with Him."¹⁰ At the moment of the new birth, the old self, i.e., the person one was before salvation, ceases to exist; "he died." Regenerate people are transformed into new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17).¹¹ Their old selves are dead and their new lives are now "hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). Like Paul, all believers "have been crucified (i.e., "have died") with Christ" (Gal 2:20).

The "Conclusion Clause" of Verse Eleven

The conditional clause of v 11 concludes with the subclause, "We shall also live with Him." The verb *syzēsomen* is a predictive future, affirming that this life with Christ will surely commence at some time in the future. The person who has trusted Christ as Savior (and who has thus died with Him) will ultimately live in Christ's presence.¹² For Paul this future life with Christ began at the moment of his physical death. The anticipation of living in Christ's presence was never far from Paul's consciousness (see 2 Cor 5:5-7; Phil 1:23; 1 Thess 1:10) and was clearly a major motivating factor for him to remain steadfastly faithful to the Lord despite the many difficulties and stresses he had to face in his Christian life.

Summary

If we have died with Christ—and every believer has—then we will

synapothnēsko rendered 'be dead with him' is more correctly translated 'died with him' (RV), or 'have died with him' (RSV). A past event is undoubtedly in view; . . . the apostle is reminding himself and Timothy of that experience of identification with Christ which forms the basis of Christian living and hence of Christian courage and endurance." Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), 145.

¹⁰ The Greek first class condition can imply "since we have died with Him." This is basically how several translations render this portion, including RSV, the Jerusalem Bible, and the Williams Translation.

¹¹ This concept is fundamental to many of the exhortations of the Pauline Epistles. Paul frequently tells believers that they are not the persons they used to be before they trusted Christ. Therefore, they should not live the kind of lives they used to live, but rather they should now have a new lifestyle. See Rom 6:1-14 and Eph 4:1-3ff.

¹² Of course every believer receives eternal life as a present, abiding possession at the moment of faith in Christ ("He who believes in Me has eternal life" [John 6:47]). But the actual manifestation of this life in Christ's literal presence does not start until either physical death or the translation of the church (1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Cor 15:51, 52).

also live with Him! Verse 11 is an uncompromising statement of the absolute certainty that every believer possesses of living with Christ in the future. Nothing in the remainder of this passage (or any other passage of Scripture, for that matter) will contradict this clearly stated axiom.¹³ Therefore, any interpretation of the following three conditional clauses which denies complete assurance to all believers of future life in the presence of Christ must be recognized as unbiblical.

III. Scrutinized for Possible Reward

(2 Timothy 2:12)

While v 11 was a statement of certainty, v 12 is a statement of contingency. The Christian will definitely live with Christ in the future. However, *he may or may not* receive special commendation and reward from the Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Verse 12, correctly understood, is motivational, designed to encourage Timothy (and by application, every believer) to be consistently faithful to the Lord in his Christian life. In context, Paul has been exhorting his friend to be a good "soldier," "athlete," and "farmer" for the Lord (2 Tim 2:3-6), following the ultimate example of Christ Himself (2 Tim 2:8) and the immediate example of the Apostle Paul (2 Tim 2:9, 10). Verses 11-13, but especially v 12, fit nicely into this contextual setting in affirming that the quality of a believer's Christian life on earth will affect the quality of his future eternal experience with Christ.¹⁴

The two conditional clauses of v 12 describe opposing extremes of Christian conduct, *endurance for Christ and denial of Christ*. To be properly understood it is imperative that these two statements be interpreted in light of the immediately preceding declaration of v 11. The sinner who has trusted Christ, has died with Him, and will also live with Him in the future. Verse 11 thus makes it absolutely clear that the future destination of believers is not in doubt. The issue of a believer's living a life of enduring fidelity to his Lord, however, is very much in question. Will the Christian steadfastly live in submission to Christ or will he consistently deny Christ's Lordship and its implications over his or her life? The Word of God is clear that not all believers faithfully live for their Lord while on earth (Acts 19:18-19; 1 Cor 3:1-3; 11:30; Gal 5:16-21; 1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 2:17-18; Heb 4:1-2, 11).¹⁵

¹³ Scripture is God's Word. God cannot err. Therefore, Scripture is inerrant and individual portions of Scripture, accurately understood, cannot contradict one another.

¹⁴ Zane C. Hodges notes regarding vv 11-13, "Much Christian truth is wrapped up in these pithy, memorable expressions. Very neatly *they balance Christian certitudes with Christian responsibilities*" (*Grace in Eclipse* [Dallas: Redención Viva, 1985], 68).

¹⁵ Indeed, what believer can say with finality that he has attained perfection in his Christian life? Certainly Paul realized that he could not (Phil 3:12-14).

Only those Christians who demonstrate an enduring, persistent faithfulness to the Lord in this life will receive special reward in the next. Carnal believers who live selfishly, denying Christ's Lordship over their lives, will be denied special commendation when their Christian experience is evaluated by the Lord.

The First Conditional Clause of Verse Twelve

"If we endure, we shall also reign with Him." Surely this is one of the grandest promises of the entire Bible. The verb rendered "we endure" is in the present tense. The present tense here has a gnomic or customary force—making a basic general statement describing the overall character of a believer's life. It does not have in view a life of perfect sinlessness, which is, of course, impossible (1 John 1:8, 10). Rather it refers to a life of consistent faithfulness.

Clearly the concept of endurance mentioned here ("if we endure") is a crucial one in v 12 and in this entire passage. An appreciation of its overall Pauline and NT usage is vital in order to fully understand its function here in 2 Tim 2:12.

The verb *hypomenō* ("to endure") and the related noun *hypomenē* ("endurance") are often used in exhortations to believers. In Rom 12:12 Paul encouraged the believers in Rome to be "persevering [i.e., enduring] in tribulation." Interestingly, this exhortation is preceded by the injunction to "rejoice in hope." This is not surprising, because hope and steadfast endurance are of necessity linked (1 Thess 1:3 and Jas 5:11). A believer's confident expectation of one day being in the presence of Jesus (his hope) is the basis of steadfast endurance in the midst of the difficulties of this present life on earth. This same interrelationship between hope and endurance is found in 2 Tim 2:11, 12. Verse 11 affirms the believer's secure hope, and then v 12 calls the believer to a life of endurance for Christ here and now while on earth.

Endurance is an essential component of a "worthy walk" (Col 1:11; Rom 5:3, 4; Jas 1:3, 4). It is a demonstration of the Christian's love for the Lord (compare 1 Cor 13:7 with Jas 1:12). Endurance involves the believer following the example of the life of Christ, who endured, remaining faithful to the Father's will even to the point of going to the cross (1 Pet 2:20-23; Heb 12:2, 3; see also Phil 2:8). Endurance is often seen and commended in the NT. Good examples of steadfast endurance include Paul himself (2 Tim 2:10; 3:10), older men in the local church (Titus 2:2), the Ephesians (Rev 2:2, 3), the Thyatirans (Rev 2:19), the Philadelphians (Rev 3:10), and Tribulation martyrs (Rev 13:10; 14:12).

Special commendation and reward is promised to believers who faith-

fully endure for the Lord. James 1:12 mentions "the crown of life" which will be bestowed upon Christians who endure for Christ in the face of especially difficult trials. Matthew 16:24-27 (cf. Mark 8:34-38 and Luke 9:23-26) can be best understood if taken in reference to future acknowledgment and reward for the believer who "saves his life" from the degradation and temporal death-dealing effects of personal sin.¹⁶ Second Peter 1:5-7 lists several character qualities, including endurance, which if manifested in the Christian's life will cause his entrance into Christ's Kingdom to be "abundantly supplied" (i.e., richly rewarded). Heb 10:36 (see also 6:12) teaches that endurance is necessary in order to receive "the promises" which, according to the argument of Hebrews, has to do with promises that steadfastly faithful believers will be special partners (*metachoi*) of Christ during His millennial reign on the earth.¹⁷ Examining carefully, then, the NT data, one becomes aware of the basic principle that endurance for Christ in the life of the believer will lead to that believer's receiving special reward over and above the experience of eternal life with Christ.¹⁸

Second Timothy 2:12a echoes this basic truth, because it states that the believer who is faithful "shall also reign with Him [Christ]." While all believers will enter Christ's Kingdom (v 11, "we shall live with Him"), only those who are consistently faithful in their Christian experience will also reign with Jesus. The verb *symbasileusomen*, rendered "we shall also reign with Him," means "to rule as king with someone."¹⁹ It refers to possessing a special place of authority in Christ's millennial administration. This exciting possibility is the same truth taught in the parable of the *minas* by Jesus Himself (Luke 19:11-27). The Lord used this story to illustrate the principle that faithful service for the Master will ultimately result in His conferring various levels of governmental authority upon reliable believers, consistent

¹⁶ This concept of the believer "saving his life" is highlighted in Matt 16:24-27. The word translated "life" is the Greek noun *psychē*. *Psychē* can mean "soul" or "life." In contexts dealing with requirements for rigorous discipleship, such as Matt 16:24-27, this concept has to do with the delivering of one's life from the temporal wrath of God against sin via an obedient, righteous submission to the Lordship of Christ. This same concept is central to the argument of the Epistle of James. For a helpful discussion of this phrase and its use in James, see Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1981), 23-27.

¹⁷ For further explanation of the argument of the book of Hebrews and the meaning of the term *metachoi* in Hebrews see Zane C. Hodges, "Hebrews," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books) 2:777-813.

¹⁸ Lenski states that "'shall reign' exceeds 'shall live'" (*The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy and to Philemon* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964], 794).

¹⁹ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 785.

with the individual's level of faithfulness, when He returns to establish His Kingdom. In Matt 19:29 the Lord Jesus promised Peter that he and the other disciples who had left everything to steadfastly follow Him: "in the regeneration [Millennium] when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne you also will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." In the next verse Christ affirmed the general principle that every believer who has displayed an enduring commitment to walk with Him will receive "many times as much" in rewards (see also Luke 22:24-30; Matt 16:27). Likewise, in Rev 2:26, Jesus declared that believers "who keep" His "deeds to the end" will receive special millennial "authority over the nations."²⁰

The Second Conditional Clause of Verse Twelve

"If we deny Him, He will also deny us." The second conditional clause of v 12 describes what will happen to the Christian who fails to live a consistent life of faithful endurance for Christ. If a believer "denies Christ" by not remaining steadfast for Him, he will in turn be denied the reward of "reigning with Him." The verb rendered "(if) we deny Him" is a present tense form of *arneomai*.²¹ Like its polar opposite "(if) we endure" in the first conditional clause of v 12, it has a gnomic or customary force. It describes the general overall character of a believer's experience. Link and Tiedtke, in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, delineate the meaning of this verb as follows: "Generally *arneomai* means to fall back from a previous relationship with him into unfaithfulness The opposite of this denial is 'to hold fast' (Rev 2:13), or 'to be faithful' (2:10)."²² They further state that it is used to describe a "failure in discipleship."²³

That it is possible for believers to "deny Christ" is clear in the NT. Peter and the other Apostles (see Matt 26:35) on one infamous occasion blatantly denied their Lord (Matt 26:70; Mark 14:68, 70; Luke 22:57; John 18:25, 27).²⁴ Denial of Christ by a believer need not be limited

²⁰ It is the position of this writer that the concept of rewards generally (and "reigning with Christ" specifically) has a millennial emphasis, although it appears quite possible that the believer's rewards and special prerogatives may well carry over into the eternal state (Rev 21:24).

²¹ While the UBS text has the future form *arnēsometha*, the vast majority of the extant manuscripts of the NT has the present tense form *arnoumetha*.

²² *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), s.v. "Deny" by H. G. Link and E. Tiedtke, 1:455.

²³ Ibid. It is true that they also say, "for denial is a rejection of God's offer of salvation and a conscious renunciation of the grace which has appeared" (1:455). But their conclusion in no way follows from the remarks cited in the text, and implies the possibility of losing one's salvation.

²⁴ See also Mark 14:31 which uses the related verb *aparneomai*.

necessarily to such dramatic settings, but can involve simple refusal to shoulder one's biblical responsibilities in any area. This is illustrated in 1 Tim 5:8, which warns that the believer who neglects to provide for his own family has in effect "denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever." Specifically in 2 Tim 2:12b the denial in view is not a single act of denial of sinful selfishness but is rather descriptive of a general failure or breakdown in discipleship.²⁵

If we fail to live a consistent life of discipleship then "He also will deny us." In describing the Lord's denial of the unfaithful believer, Paul again uses a form of *arneomai* here meaning "to refuse, to disdain."²⁶ How will Christ deny the unfaithful believer? Or to put the question another way: What and how will He *refuse* the unfaithful believer? First the interpreter must remember that this passage has already established the fact that every believer will live with Christ (v 11). Additionally, Paul has also affirmed that those believers who faithfully endure in their Christian experience will receive special rewards and prerogatives in Christ's Kingdom (they "will reign with Him"). In context then, the denial spoken of here has to do with the Lord's denying the unfaithful believer the privilege of intimate, high-level interaction with Him in governing the millennial state.²⁷ First Corinthians 3:15 sheds additional light on the negative consequences of such denial because it indicates that the unfaithful, unfruitful believer will be denied reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ, "*but* he himself shall be saved" (i.e., the unrewarded believer will still "live with Christ").²⁸

²⁵ This is illustrated in the cases of Peter and David. While Peter did deny his Lord in the tragic setting previously described, it is clear that this one major failure did not destroy the total faithfulness and fruitfulness of his life and ministry.

In a similar way David in a sense denied the Lord when he fell into a prolonged period of serious sin—including adultery and murder. And yet the Lord describes the overall course of David's life in glowing terms (2 Chr 7:17; 1 Kgs 9:4-5). And his life is posited by the Lord as the standard of faithfulness, by which the other kings are measured (1 Kgs 11:4; 14:8; 15:3; 2 Kgs 16:2).

Thus while in a very real sense both David and Peter denied the Lord, the whole course of their lives would have to be described as faithful and enduring for the Lord.

²⁶ *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 107.

²⁷ Not only will the unfaithful/unfruitful believer be denied reward, but he will also be rebuked by the Lord (see Matt 25:26-27; Luke 19:22-24; 1 John 2:28; 3:3). For an excellent and balanced discussion of the negative side of the believer's judgment see "The Negative Aspects of the Christian's Judgment" by Samuel L. Hoyt in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137 (1980): 125-132.

²⁸ This same concept is seen in Luke 19:20-27 where the unfruitful/unfaithful servant is denied reward that other servants do receive. This servant is differentiated, however, from those who are not allowed to enter the Master's kingdom at all. The "enemies" of the Master (v 27), also referred to as "citizens" who hated the Master (v 14), comprise those individuals who are slain at the advent of the Master. In contrast, all of the Master's servants have an audience with Him, and then enter the kingdom recompensed according to their faithfulness.

Summary

The warning given in v 12 to believers who fail to endure in a life of fruitful fellowship is a solemn one indeed, but it should not be made more somber than it actually is. This caution does not threaten the unfaithful believer with loss of future life with Christ. It does, however, warn that the consequences of unfaithfulness in the Christian life include the forfeiture of future reward. As always, the principle of evaluation (not salvation from hell) according to works comes into play (see Matt 16:27; 1 Cor 3:13; 2 Cor 5:10; Rev 22:12). Shameful living as a child of God will be recognized as such when the Lord personally assays the quality of each believer's life on earth (Rom 14:10-12).

IV. Still Secure in Spite of Scrutiny

(2 Timothy 2:13)

Verse 13 is a reaffirmation of the comforting and foundational truth of this passage that "we shall live with Him" (v 11). The solemn reference to possible major failure by the Christian ("if we deny Him") and the serious consequence ("He also will deny us") in the previous verse demands a reassuring word. Many commentators have erroneously interpreted v 13 to be merely a restatement of the second conditional clause of v 12.²⁹ Thus they understand v 13 as meaning, "If we are faithless" (i.e., if we deny Him), He stays "faithful" in the sense that He will certainly carry out the threat of v 12 ("He will deny us"). This writer agrees with Barrett that it is inconceivable that Paul would appeal to God's *faithfulness* as the basis of a *threat*.³⁰

Correctly understood, v 13 is designed to give assurance to (even fallen) believers without encouraging them to fall (or to stay fallen).³¹ This verse affirms the pivotal truth that the believer is both saved and secure based on God's faithfulness to him, not based on his faithfulness (or lack thereof) to God. While it is important to remember that v 13 does nothing to dilute the stern warning of v 12, it primarily functions

²⁹ See William Hendricksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy, and Titus* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), pp. 259-260; and John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 64.

³⁰ "The only ground for security is not man's faithfulness but God's, that is, God's faithfulness to his word, to his promises, and to himself. Some interpret this line differently, taking it as a direct continuation of the third line: if we are faithless, God keeps faith by denying us, and meting out to us the punishment that we deserve. But this interpretation is unsuitable to the context, and does not do justice to the Biblical conception of the faithfulness of God." C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 104.

³¹ J. N. D. Kelly notes that "the aim of this fourth strophe is not, of course, to open the door to backsliding and apostasy, but rather to provide a balm for troubled consciences" (*A Commentary On the Pastoral Epistles* [reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981], 181).

to affirm the absolute security of all believers based on the absolute fidelity to them of their saving God.

The "If Clause" of Verse Thirteen

The conditional clause of v 13 begins with the subclause, "If we are faithless . . ." It is crucial to recognize that the verb rendered "(if) we are faithless" in this context describes unfaithfulness in the lives of regenerate people, not a lack of saving faith.³² This same verb is found in ancient secular documents describing "disloyal soldiers" (i.e., not soldiers who disbelieve their sovereign but rather those who disobey him).³³ Here in a broad context in which Paul has specifically exhorted Timothy to be a faithful "soldier" for Christ (2 Tim 2:3, 4), the use of this verb is especially appropriate. Paul well recognized that on the battlefield of spiritual combat it is possible for soldiers of Christ to go AWOL.

The "Conclusion Clause" of Verse Thirteen

The conditional clause of v 13 concludes with the subclause, "He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself." The wonderful truth of this portion of Scripture is that even the unfaithful believer, who is a disloyal soldier of Christ, is assured of future life with his ever-faithful Commander-in-Chief. The Christian's security rests not in his own word, promises, or performance, but rather on God's Word, God's promises, and God's performance. The unfaithful believer is assured that despite his failures, "He remains faithful; for He cannot deny

³² While this verb can simply mean "to refuse to believe" or "to disbelieve," it can also mean, and in this context does mean, "to be unfaithful." This is validated by the obvious wordplay in the Greek text between the "faithfulness" (*pistos*) of Christ in contrast to the potential "unfaithfulness" of believers. This meaning of the verb *apisteuō* ("to be unfaithful") in 2 Tim 2:13 is validated by the major lexical tools: *Theological Dictionary of the Greek New Testament*, s.v. "*pisteuō*," by R. Bultmann (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 6:205; *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, s.v. "*Faith*," by O. Michel, 1:594; *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p. 84; J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Company, 1889), 21.

"It is reasonable," White maintains, "to hold that the sense of *apisteuō* in this place must be determined by the antithesis of *pistos menei*. Now *pistos* as applied to God, must mean faithful (Deut 7:9), one who 'keepeth truth for ever' (2 Cor 1:18; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; Heb 10:23; 11:11). There is the same contrast in Rom 3:3 'shall their want of faith (*apistia*), make of none effect the faithfulness (*pistin*) of God?' But while we render *apistoumen*, with RV, 'are faithless,' we must remember that unreliability and disbelief in the truth were closely allied in St. Paul's conception of them." Newport J. D. White in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. 4:164 (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979).

³³ Sophocles, *Antigone*, pp. 219, 318f; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 2, 6, 19.

Himself." The contrast here could not be more graphic! While it is (regrettably) possible for the believer to be unfaithful to Christ, Christ *cannot* be unfaithful to the believer.³⁴ Christ remains faithful to His promise that the one who believes in Him possesses eternal life securely (John 3:15-18; 6:39, 40; 6:47; 10:26-29). This fidelity is in no way predicated upon the believer's worthiness, either before or after receiving eternal life. It is based solely upon Christ's inherent faithfulness to His own nature and character. Hodges has well said:

If we Christians were "faithless," this in no way affected His loyalty to us. Every guarantee that had been made to us in grace would still be ours, regardless of our lack of faith or fidelity. . . . "The gifts and the calling of God" were still "irrevocable" (Rom 11:29).

For Him to act otherwise toward us, whatever form our faithlessness might take, was unthinkable. Our Lord always remained faithful to us precisely because anything else would be an act that "denied" His own nature and character. As the prophet had said long ago: "Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist" (Isa 11:5).³⁵

Summary

Verse 13 is a remarkable (re)affirmation of the absolute security of every believer. Working in tandem with v 11, it serves as a bedrock verse in the Bible's doctrinal teaching concerning assurance that every believer will "live with Christ." Moreover, v 13 affirms the foundational truth that salvation is of the Lord. It is the work of God for man, rooted in the character of God Himself.

V. Conclusion

Faithfulness to Christ is vital in order that the believer might glorify God and bear much fruit. However, steadfastness for the Lord is not to be motivated by the mistaken idea that endurance is necessary to obtain, or to retain, eternal life and the assurance of future life with Christ. While there is a very real price to be paid for failure in the

³⁴ Charles Haddon Spurgeon was fond of saying: "Three things God cannot do. He cannot die, he cannot lie, and he cannot be deceived. . . . These three impossibilities do not limit his power, but they magnify his majesty; for these would be infirmities, and infirmity can have no place in the infinite and ever blessed God." *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* (Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1972), 25:32.

Specifically the Word of God states that God "cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim 2:13); He "cannot lie" (Titus 1:2); and He "cannot be tempted by evil" (Jas 1:13). More generally it can be said that God cannot do anything that would violate His own character or essence.

³⁵ *Grace in Eclipse*, 68.

Christian experience, that price will never involve consignment to the lake of fire.³⁶

Second Timothy 2:11-13 teaches the cardinal truth that the believer's assurance of eternal life, and ultimately, actual life in His presence, is the basis upon which he is to build a steadfastly faithful Christian life. Sadly, many in evangelical circles today teach just the opposite. They deny that a believer can have complete assurance of salvation until and unless he demonstrates consistent and ongoing faithfulness. This erroneous idea that faithfulness is the basis of assurance confuses grace and works, and actually undermines both assurance and faithfulness, because it insidiously works to weaken believers, not only theologically, but also psychologically.³⁷

Designed to be both comforting *and* motivating, the passage begins (v 11) and ends (v 13) with definitive statements of assurance of future life with Christ for all believers.³⁸ Building on this absolutely assured status, v 12 seeks to motivate believers to a life of steadfast endurance with an offer and a warning. Believers should realize that faithful endurance on earth will result in special privilege in the future. Believers should also soberly understand that those who deny Christ's Lordship in their Christian experience will cause Christ to deny them reward.

The truths of this often misunderstood passage must be meticulously maintained in our thinking, living, witnessing, preaching, and teaching. Yes, all believers are secure in their basic relationship with Jesus Christ; they will definitely live with Him in the future. Yes, all believers will have their Christian lives evaluated and scrutinized. Those who have been steadfastly faithful will receive wonderful rewards and special prerogatives. Those who have been unfaithful will have such reward and prerogatives denied them. And yes, even the inconsistent, unfruitful believer remains secure in his basic relationship with the Lord. His

³⁶ The promise of John 3:16 that the one who believes in the Son will never perish is not a pledge that the believer will never die physically, but is an affirmation that he will never experience "the second death," i.e., "the lake of fire" (Rev 20:11-15; see also John 5:24; 10:28, 29; Rom 8:1).

³⁷ Christian psychiatrist Frank Minirth states, "Just as parents usually accept their children and will have an innate love for them regardless of what they do, so God loves us. Although God does not always like our behavior, just as parents do not always like their children's behavior, there is a great difference between not accepting someone's behavior and not accepting them. Children still feel loved if parents do not accept their irresponsible behavior, but they feel rejected and discouraged if they feel that they themselves are rejected. This type of rejection leads to discouragement, neurosis, and even psychosis. Likewise, Christians may become discouraged, neurotic, or even psychotic if they feel their receiving or keeping Christ is conditional." *Christian Psychiatry* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1973), 41.

³⁸ Hodges describes "we shall live with Him" and "He remains faithful" in vv 11 and 13 as "two pillars of certainty." Between these two pillars, Hodges says, there are "two alternatives that (are) fully conditional" (i.e., in v 12), *Grace in Eclipse*, 68.

security is based solely on the gracious, immutable faithfulness of Christ Himself. Man's works are not that upon which his salvation depends. And yet his works as a Christian *will be evaluated*, and this evaluation will determine either the presentation or the denial of reward.³⁹ In short, 2 Tim 2:11-13 teaches that the believer in Christ is *secure yet scrutinized!*

VI. An Interpretive Paraphrase

(2 Timothy 2:11-13)

This is an especially important statement:

If we have died with Him (and every believer has)—
then we will live with Him (in His presence after death/the Rapture).

If we are faithful/endure for Him through the course of our lives—
then we will also reign/govern with Him in His Kingdom.

If we deny Him/are unfaithful to Him—
then He will deny us the privilege of reigning/governing with Him.

But even if we are unfaithful (forfeiting the privilege of reigning/
governing with Him)—

Even then He remains faithful to us—we will live with Him—
For He cannot deny Himself.

³⁹ Throughout the Bible, salvation from hell is presented as truly free, and vibrant discipleship is presented as truly costly. Compare Rom 3:21-24 with Rom 12:1, 2; Eph 2:8, 9 with Eph 2:10; Titus 3:5 with Titus 3:8 and 3:14; and Rev 22:17 with Luke 14:26, 27.

A Voice from the Past:

THE TERMS OF SALVATION

LEWIS SPERRY CHAFER*

Outside the doctrines related to the Person and work of Christ, there is no truth more far-reaching in its implications and no fact more to be defended than that salvation in all its limitless magnitude is secured, so far as human responsibility is concerned, by believing on Christ as Savior. To this one requirement no other obligation may be added without violence to the Scriptures and total disruption of the essential doctrine of salvation by grace alone. Only ignorance or reprehensible inattention to the structure of a right Soteriology will attempt to intrude some form of human works with its supposed merit into that which, if done at all, must, by the very nature of the case, be wrought by God alone and on the principle of sovereign grace. But few, indeed, seem ever to comprehend the doctrine of sovereign grace, and it is charitable, at least, to revert to this fact as the explanation of the all-but-universal disposition to confuse the vital issues involved. It is the purpose of this article to demonstrate that the eternal glories which are wrought in sovereign grace are conditioned, on the human side, by faith alone. The practical bearing of this truth must of necessity make drastic claims upon the preacher and become a qualifying influence in the soul-winning methods which are employed. The student would do well to bring his message and his methods into complete agreement with the workings of divine grace, rather than to attempt to conform this unalterable truth to human ideals.

Salvation which is by faith begins with those mighty transformations which together constitute a Christian what he is; it guarantees the safe-keeping of the Christian and brings him home to heaven conformed to the image of Christ. The preacher or soul-winner who is able to trace through these limitless realities and to preserve them from being made to depend to any degree upon human responsibility other than saving faith in Christ, merits the high title of "a good minister of Jesus

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Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine" (1 Tim 4:6). A moment's attention to the transforming divine undertakings which enter into salvation of the lost will bring one to the realization of the truth that every feature involved presents a task which is superhuman, and, therefore, if to be accomplished at all, must be wrought by God alone. Such a discovery will prepare the mind for the reception of the truth, that the only relation man can sustain to this great undertaking is to depend utterly upon God to do it. That is the simplicity of faith. However, since moral issues are involved which have been divinely solved by Christ in His death, He has there too become the only Savior, and to save faith must be directed toward Him. "Whosoever believeth in him" shall not perish, but have everlasting life. But even when the supernatural character of salvation is recognized, it is possible to encumber the human responsibility with various complications, thus to render the whole grace undertaking ineffectual to a large degree. These assertions lead naturally to a detailed consideration of the more common features of human responsibility which are too often erroneously added to the one requirement of *faith* or *belief*.

I. Repent and Believe

Since repentance—conceived of as a separate act—is almost universally added to believing as a requirement on the human side for salvation, a consideration of the Biblical meaning of repentance is essential. This consideration may be traced as follows: (1) the meaning of the word, (2) the relation of repentance to believing, (3) the relation of repentance to covenant people, (4) the absence of the demand for repentance from salvation Scriptures, and (5) the significance of repentance in specific passages.

1. The Meaning of the Word

The word *metanoia* is in every instance translated *repentance*. The word means *a change of mind*. The common practice of reading into this word the thought of sorrow and heart-anguish is responsible for much confusion in the field of Soteriology. There is no reason why sorrow should not accompany repentance or lead on to repentance, but the sorrow, whatever it may be, is not repentance. In 2 Cor 7:10, it is said that "godly sorrow worketh repentance," that is, it leads on to repentance; but the sorrow is not to be mistaken for the change of mind which it may serve to produce. The son cited by Christ as reported in Matt 21:28-29 who first said "I will not go," and afterward repented and went, is a true example of the precise meaning of the word. The

New Testament call to repentance is not an urge to self-condemnation, but is a call to a change of mind which promotes a change in the course being pursued. This definition of the word as it is used in the New Testament is fundamental. Little or no progress can be made in a right induction of the Word of God on this theme, unless the true and accurate meaning of the word is discovered and defended throughout.

2. The Relation of Repentance to Believing

Too often, when it is asserted—as it is here—that repentance is not to be added to belief as a separate requirement for salvation, it is assumed that by so much the claim has been set up that repentance is *not* necessary to salvation. Therefore, it is as dogmatically stated as language can declare, that repentance is essential to salvation and that none could be saved apart from repentance, but it is included in believing and could not be separated from it. The discussion is restricted at this point to the problem which the salvation of unregenerate persons develops; and it is safe to say that few errors have caused so much hindrance to the salvation of the lost than the practice of demanding of them an anguish of soul before faith in Christ can be exercised. Since such emotions cannot be produced at will, the way of salvation has thus been made impossible for all who do not experience the required anguish. This error results in another serious misdirection of the unsaved, namely, one in which they are encouraged to look inward at themselves and not away to Christ as Savior. Salvation is made to be conditioned on feelings and not on faith. Likewise, people are led by the intensity of anguish which preceded or accompanied it. It is in this manner that sorrow of heart becomes a most subtle form of meritorious work and to that extent a contradiction of grace.

Underlying all this supposition that tears and anguish are necessary is the most serious notion that God is *not* propitious, but that He must be softened to pity by penitent grief. The Bible declares that God *is* propitious because of Christ's death for the very sin which causes human sorrow. There is no occasion to melt or temper the heart of God. His attitude toward sin and the sinner is a matter of revelation. To imply, as preachers have done so generally, that God must be mollified and lenified by human agony is a desperate form of unbelief. The unsaved have a gospel of good news to *believe*, which certainly is not the mere notion that God must be coaxed into a saving attitude of mind; it is that Christ *has* died and grace is extended from One who is propitious to the point of infinity. The human heart is prone to imagine that there is some form of atonement for sin through being sorry for it. Whatever may be the place of sorrow for sin in the resto-

ration of a Christian who has transgressed, it cannot be determined with too much emphasis that for the unsaved—Jew or Gentile—there is no occasion to propitiate God or to provide any form of satisfaction by misery or distress of soul. With glaring inconsistency, those who have preached that the unsaved must experience mental suffering before they can be saved, have completely failed to inform their hearers about how such required torture may be secured. It should be restated that, since genuine grief of mind cannot be produced at will and since many natures are void of depression of spirit, to demand that a self-produced affliction of mind shall precede salvation by faith becomes a form of fatalism and is responsible for having driven uncounted multitudes to despair. However, it is true that, from the Arminian point of view, no greater heresy could be advanced than this contention that the supposed merit of human suffering because of personal sins should be excluded from the terms on which a soul may be saved.

As before stated, repentance, which is a change of mind, is included in believing. No individual can turn to Christ from some other confidence without a change of mind, and that, it should be noted, is all the repentance a spiritually dead individual can ever effect. That change of mind is the work of the Spirit (Eph 2:8). It will be considered, too, by those who are amenable to the Word of God, that the essential preparation of heart which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the unsaved to prepare them for an intelligent and voluntary acceptance of Christ as Savior—as defined in John 16:8-11—is not a sorrow for sin. The unsaved who come under this divine influence are illuminated—given a clear understanding—concerning but *one* sin, namely that “they believe not on me.”

To believe on Christ is one act, regardless of the manifold results which it secures. It is not turning from something to something; but rather turning to something from something. If this terminology seems a mere play on words, it will be discovered, by more careful investigation, that this is a vital distinction. To turn from evil may easily be a complete act in itself, since the action can be terminated at that point. To turn to Christ is a solitary act, also, and the joining of these two separate acts—repentance and faith—are required for salvation. On the other hand, turning to Christ from all other confidences is one act, and in that one act repentance, which is a change of mind, is included. The Apostle stresses this distinction in accurate terms when he says to the Thessalonians, “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess 1:9). This text provides no comfort for those who contend that people must first, in real contrition, turn from idols—which might terminate at that point—and afterwards, as a second and

separate act, turn to God. The text recognizes but one act—"Ye turned to God from idols"—and that is an act of faith alone.

Those who stress repentance as a second requirement along with believing, inadvertently disclose that, in their conception, the problem of personal sin is all that enters into salvation. The sin nature must also be dealt with; yet that is not a legitimate subject of repentance. Salvation contemplates many vast issues and the adjustment of the issue of personal sin, though included, is but a small portion of the whole. Acts 26:18, sometimes drafted in proof of the idea that the unsaved must do various things in order to be saved, rather enumerates various things which are wrought for him in the saving power of God.

3. The Relation of Repentance to Covenant People

The term *covenant people* is broad in its application. It includes Israel, who are under Jehovah's unalterable covenants and yet are to be objects of another, new covenant (Jer 31:31-34), and the Church, composed of all believers of the present age, who are also now the objects of that new covenant made in Christ's blood (Matt 26:28; 1 Cor 11:25). A covenant implies relationship because it secures a right relation to God in matters belonging within the bounds of the covenant. A covenant that is unconditional, as the above-named covenants are, is not affected by any human elements, nor is it changeable even by God Himself.

However, the *fact* of a covenant and the experience of its blessings are two different things. It is possible to be under the provisions of an unconditional covenant and to fail for the time being to enjoy its blessings because of sin. When sin has cast a limitation upon the enjoyment of a covenant and the covenant, being unchangeable, still abides, the issue becomes, not the remaking of the covenant, but the one issue of the sin which mars the relationship. It therefore follows that, for the covenant people, there is a need of a divine dealing with the specific sin and a separate and unrelated repentance respecting it. This repentance is expressed by confession to God. Having confessed his sin, David did not pray for his salvation to be restored; he rather prayed for the restoration of "the joy" of his salvation (Ps 51:12). In like manner, it is joy and fellowship which confession restores for the believer (1 John 1:3-9). When Christ came offering Himself to Israel as their Messiah and announcing their kingdom as at hand, He, with John and the apostles, called on that people to repent in preparation for the proffered kingdom. There was no appeal concerning salvation or the formation of covenants; it was restoration of the people by a change of mind which would lead them to forsake their sins (Matt

10:6ff.) The application of these appeals made to covenant Jews concerning their adjustments within their covenants to individual unregenerate Gentiles, who are "strangers from the covenants" (Eph 2:12), is a serious error indeed. In like manner, a Christian may repent as a separate act (2 Cor 7:8-10). The conclusion of the matter is that, while covenant people are appointed to national or personal adjustment to God by repentance as a separate act, there is no basis either in reason or revelation for the demand to be made that an unregenerate person in this age must add a covenant person's repentance to faith in order to be saved.

4. The Absence of the Demand for Repentance from Salvation Scriptures

Upwards of 115 New Testament passages condition salvation on *believing*, and fully 35 passages condition salvation on *faith*, which latter word in this use of it is an exact synonym of the former. These portions of Scripture, totaling about 150 in all, include practically all that the New Testament declares on the matter of the human responsibility in salvation; yet each one of these texts omits any reference to repentance as a separate act. This fact, easily verified, cannot but bear enormous weight with any candid mind. In like manner, the Gospel of John, which is written to present Christ as the object of faith unto eternal life, does not once employ the word *repentance*. Similarly, the Epistle to the Romans, which is the complete analysis of all that enters into the whole plan of salvation by grace, does not use the word *repentance* in connection with the saving of a soul, except in 2:4 where repentance is equivalent to salvation itself. When the Apostle Paul and his companion, Silas, made reply to the jailer concerning what he should do to be saved, they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). This reply, it is evident, fails to recognize the necessity of repentance in addition to believing. From this overwhelming mass of irrefutable evidence, it is clear that the New Testament does not impose repentance upon the unsaved as a condition of salvation. The Gospel of John with its direct words from the lips of Christ, the Epistle to the Romans with its exhaustive treatment of the theme in question, the Apostle Paul, and the whole array of 150 New Testament passages which are the total of the divine instruction, are incomplete and misleading if repentance must be accorded a place separate from, and independent of, believing. No thoughtful person would attempt to defend such a notion against such odds, and those who have thus undertaken doubtless have done so without weighing the evidence or considering the untenable position which they assume.

5. The Significance of Repentance in Specific Passages

When entering upon this phase of the study, it is first necessary to eliminate all portions of the New Testament which introduce the word *repentance* in its relation to covenant people. There are, likewise, passages which employ the word *repentance* as a synonym of believing (cf. Acts 17:30; Rom 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25; 2 Pet 3:9). Also, there are passages which refer to a change of mind (Acts 8:22; 11:18; Heb 6:1, 6; 12:17; Rev 9:20, etc.). Yet, again, consideration must be accorded three passages related to Israel which are often misapplied (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31). There are references to John's baptism, which was unto repentance, that are outside the Synoptics (Acts 13:24; 19:4).

Four passages deserve more extended consideration, namely:

Luke 24:47 "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

It will be seen that repentance is not in itself equivalent to believing or faith, though, being included in believing, is used here as a synonym of the word *believe*. Likewise, it is to be recognized that "remission of sins" is not all that is proffered in salvation, though the phrase may serve that purpose in this instance. Above all, the passage does not require human obligations with respect to salvation. Repentance, which here represents believing, leads to remission of sin.

Acts 11:18 "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Again repentance, which is included in believing, serves as a synonym for the word *belief*. The Gentiles, as always, attain to spiritual life by faith, the all-important and essential change of mind. It is also true that the passage does not prescribe two things which are necessary to salvation (cf. vs. 17).

Acts 20:21 "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

First, though unrelated to the course of this argument, it is important to note that the Apostle here places Jews on the same level with Gentiles, and both are objects of divine grace. The Jew with his incomparable background or the Gentile with his heathen ignorance, each, must undergo a change of mind respecting God. Until they are aware of God's gracious purpose, there can be no reception of the idea of saving faith. It is quite possible to recognize God's purpose, as many do, and not receive Christ as Savior. In other words, repentance toward God could not itself constitute, in this case, the equivalent of "faith toward

our Lord Jesus Christ," though it may prepare for that faith. The introduction of the two Persons of the Godhead is significant, and that Christ is the sole object of faith is also most vital. Those who would insist that there are here two human obligations unto salvation are reminded again of the 150 portions in which such a twofold requirement is omitted.

Acts 26:20 "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Again, both Jews and Gentiles are addressed as on the same footing before God. Two obligations are named here, in order that spiritual results may be secured—those to "repent and turn to God." The passage would sustain the Arminian view if repentance were, as they assert, a sorrow for sin; but if the word is given its correct meaning, namely, *a change of mind*, there is no difficulty. The call is for a change of mind which turns to God. This passage, also, has its equivalent in 1 Thess 1:9, "Ye turned to God from idols."

Conclusion

In the foregoing, an attempt has been made to demonstrate that the Biblical doctrine of repentance offers no objection to the truth that salvation is by grace through faith apart from every suggestion of human works of merit. It is asserted that repentance, which is a change of mind, enters of necessity into the very act of believing on Christ, since one cannot turn to Christ from other objects of confidence without that change of mind. Upwards of 150 texts—including all of the greatest gospel invitations—limit the human responsibility in salvation to believing or to faith. To this simple requirement nothing could be added if the glories of grace are to be preserved.

II. Believe and Confess Christ

The ambition to secure apparent results and the sincere desire to make decisions for Christ very definite have prompted preachers in their general appeals to insist upon a public confession of Christ on the part of those who would be saved. To all practical purposes and in the majority of instances these confessions are, in the minds of the unsaved, coupled with saving faith and seem, as presented, to be of equal importance with that faith. This demand upon the unsaved is justified, if justified at all, from two texts of Scripture which should have consideration:

1. Scripture Bearing on Confession of Christ

Matt 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."

This verse, which occurs in the midst of Christ's kingdom teachings and as a part of His instruction to His disciples whom He is sending forth with a restricted message to Israel (cf. vv 5-7) and which was to be accompanied by stupendous miracles (cf. v 8) such as were never committed to preachers in the present age, applies, primarily, to these disciples themselves in respect to their faithful delivery of this kingdom proclamation, and could be extended in its appeal only to Israelites to whom they were sent. The carelessness which assumes that this Scripture presents a condition of salvation for a Jew or Gentile in the present age is deplorable indeed.

Rom 10:9-10 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

This message, falling as it does within the specific teachings which belong primarily to the way of salvation by grace, is worthy of more consideration. The force of the positive statement in v 9, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," is explained in v 10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In the latter verse the true meaning and use of the word "confess" is suggested. Of this word in this same passage the late Dr. Arthur T. Pierson wrote:

That word means to speak out of a like nature to one another. I believe and receive the love of God. In receiving His love I receive His life, in receiving His life I receive His nature, and His nature in me naturally expresses itself according to His will. That is confession. Alexander Maclaren has said: "Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, because the candle would either go out or burn the bushel." You must have vent for life, light, and love, or how can they abide? And a confession of Christ Jesus as Lord is the answer of the new life of God received. In receiving love, you are born of God, and, being born of God, you cry "Abba, Father," which is but the Aramaic word for "Papa"—syllables which can be pronounced before there are any teeth, because they are made with the gums and lips—the first word of a new-born soul, born of God, knowing God, and out of a like nature with God speaking in the language of a child.

The two activities named in these verses are each expanded with

respect to their meaning in the immediate context which follows. Of believing it is said: "For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (vv 11-12). Salvation is promised to both Jew and Greek (though in his case a Gentile) on the one condition that they believe. Such, indeed, shall not be ashamed. Of confession it is said: "For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (vv 12-13). It cannot go unobserved that the confession of vv 9 and 10 is declared to be a calling on the name of the Lord. In other words, this confession is that unavoidable acknowledgment to God on the part of the one who is exercising saving faith, that he accepts Christ as his Savior. As Abraham *amen*ed the promise of God—not a mere unresponsive believing (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3), so the trusting soul responds to the promise which God proffers of salvation through Christ.

2. Two Conclusive Reasons

There are two convincing reasons why the Scripture under consideration does not present two human responsibilities in relation to salvation by grace.

a. To claim that a public confession of Christ as Savior is required in addition to believing in Christ, is to contend that 150 passages in which believing alone appears are incomplete and to that extent misleading. A certain type of mind, however, seems able to construct all its confidence on an erroneous interpretation of one passage and to be uninfluenced by the overwhelming body of Scripture which contradicts that interpretation.

b. To require a public confession of Christ as a prerequisite to salvation by grace is to discredit the salvation of an innumerable company who have been saved under circumstances which precluded any public action.

Conclusion

Confession of Christ is a Christian's privilege and duty and may be undertaken at the moment one is saved, but it is not a condition of salvation by grace, else works of merit intrude where only the work of God reigns.

III. Believe and Be Baptized

In any discussion respecting the word *baptizō* it must be recognized that this term is used in the New Testament to represent two different

things—a real baptism by the Spirit of God by which the believer is joined in union to Christ and is henceforth in Christ, and a ritual baptism with water. John distinguished these when he said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matt 3:11). Though this word sustains a primary and secondary meaning and these are closely related ideas, the fact that the same identical word is used for both real and ritual baptism suggests an affiliation between the two ideas with which this word is associated. In fact, Eph 4:5 declares that there is but one baptism. The contemplation of such facts respecting this word is essential to a right understanding of the theme under discussion. The question naturally arises when it is asserted that one must believe and be baptized, whether a real or a ritual baptism is in view. There are two passages demanding attention:

Mark 16:15-16

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

A strange inattention to the evidence which serves as proof that reference is made in this text to real baptism by the Spirit, has characterized the interpretation of the passage. This evidence should at least be weighed for all that it is. Should it prove upon examination that reference is made to real baptism by the Spirit, which baptism is essential to salvation, the difficulty of a supposed regenerating baptism is immediately dismissed. Dr. James W. Dale, in his *Christic and Patristic Baptism* (pp. 392-94), has discussed this vital issue in an extended argument. He writes:

All, so far as I am aware, who interpret the language of the Evangelist as indicating a ritual baptism, do so without having examined the question—“May not this be the *real* baptism by the Holy Spirit and not *ritual* baptism with water?” This vital issue has been assumed without investigation, and determined against the real baptism of the Scriptures, without a hearing. Such assumption is neither grounded in necessity, nor in the warrant of Scripture; whether regarded in its general teaching or in that of this particular passage. That there is no necessity for limiting the baptism of this passage to a rite is obvious, because the Scriptures furnish us with a real baptism by the Spirit, as well as with its symbol ritual baptism, from which to choose. There is no scriptural warrant in the general teaching of the Bible for identifying a *rite* with salvation; nor can such warrant be assumed in this

particular passage (which does identify *baptism* and salvation), because there is no evidence on the face of the passage to show, that the baptism is ritual with water, rather than real by the Spirit. These points must be universally admitted: 1. The passage does not declare a ritual baptism by express statement; 2. It contains no statement which involves a ritual baptism as a necessary inference; 3. The Scriptures present a real and a ritual baptism, by the one or the other of which to meet the exigencies of any elliptically stated baptism; 4. That baptism which meets, in its scripturally defined nature and power, the requirements of any particular passage, must be the baptism designed by such passage. We reject ritual baptism from all direct connection with this passage, in general, because, the passage treats of salvation and its conditions (belief and baptism). All out of the Papal church admit, that ritual baptism has not the same breadth with belief as a condition of salvation, and are, therefore, compelled to introduce exceptions for which no provision is made in the terms of this passage. We accept the real baptism by the Holy Spirit as the sole baptism directly contemplated by this passage, in general, because, it meets in the most absolute and unlimited manner *as a condition of salvation* the obvious requirement on the face of the passage, having the same breadth with belief, and universally present in every case of salvation. We accept this view in particular: Because it makes the use of "baptized" harmonious with the associate terms, "believeth" and "saved." The use of these terms, as well as "baptized," is elliptical. "Believe" has in the New Testament a double usage; the one limited to the action of the intellect, as "the devils believe and tremble"; the other embraces and controls the affections of the heart, as "with the heart we believe unto righteousness." It is the higher form of "belief" that is universally recognized as belonging to this passage. "Saved," also, is used in the New Testament, with a double application; as of the body, "all hope that we should be saved was taken away"; and of the soul, "He shall save His people from their sins." Again it is this higher salvation that is accepted without question. So, "baptized" is used in a lower and a higher meaning; applied in the one case to the body, as "I baptize you with water"; and in the other case applied to the soul, as "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." By what just reasoning, now, can "believeth," and "saved," be taken in the highest sense, and "baptized," in the same sentence and in the same construction, be brought down to the lowest? We object to such diversity of interpretation as unnatural and without any just support. The only tenable supply of the ellipsis must be, "He that believeth" (with the heart upon Christ), "and is baptized" (by the Holy Ghost into Christ) "shall be saved" (by the redemption of Christ). The construction allows and the case requires, that a relation of dependence and unity subsist between "believeth" and "baptized." There is evidently some *vinculum* binding these words and the ideas which they represent, together. MIDDLETON (Greek article, *in loco*) says: "In

the *Complutens.* edit. the second participle has the article, which would materially alter the sense. It would imply, that he who believeth, as well as he who is baptized, shall be saved; whereas the reading of the MSS. insists on the fulfilment of both conditions in every individual." This is true; but it is not all the truth. This faith and this baptism must not only be disjoined by being assigned to different persons, but they must not be disjoined by being assigned to different spheres, the one spiritual and the other physical; and being conjoined, in like spiritual nature, and meeting together in the same person, the whole truth requires, that they shall be recognized not as two distinct things existing harmoniously together, but as bearing to each other the intimate and essential relation of cause and effect, that is to say, the baptism is a consequence proceeding from the belief.

Believing has the influence over the soul, through the power of God in accordance with His promise in the gospel, of bringing the one who believes into the estate of salvation with all its values which are received from Christ. The new relation to Christ of being in Him is wrought by the Holy Spirit's baptism, and it could not be absent in the case of any true salvation. On the other hand, all who have been saved have been saved quite apart from ritual baptism. The form of speech which this text presents is common in the Bible, namely, that of passing from the main subject to one of the features belonging to that subject, as, "Thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak" (Luke 1:20). The word *dumb* is amplified by the words *not able to speak*. In the text in question, the word *believeth* is amplified by the words *and is baptized*, and with reference to real baptism which is an integral part of salvation.

Acts 2:38

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

A very general impression obtains among informed students of the Sacred Text that the translation of this passage is injured by the rendering of two prepositions *epi* and *eis* by the words *in* and *for*. That *epi* is better translated *upon*, and *eis* is better rendered *into* would hardly be contested. To this may be added the demand of some worthy scholars that the word *believing* should be supplied, which would give the following rendering: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, [believing] upon the name of Jesus Christ into the remission of sins." By so much the passage harmonizes with all other Scripture, which, from the interpreter's standpoint, is imperative (2 Pet 1:20); and the remission of sins—here equivalent to personal salvation—is made to depend not upon repentance or baptism.

Dr. J. W. Dale is convinced that it is real baptism by the Spirit which is referred to here and also in verse 41. He proposes that the same arguments which he advanced to prove that Mark 16:15-16 refers to real baptism by the Spirit serve as valid evidence in Acts 2:38, 41. He feels a particular relief that there is no need, according to this interpretation, of defending the idea that 3,000 people were baptized by ritual baptism in what could have been but slightly more than half a day and as a surprise necessity for which preparations could not have been made either by the candidates or administrators, whereas, Dr. Dale contends, to reckon this baptism to have been real and that which unavoidably does enter into the salvation of every soul and does not follow after as a mere testimony, is to encounter no insuperable difficulty whatever. Most of all, he points out, by such an interpretation this passage is rescued from the misinterpretation which exalts ritual baptism to the point of being all-but-essential to salvation.

It is significant that the Apostle Peter follows this exhortation contained in Acts 2:38 with a promise respecting the reception of the Holy Spirit. In the disproportionate emphasis which has been placed on ritual baptism—doubtless stimulated by disagreement on its mode—the great undertaking of the Spirit in real baptism which conditions the believer's standing before God and engenders the true motive for Christian character and service, has been slighted to the point that many apparently are unaware of its existence. Such a situation is not without precedent. At Ephesus the Apostle Paul found certain men who were resting their confidence in "John's baptism," who confessed "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:1-3). In other words, the student would do well to note that the truth regarding the baptism with the Holy Spirit is itself more important than the Christian public, led by sectarian teachers, supposes it to be.

Conclusion

The above examination of two passages, on which the idea of baptismal regeneration is made to rest, has sought to demonstrate that ritual baptism, however administered, is not a condition which is to be added to believing as a necessary step in salvation.

IV. Believe and Surrender to God

On account of the subtlety due to its pious character, no confusing intrusion into the doctrine that salvation is conditioned alone upon believing is more effective than the added demand that the unsaved must dedicate themselves to do God's will in their daily life, as well

as to believe upon Christ. The desirability of a dedication to God on the part of every believer is obvious, and is so stressed in the Sacred Text that many sincere people who are inattentive to doctrine are easily led to suppose that this same dedication, which is *voluntary* in the case of the believer, is *imperative* in the case of the unsaved. This aspect of the general theme may be approached under three considerations of it: (1) the incapacity of the unsaved, (2) what is involved, and (3) the preacher's responsibility.

1. The Incapacity of the Unsaved

The Arminian notion that through the reception of a so-called common grace anyone is competent to accept Christ as Savior if he will, is a mild assumption compared with the idea that the unregenerate person, with no common or uncommon grace proffered, is able to dedicate his life to God. Much has been written on previous pages regarding the overwhelming testimony of the Bible to the utter inability and spiritual death of the unsaved. They are shut up to the one message that Christ is their Savior; and they cannot accept Him, the Word of God declares, unless illuminated to that end by the Holy Spirit. Saving faith is not a possession of all men but is imparted specifically to those who do believe (Eph 2:8). As all this is true, it follows that to impose a need to surrender the life to God as an added condition of salvation is most unreasonable. God's call to the unsaved is never said to be unto the Lordship of Christ; it is unto His saving grace. With any reception of the divine nature through the regenerating work of the Spirit, a new understanding and a new capacity to respond to the authority of Christ are gained. Those attending upon such issues in practical ways are aware that a self-dedication taxes the limit of ability even for the most devout believer. The error of imposing Christ's Lordship upon the unsaved is disastrous even though they are not able intelligently to resent it or to remind the preacher of the fact that he, in calling upon them to dedicate their lives, is demanding of them what they have no ability to produce. A destructive heresy was formerly abroad under the name The Oxford Movement, which specializes in this blasting error, except that the promoters of the Movement omit altogether the idea of believing on Christ for salvation and promote exclusively the obligation of surrender to God. They substitute consecration for conversion, faithfulness for faith, and beauty of daily life for believing unto eternal life. As is easily seen, the plan of this Movement is to ignore the need of Christ's death as the ground of regeneration and forgiveness, and to promote the wretched heresy that it matters nothing what one believes respecting the Saviorhood of Christ if only

the daily life is dedicated to God's service. A pseudo self-dedication to God is a rare bit of religion with which the unsaved may conjure. The tragedy is that out of such a delusion those who embrace it are likely never to be delivered by a true faith in Christ as Savior. No more complete example could be found today of "the blind leading the blind" than what this Movement presents.

2. What Is Involved

The most subtle, self-satisfying form of works of merit is, after all, found to be an engaging feature in this practice of applying to unbelievers the Lordship of Christ. What more could God expect than that the creatures of His hand should by supposed surrender be attempting to be obedient to Him? In such idealism the darkened mind of the unsaved, no doubt, sees dimly some possible advantage in submitting their lives to the guidance of a Supreme Being—of whom they really know nothing. Such notions are only human adjustments to God and resemble in no way the terms of divine adjustment, which first condemns man and rejects all his supposed merit, and then offers a perfect and eternal salvation to the helpless sinner on no other terms than that he believe on Christ as his Savior.

If the real issue in self-dedication to God is stated in its legitimate though extreme form, the possibility of martyrdom is first in evidence. One who is faithful unto God is enjoined to be faithful unto death (Rev 2:10). Such, indeed, is a glorious challenge to the devout believer and perhaps many have accepted the challenge and suffered a martyr's death; but would any zealous advocate of the idea that the Lordship of Christ must be applied to the unsaved as a condition of salvation, dare to propose to the unsaved that they must not only believe on Christ but be willing to die a martyr's death? The very proposal of such a question serves only to demonstrate the unwisdom and disregard for revealed truth which this error exhibits.

The unregenerate person, because of his condition in spiritual death, has no ability to desire the things of God (1 Cor 2:14), or to anticipate what his outlook on life will be after he is saved. It is therefore an error of the first magnitude to divert that feeble ability of the unsaved to exercise a God-given faith for salvation into the unknown and complex spheres of self-dedication, which dedication is the Christian's greatest problem.

3. The Preacher's Responsibility

It is the preacher's responsibility, not only to preserve his message

to the unsaved from being distorted by issues other than that of simple faith in Christ, but, when speaking to Christians in the presence of the unsaved regarding issues of Christian character, conduct, and service, to declare plainly that the truth presented has no application to those who are unsaved. Such a reminder, oft repeated, will not only preserve the unregenerate individuals who are present from the deadly supposition that God is seeking to improve their manner of life rather than to accomplish the salvation of their souls, but will also create in their minds the so important impression that they are, in the sight of God, hopelessly condemned apart from Christ as Savior. God alone can deal with a situation wherein a large percentage of the members of the church are unsaved, and yet are habitually addressed as though they were saved and on no other basis than that they belong to the church. It is surprising, indeed, that any unsaved person ever gains any right impression respecting his actual relation to God, when he is allowed to believe that he is included in all the appeals which are made to Christians regarding their daily life. If the importance of attention to this wide difference between the saved and the unsaved is not appreciated and respected by the preacher, the fault is nearly unpardonable since the results may easily hinder the salvation of many souls. Next to sound doctrine itself, no more important obligation rests on the preacher than that of preaching the Lordship of Christ to Christians exclusively, and the Saviorhood of Christ to those who are unsaved.

Conclusion

A suggestion born of this theme is that in all gospel preaching every reference to the life to be lived beyond regeneration should be avoided as far as possible. To attend to this is not a deception nor a withholding of the truth from those to whom it applies. It is the simple adjustment to the limitation and actual condition of those unto whom the gospel is addressed. To such among the unsaved who, because of the weakness and inability which they observe in themselves, are fearful lest they would not "hold out" as Christians, it is desirable to remind them that, in the new relation to Christ which will exist after they receive Him, new abilities will be possessed by which they can live to the glory of God. Such proffered assurance is far removed from the practice of introducing obligations which are exclusively Christian in character and as something to which they must consent in order to be saved. Multitudes of unsaved people have been diverted from the one question of their acceptance of Christ as Savior to other questions regarding amusements and unchristian ways of living. As an unsaved person has no motive or spiritual light by which to face such problems, that person

can only be bewildered by these issues. His problem is not one of giving up what in his unsaved state seems normal to him; it is a problem of receiving the Savior with all His salvation.

V. Believe and Confess Sin or Make Restitution

But a moment need be devoted to this error which prevails among certain groups of zealous people. The Scripture employed by advocates of this error is that which applies only to Christians. The passage reads: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). This declaration, as has been seen, is addressed to believers who have sinned and presents the ground on which such may be restored to fellowship with God. The notion that restitution must be made before one can be saved is based on the God-dishonoring theory that salvation is only for good people, and that the sinner must divest himself of that which is evil before he can be saved. In other words, God is not propitious respecting sin; He is propitious toward those only who have prepared themselves for His presence and fellowship. Over against this, the truth is ignored that the unregenerate person cannot improve his fallen condition and, if he could, he would be bringing merit to God where merit is wholly excluded to the end that grace may abound and be magnified through all eternity. The preacher must ever be on his guard to discourage the tendency of the natural man to move along lines of reformation rather than regeneration. All who are serious regarding their lost estate are best helped by that body of truth which declares how God, through Christ, must save and will save from all sin; that He must and will deal with the very nature which sins; and that He must and will rescue men from their estate under sin. There are various ways by which the natural man proposes to be saved and yet retain his dignity and supposed worthiness, and one of these is the contention that sin must be confessed and restitution made as a human requirement in salvation. It is God who justifies the ungodly (Rom 4:5); it is while men are "enemies, sinners, and without strength" that Christ died for them (Rom 5:6-10); and all their unworthiness is accounted for by Christ in His death. There is a duty belonging only to Christians—to set things right after they are saved—and there should be no neglect of that responsibility. It therefore remains true that those who are saved are saved on the one condition of believing upon Christ.

VI. Believe and Implore God to Save

None of the errors being considered seems more reasonable than

this, and none strikes a more deadly blow at the foundation of divine grace. The error includes the claim that the sinner must "seek the Lord," or that he must plead with God to be merciful. These two conceptions, though nearly identical, should be considered separately.

1. "Seek Ye the Lord"

This phrase, quoted from Isa 55:6, represents Jehovah's invitation to His covenant people, Israel, who have wandered from their place of rightful blessings under His covenants, to return to Him. It was appointed to that people to "seek the LORD while he may be found" and to "call upon him while he is near"; but the gospel of the grace of God in the present age declares to Jew and Gentile alike that "there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom 3:11), and that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). This declaration that in this age there are none who seek the LORD, accords with the testimony of the New Testament relative to the incapacity of those who are lost to turn to God. Apart from the new birth, the unsaved "cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), their minds are blinded by Satan (2 Cor 4:3-4), and they can exercise faith toward God only as they are enabled to do so by the Holy Spirit (Eph 2:8). In the light of these revelations, there is little ground for the hope that the unsaved will "seek the LORD," and, what is far more essential to the right understanding of the way of salvation by grace, the unsaved are not asked to seek the LORD. If this is true, the unsaved should never be placed in the position of those who must discover God or prevail upon Him to be gracious.

2. Believe and Pray

The question which arises at this point is one of whether God is propitious. If He is propitious, there remains no occasion for the unsaved to try to find Him, to wait until He is on "the giving hand," or to implore Him to save. He is propitious to an infinite degree and the problem confronting the mind of man is one of adjustment to that revelation. The transforming effect of the truth that God is propitious penetrates every phase of Soteriology. His flood tide of blessing—all that is impelled by infinite love—awaits, not the imploring, prevailing appeal that might move one to be gracious, but rather it awaits the simple willingness on the part of men to *receive* what He has already provided and is free to bestow in and through His Son, the Savior.

Attention has been called in an earlier discussion to the fact that salvation begins in the heart of God and is precisely what His infinite

love demands and ordains. Its whole scope and extent is the reflection of that immeasurable love. It embraces all that infinity can produce. The sinner's plight is serious indeed and the benefits he receives in saving grace cannot be estimated; but all this together is secondary compared with the satisfaction which God's great love demands. As before stated, but two obstacles could hinder the satisfaction of divine love—the sin of the creature He loves and the will of that creature. As the Creator of all things, even these obstacles take their place in the divine decree which ordained all things that exist. Accordingly He has, as the only One who could do it, met by the sacrifice of His Son the obstacle which sin imposed, and He, too, secures the glad cooperation of the human will. The effect of the death of His Son is to render God righteously free to act for those whom He loves, and that freedom for love to act is propitiation. Therefore, it must be again asserted that God is propitious. It is infinite love that now invited the sinner to eternal glories, and it is infinite love that awaits the sinner's response to that invitation.

With this marvelous revelation in view, there is no place left for the idea that the sinner must "seek the LORD," or that the sinner must plead with God to be merciful and kind. No burden rests on the unsaved to persuade God to be good; the challenge of the gospel is for the unsaved to believe that God is good. Since these great truths are revealed only in the Word of God, the unsaved are enjoined to believe God's Word, and the Scriptures hold a large share in the divine undertaking of bringing men to salvation (John 3:5). It is common, however, for some who, with great passion of soul, attempt to preach the gospel, so to fail in the apprehension of the divine propitiation that they imply that salvation is secured by entreating God, and by so much the value of Christ's mediation in behalf of the sinner is nullified.

The example of the prayer of the publican is usually cited as the best of reasons for urging the unsaved to plead with God for His mercy and salvation. What, it is asked, could be more appropriate than that the unsaved should pray as did the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13)? The appeal on the part of the publican is assumed to be the norm for all sinners, though, in reality, it contradicts the very truth of the gospel of divine grace. The incident must be examined carefully. It is essential to note that the publican—a Jew of the Old Testament order and praying in the temple according to the requirements of a Jew in the temple—did not use the word *merciful*—which word is properly associated with the idea of kindness, bigheartedness, leniency, and generosity. According to the original text, which in the Authorized Version is too freely translated, the publican said,

"God be propitiated to me the sinner." The word *hilaskomai*, which means "to make propitiation," appears in the text.

There is a wide difference between the word *merciful* with all its implications and the word *propitiation*. By the use of the word *merciful* the impression is conveyed that the publican pleaded with God to be magnanimous. By the use of the word *propitiation*—if comprehended at all—the impression is conveyed that the publican asked God to cover his sins in such a way as to dispose of them; yet, at the same time, to do this in a way that would protect His own holiness from complicity with his sins. If the publican did as Jews were accustomed to do in his day when they went into the temple to pray, he left a sacrifice at the altar. It is probable that he could see the smoke of that sacrifice ascending as he prayed. What he prayed was strictly proper for a Jew of his time to pray under those circumstances. However, his prayer would be most unfitting on this side of the cross of Christ. With reference to the word *merciful*, it was not in the publican's prayer nor would it be a proper word for a penitent to use, on either side of the cross. God cannot be merciful to sin in the sense that He treats it lightly, whether it be in one age or another. But with reference to the word *propitiation* and its implications, that word was justified in the age before Christ died and when sin was covered by sacrifices which the sinner provided. It was suitable for the publican, having provided his own sacrifice, to ask that his sacrifice be accepted and himself absolved. Yet, on this side of the cross when Christ has died and secured propitiation and it is established perfectly forever, nothing could be more an outraging of that priceless truth upon which the gospel rests than to implore God to be propitious. Such prayers may be enjoined through ignorance, but the wrong is immeasurable. When this prayer is made, even for God to be propitious, there is a direct assumption expressed that God is not propitious, and to that extent the petitioner is asking God to do something more effective than the thing He has done in giving His Son as a sacrifice for sin.

A moment's consideration would disclose the immeasurable wrong that is committed when God is asked to be propitious, when, at the infinite cost of the death of His Son, He is propitious. The truth that God is propitious constitutes the very heart of the gospel of divine grace, and the one who does not recognize this and sees no impropriety in the use of the publican's prayer today has yet to comprehend what is the first principle in the plan of salvation through Christ. Men are not saved by asking God to be good, or merciful, or propitious; they are saved when they believe God has been good and merciful enough to provide a propitiating Savior. The sinner is saved, not because he

prevails on God to withhold from him the blow of judgment that is due him for his sin, but because he believes that that has fallen on his Substitute. If it is thought that all this is but a mere theological distinction and that after all God is love and the sinner will be treated in love, consideration should be given to the fact that it was for the very purpose of providing a righteous ground for salvation of sinners that the Son of God became incarnate, that He died, and that He arose from the dead. To imply that all this—and there is no salvation apart from it—is only a theological speculation, is to reject the whole plan of salvation through a Savior and to assume to stand before God, who is consuming fire, without shelter, shield, or surety.

VII. Conclusion

In consummating this section on the human terms which condition the salvation of a soul, it may be restated:

a. Every feature of man's salvation from the divine election in past ages and on through successive steps—the sacrifice of the Savior, the enlightenment by the Spirit, the immediate saving work of God in its manifold achievements, the keeping work of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the delivering work of the Spirit, the empowering work of the Spirit, and the final perfecting and presenting in glory—is all a work so supernatural that God alone can effect it, and, therefore, the only relation which man can sustain to it is to trust God to do it. Such a dependence is not only reasonable, but is all and only that which God requires on the human side for the eternal salvation of a soul. This human trust acknowledges that, according to revelation, God can deal righteously with sinners on the ground of the death of His Son for them. The sinner thus trusts in the Saviorhood of Christ.

b. It has been asserted that the primary divine purpose in saving a soul is the satisfying of infinite divine love for that soul and the exercise of the attribute of sovereign grace. Should the slightest human work of merit be allowed to intrude into this great divine undertaking, the purpose of manifesting divine grace would be shattered. It therefore follows that, of necessity, men are saved by believing apart from every form of human worthiness.

c. In the preceding pages it is also pointed out that the New Testament declares directly and without complication in at least 150 passages that men are saved upon the sole principle of faith; and, in this connection, it has been demonstrated that it is not a matter of believing and repenting, of believing and confessing Christ, of believing and being baptized, of believing and surrender to God, of believing and confessing sin, or of believing and pleading with God for salvation, but it is believing

alone. Such belief is apart from works (Rom 4:5); it is a committal of one's self to Christ (2 Tim 1:12); and it is a definite turning—an act of the will—to God from every other confidence (1 Thess 1:9). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Grace in the Arts:

THE BILLIARD PARLOR EVANGEL

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"I have seen the horrors of war—young men in their prime, gunned down like so many cattle at the slaughterhouse. I have seen the suffering of children—grotesquely twisted little bodies, crying out in pain, begging for love and acceptance, only to find ridicule, rejection, and at the most, the pity of the rich and powerful. I have seen the willful hatred of men toward men, for no reason other than the color of their skin, the shape of their eyes, or the sound of their speech. I am myself a brokenhearted and lonely old man. And you talk to me of your religion! Of all the religions in the world, the one whose constituency adheres the least to its stated beliefs is 'Christianity'!"

I knew quite well to avoid at this moment the simplistic reply that there was a sovereign God over the universe who would make it all too clear in the by and by. In this man's mind, he would have nothing to do with an all-powerful Being who could simply will such inhumanity out of existence and yet persistently chose not to do so.

Why should I waste my time with one who harbored nothing but utter contempt for my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ? Why should I witness to him, when I could spend my time with others who would be much more open to the Gospel and much more likely to respond?

Perhaps it was because I observed that this man loved to talk of how he had no time to talk of the subject of a loving God controlling a hateful universe. Perhaps too it was the realization that Christ died to save and forgive just such wretched sinners as this unfortunate individual—and also for such wretched sinners as I. Not that I actually enjoyed, mind you, listening to his ranting or attempting a rebuttal to his extreme and bitter verbosity when he was confronted with any conversation regarding the subject of religion. Particularly this was true with regard to the "Christian" religion. His sharp retorts were

* Although a work of fiction, this short story is based on Dr. Hosler's many experiences in witnessing to unbelievers.

capable of humiliating even the most humble of saints. Not being of that elite company of humility, I often found his comments infuriating and his person deplorable.

The old gentleman was, I would assume, around sixty-five or so. He was fat and flabby, with a balloon-like belly that protruded so far out in front of him that it seemed to push people away. His yellowed, bloodshot eyes, his balding head, with the fewest of gray, greasy hairs combed neatly across his shiny scalp, and his round, sagging face with its long nose, deep lines, and gray, scraggly moustache, curling limply at each end, made him look like nothing so much as a forlorn walrus. He was a caricaturist's incarnation and I recalled seeing his perfect likeness in some Dickensian political cartoons from a history textbook in college days.

Some would have found him repulsive, and although I could not bring myself to be that unkind, I had to admit that there was nothing attractive or desirable about him. Such thoughts reminded me of the words of the Prophet Isaiah describing Jesus, our great Messiah and Lord: "For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isa 52:3).

In any case, I suppose I intended to encounter him this night, because he could usually be found standing outside the billiard parlor, waiting to snare some unsuspecting passerby into a game of eight ball, for which he would not have to pay. I knew that he was a formidable opponent at the table, and yet, I also knew that I would get little more conversation from him on the street.

"Would you be so kind as to accomodate me in a game of eight ball since I have the entire evening free?" I asked.

"Of course," he exclaimed, "if you can also tolerate the ramblings of a bitter old man in the process."

This was exactly what I had in mind. Perhaps God was now beginning to answer my prayer for just such an opportunity. At the close of the second game, I was about to call the eight ball into the corner pocket.

He laughed and said, "I once stood up all night trying to miss a shot like that."

"Just for conversation," I said, "can you give me a scientific description of the shot that I am about to make?"

"Elementary, my dear fellow," he said, as he seized the opportunity to relay his intellectual expertise. "The elongated cue stick, which you hold in your hand, is an energy condenser and converter.

"Notice how the diameter narrows from the grip to the tip. This is for the purpose of energy conversion. What would otherwise be a

harmless push of your hand is converted to an impact that would feel like a bullet between my eyes. There will be an instantaneous conversion of energy from the cue tip to the cue ball.

"Notice two balls when they touch. Their contact comprises only a minute fraction of a square inch. It is through this small, inappreciable area that the energy of the cue ball will be transferred to the eight ball.

"Observe the change in direction in the inertia of the condensed energy. The cue ball, moving straight forward, impacts the eight ball slightly to the right so that the latter proceeds at a forty-five degree angle."

"That was a fascinating description," I said, as I finished the winning shot of the game. "So, would it be correct to say that every observable reaction is the direct result of some action?"

"This would be correct," he said, "and furthermore, every observable action is itself a mere reaction."

"Ah! Then all observable motion is a chain of actions and reactions?"

"This appears to be correct," he exclaimed.

"Well then, can the cue ball be its own action and its own reaction simultaneously?"

"That would be impossible because then it would have to be not moving and moving at the same time. There must be a chain reaction."

"Chain! Does that explain the universe of motion as we know it?"

"Yes indeed, but you must understand that the chain reaches back into infinity."

"You contradict yourself, sir, for what is the difference between this 'chain' and my cue ball? If the chain is what you say, then it cannot have a causative force outside of itself. It is a singular chain and yet it is its own cause and effect. Why is this possible for a chain and impossible for a cue ball?"

"Well, my friend," he said, "you are trying to trap me into admitting that there had to be an uncaused cause out there in infinity that set the chain into motion."

"Do you, in fact, admit that?"

"Yes, I suppose so . . ."

"Then, you are not an atheist."

"No, but even if I admit that there is such a force there, and if I admit that it is an omnipotent person, 'he' still refuses to will away the evil of this world when it is obvious that 'he' could. This is not justice and I want nothing to do with 'him!' Such a being that you call 'God' more closely approximates a being I'd call the devil!"

"That's pretty harsh."

"It's a harsh world, friend, and one that no caring, concerned per-

son—whether divine or human—can stand by and watch without experiencing something akin to outrage!”

I breathed deeply and exhaled in frustration. The two of us stood there looking at each other for a minute, the penetrating glare of the neon and fluorescent lights in the pool hall filling the room with a garish, decadent glow worthy of Van Gogh’s post-impressionism. At last, I spoke, deciding to use a different tactic.

“Do you know what it’s like to be lonely?”

“I most certainly do, my friend, and more than you would imagine. I have known love and then the bitter loss of it. It is a painful experience that you never forget.”

“Love is a fascinating subject,” I said, as a new strategy began to take shape. “Love is something you have to have in the first place in order to give.”

“That is correct. Something must be possessed in order to be transferred.”

“This would not be totally unlike the transference of energy from a cue ball to a cue ball.”

“That is true. Energy must be possessed in order to be transferred.”

“Forgive me for changing the subject,” I asked, “but the sun is transferring energy from itself at an incalculable rate. We know that it is not replenishing itself. We also know that if it has always been there, it would have burned out long ago, for at the present rate it will burn out some day.”

“Correct, but how did we get back on the subject of energy?”

“Well,” I said, “if the sun has not always been there it is logical to assume that it had to have originated. It could not have self-originated because then it would have had to exist and not exist at the same time, which is logically impossible. Neither could it have installed its own energy. Just as a cue ball cannot transfer energy to itself. Therefore, the sun’s originator would have installed its energy.”

“Correct again,” he said, “and I am intrigued as to where this conversation is leading.”

“Why don’t you join me at the coffee shop and I will tell you what is really on my mind.”

The old gentleman agreed to allow me to buy supper for the both of us. I knew that it was a small price to pay for this opportunity. As we walked toward the coffee shop, I began to pray: “Lord, I know he will break this conversation off if I begin to quote Scripture to him now, but I must have an opportunity to present the plan of salvation to him from the Bible. I know that You can do all things and I ask You to create such an opportunity for me this very night. Amen.”

"Well," I said, as our two cheeseburgers, fries, and cokes were served, "someone or something had to have installed the energy into the billions of suns in the Milky Way. If the Milky Way has always been there it would have burned out long ago also. Can you imagine how big and how infinite the energy of this one or this thing is?"

"That is what the word 'infinite' means, my friend," he said. "There can be no greater power or energy than that of the original originator."

"Could this also be true of other attributes of God such as all-loving, all-knowing, all-present, all-righteous, and all-justice?"

"I told you not to speak to me about a loving god!" he exclaimed with irritation. "The existence of such a one is logically impossible from my observation."

"To observe the absence of love we must have an understanding of what love is," I answered. "If the human race did not originate itself, then its ability to love had to have been installed. The installer had to have it in order to give it. We tried to conceive of His infinite power when we thought of Him installing the energy into the Milky Way. He had to have love; in fact, He had to be infinite love. All love we experience is merely a reflection of His original love."

"I disagree, but what is your point?"

"Suppose you were a young man again and had a choice between two beautiful girls. The first girl has a button on her shoulder which, when pushed, causes her to say, 'I love everything about you and I will be devoted to you and express words of love to you from henceforth.' The second girl stands on her own volition and willfully exclaims, 'I love everything about you and I will be true to you as long as I live.' Of these two girls, equally beautiful and charming in all other respects, which one would you choose?"

"Obviously, I would choose the second girl, if I wanted to know true love."

"Precisely. But if you choose girl number two, you are taking the chance that she will not continue to say these words, or if she does, she will not mean them. So you will take this chance. It is the option to hate that makes true love possible. It is a wife's option to hate her husband that makes her love valuable. If she were brainwashed or programmed to express love, she could not satisfy the true loneliness of a man. God could have created beings who could not choose evil or hatred, but this would not have satisfied Him any more than it would satisfy you or me. God in His wisdom created beings with the ability to choose hatred and evil."

"I see what you're driving at, my good friend," he said. "If the god I've been looking for really existed, it would be impossible to know

him or his love. It would be as impossible as true love and devotion coming from a computer. Hate is what makes love worth having and evil is what makes good so precious."

I wanted to keep going on and on, but the old gentleman, with a good meal under his belt, was beginning to fade. His sad eyes began to droop even more than usual, so I begged off for the evening, but not before obtaining his promise to return the following week.

In the meantime, I prayed much and studied not a little over a number of Scripture passages related to salvation. I drew much comfort from these verses and returned the next week ready for battle with the dark forces of unbelief in this man's soul.

After two challenging games of eight ball and dinner ("Dutch" this time), I reviewed our previous conversation, establishing the necessity of God's existence and His chief attribute of love.

The old gentleman challenged me at the end of my speech.

"All you have said makes sense, but I still have one problem. If God is infinitely righteous and infinitely just he must perform justice upon the human race. I believe Christians call this justice 'condemnation.'"

This was the opportunity I had been waiting for. It was time to begin quoting Scripture to the gentleman. "As it is written, 'There is none righteous, no, not one'";¹ "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God . . .";² "For the wages of sin is death . . .";³

After I had talked for a while about God's condemnation of sin, the old man spoke, "Your Bible has one flaw, my friend. There is a conflict between two of the infinite attributes of your god. If he is infinitely just he will condemn you for falling short of his infinite righteousness. However, if he is infinitely loving, he infinitely desires for you to never experience his condemnation. He cannot compromise his love for his justice and he cannot compromise his justice for his love. Now he has a problem and wicked man cannot provide a solution for him. If he compromises his justice he is unjust. Why should anyone believe an unjust god, if he exclaimed a million times that he loved us?"

"You are absolutely correct, sir," I exclaimed with excitement. "God knew that this conflict would fall into play if He created a race with free choice. However, His desire to love was so strong that He determined to do it even if it meant not being loved in return. His attributes would not permit that He should be the creator of evil and so, in His wisdom, He created free choice in mankind. Thus, before He created such a race He devised His own plan to resolve the conflict between

¹ Rom 3:10

² Rom 3:23

³ Rom 6:23

His love and justice. That the conflict exists is logically undeniable, but the solution to the conflict has been explained only in the Bible.

"Before the foundation of the world God determined to become a perfect human being who would choose no evil. In this perfect state of incarnation, He would effect a transference. Remember how energy is transferred from the cue ball to the eight ball? In a similar sense God transferred the guilt of the entire human race and imputed it to His own Son's body. Because the infinite justice of God requires condemnation upon all guilt, He poured out His wrath upon His own Son until His justice was satisfied.

"The Prophet Isaiah foresaw this some seven hundred years before Christ in the statement: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.'⁴ Isaiah also prophesied that this alone would satisfy the justice of God: 'He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied . . .'⁵ The prophet Zechariah tells us that God Himself would be dying upon the cross. The God of the Old Testament is speaking when He says: 'And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplications; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son . . .'⁶

"Now," I said, "He offers to make another transference. As a free gift, paid for 100% by His shed blood and broken body on the cross, He will transfer His pure righteousness and impute it to you, if you will just say yes. When you accept His righteousness as a free gift, you will also receive forgiveness of sin and eternal life. You see, you must be as righteous as God Himself in order to have eternal life. This righteousness is not something that you do, but something that you are made by the grace of God—'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.'⁷

Suddenly I noticed a change in his countenance and there was no longer the same hostility in his face. Perhaps God had answered my prayer and this was the moment.

He looked at me and said, "What you have said tonight is the only explanation of the conflict between the love and justice of God that I have ever made sense of. Are you sure that this is what the Bible teaches?"

"I will quote you three more passages and then ask you for an

⁴Isa 53:6

⁵Isa 53:11

⁶Zech 12:10

⁷2 Cor 5:21

answer. 'For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit'⁸; 'to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus'⁹; 'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.'¹⁰ Then I asked him, "Will you receive this gift from God tonight?"

He was silent for a long time. Then at last, he said, "Not tonight."

"Why not?" I asked, trying bravely not to show my disappointment.

"I'm . . . just not ready."

"Very well. Would you join me one week from tonight, same time and place, and let us talk further about these things?"

"I'll look forward to it."

In the intervening week, I enlisted as much prayer support as I could muster, both local and long distance, even sending out a few postcards and sending a request down the prayer chain at my church. I was determined not to let Satan keep this old man's soul without all the powers of heaven called upon to set him free.

At our next meeting, after the billiard game and dinner, we talked until the last customer had paid his bill and the waitress had cleaned the last table for the night.

Finally, after listening to his ramblings, I began to talk to him in earnest. "A few weeks ago, friend, you gave me a little speech about war and suffering children and hatred and the hypocrisy of Christians. I have an answer for you, now that you will listen to me."

"Please continue."

"This is an answer I hope you will never forget. You said that you've seen the horrors of war."

"Yes," said the old man, recalling his own words, "'Young men in their prime gunned down like so many cattle at the slaughterhouse.'"

I looked the old man straight in the eye. "You are not the only one who has seen such horrors. You are not the only one to recoil in outrage and indignation. There is Another who has seen all this and more, and that is God. His omniscient eye has seen; His heart has felt; and He has acted to stop these things."

"You see, He has given His only Son, Jesus Christ—a young man in His prime, sent to the slaughter, like a soldier into battle, like a lamb to a bloody sacrifice. Jesus Christ died a horrible, humiliating

⁸1 Pet 3:18

⁹Rom 3:26

¹⁰Eph 2:8, 9

public execution, and rose again to conquer all war, all rebellion, and all senseless killing forever."

He started to speak, but I continued emphatically, determined for once not to let him interrupt and divert the conversation down another path.

"You spoke of seeing the suffering of children—well, God has seen all of them too and He cares more than you or I ever could. He allowed the body of His own Son to become grotesquely twisted on the cross, permitted Him to cry out in agony, to receive ridicule and rejection—not just at the cross, but for some 2,000 years thereafter, all to give us the very love and acceptance that His Son was denied for our sake.

"You have seen the hatred of men for each other, the willful pride and prejudice against all reason, and yet I tell you, there was no reason for Jesus Christ to be hated. He was the only perfect, sinless man to ever walk this planet, yet He was hated without a cause, and not just by man, but He became the thing God hates most—*sin*—the thing against which God holds the most loathing contempt and righteous anger.

"You and I talk of love and mercy as though we were authorities, as though the God of the universe was on trial and we were His judge and jury! He is our Judge and all eternity hangs in the balance for each of us, unless we receive by faith the only One in the universe who can save us—Jesus Christ.

"You said you were heartbroken and lonely. Did it ever once occur to you that Christ died of a broken heart, that *He* felt the utter aloneness of being forsaken by God, His Father, so you would never have to experience that in time or eternity?"

The old man held up his hand. "Enough. I am a fool. Do not add insult to injury."

"No!" I said. "I have one last answer to your objections. Let me say this and I am done."

He nodded, consenting with an almost desperate resignation to hear the end of my speech. I feared that I would drive him away and undo all I'd worked to achieve, and yet something in me urged me onward, propelled me forward.

"You said that the one religion of the world whose constituency adheres the least to its stated beliefs is Christianity."

"I said that because it is true."

"No, it is *not* true! You are wrong for a number of reasons.

"You are wrong because you have never seen the true adherents of Christianity really at work. You are wrong because you have based your opinion of Christianity on nominal Christians who may not even

be Christians at all, or if they are, they have an awful day of reckoning when they stand face to face with Jesus Christ at His judgment bar. For every true Christian you show me who's failing, I'll show you two strong Christians who are succeeding. Don't look at Sunday-only Christians and television evangelists. Look at retired ladies who live on Social Security, spending hours daily in their prayer closets. Look at obscure men and women, laboring faithfully on some remote mission field. *They* are examples of true adherents of Christianity.

"You are wrong because you have misunderstood the very nature of God's grace and love. You are not the only one, because most of the world is mistaken along with you. God's grace, by its very nature, can be abused, misused, taken lightly, or taken for granted.

"Christians are sinners just like unbelievers, and unfortunately they often share the same unbelieving, unappreciative attitude toward God's grace. The hypocrisy of some Christians doesn't nullify Christianity—if anything, it is the greatest proof of how loving and gracious and forgiving and patient God is to put up with people who should be deeply grateful, but who for the most part are ungrateful.

"But if all this were not enough, my friend, your biggest error of all is in looking at Christianity or at Christians and not at Christ. No church, no baptism, no preacher, no good work can take you to heaven—only Christ can do that. Right now, God is not asking you to trust in any Christian, since no Christian can save you. Only Christ deserves your trust for salvation, because He alone can save you."

I stopped, a little out of breath. When the old gentleman wouldn't look up at me or say a word for a few minutes, I was afraid I'd said too much.

At last, unable to bear the silence between us, I spoke.

"If I offended you, it was because I was trying desperately to help you. A person doesn't speak politely to a man who's drowning."

A slight smile came across his lips, like the smile I'd seen when I asked him to dinner that first night or when I asked him to play a second game of eight ball.

"Young man, I have been silent, because I've been thinking about what you've said. I've been thinking all these weeks of what you've been telling me and it all makes sense."

"I hope," I said, looking down at the dregs in my empty coffee cup, "I hope that you see all I've said is really a restatement of what God said first in His Word."

"I understand that part."

"Then let me ask you a question again—the same question I asked you last week, only this time in different words. What would you say

if the God of the Bible, Jesus Christ the Savior, were to walk into this coffee shop and say to you: 'I have for you the gift of eternal life, the righteousness of God and forgiveness of sin, but you must receive it as a free gift. Will you receive this gift from Me?' What would be your answer?"

By now his eyes began to get moist as he said, "My answer would probably be 'Yes.'"

I looked at him as he said this. "The God of the Bible, the God of the universe, is not a God of probabilities—He is the God of certainties. He asks nothing less of us. He does not have to walk into this room. The Bible says that He has been here all along; that He knows your thoughts, and that He wants your answer. What will it be?"

Without hesitating this time, he said, "Yes."

I smiled, knowing a cheer had just resounded throughout the length and breadth and height and depth of heaven itself. And it came to pass just as it was written: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."¹¹ To God be the glory!

That night as I left the coffee shop, the billiard parlor, and that whole seamy side of town, it seemed like a different world to me. I knew that I would have an audience with this new friend of mine quite often in the future. I had so many other subjects I wanted to share with him: the assurance of salvation, the authority of the Bible over our lives, the privilege of access to God through prayer, the importance of assembling with other believers, and the privilege of soul-winning. But at that moment my surpassing joy was the realization that God had used me as an instrument this very night!

And beyond that, there was also the realization that this new brother of mine would accompany me into an eternal future in the presence of God. I felt in a fresh way the force of the Apostle's words: "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"¹²

Tonight I knew that my life was not just passing through my fingers. Tonight I had experienced the dynamics of the divine purpose for my earthly existence. Tonight, in fact, I understood why God had left me here.

¹¹John 1:12

¹²1 Thess 2:19

BOOK REVIEWS

Basic Theology. By Charles C. Ryrie. Wheaton Illinois: Victor Books, 1986. 544 pp. Hardcover, \$14.95.

In *Basic Theology* there are no surprises. For some this is unwelcome. For those who have enjoyed Ryrie's other works and are committed to a theology that is straightforward and readable, and to wholesome doctrine, *Basic Theology* will seem like an old friend. Some of this book includes a compilation of many of the author's other works (see p. 4).

According to the author this book is for everyone. It is for everyone because all are theologians whether they call themselves that or not. Some are armchair theologians and others are card-carrying theologians, all of whom need a recognized systematic approach. Those who wish to study theology have a hard time finding a text that studies all the major systems of theology, is clear, and approaches the Bible with a consistent hermeneutical system.

Of particular interest for those who are concerned for the clarity of the Gospel is Ryrie's chapter on the Gospel. In that chapter he exposes many errors in evangelism: in adding baptism, in misunderstanding repentance, and in making surrender of one's life a part of the Gospel. Ryrie specifically defines repentance as changing one's mind about Jesus Christ. Whatever one thought before, he changes his mind and trusts Christ as his Savior.

Those with a background in theology can appreciate the author's theology, structure, and organization of material. Though this reviewer has a background in theology, his greatest appreciation was the book's effectiveness as a basic text for Bible college students. Because of the author's strong and basic stand on grace, security, and the Gospel, this work makes an outstanding textbook.

Dr. Ryrie is a well-known champion of the Gospel of grace. However, some could see a bit of confusion when he discusses "proof of justification" (p. 300). The author says that "justification is proved by purity." He uses an analogy of a two-coupon ticket. "Faith and works are like a two-coupon ticket to heaven. The coupon of works is not

for passage, and the coupon of faith is not valid if detached from works." Works may demonstrate faith to men but lack of works is not a proof of the opposite. Otherwise one would fall into works-salvation, which the author earlier calls a "teaching of demons" (p. 165). Ryrie's statement that works are a proof *to men* should also be considered. As far as *God* is concerned the proof is in the heart of those who put their faith in Jesus Christ as their Substitute.

This reviewer and all who strive for a clear stand on the doctrine of salvation find a trustworthy standard reference work in *Basic Theology*.

Alejandro Mandes

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Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance. By M. Charles Bell. 33 Montgomery Street, Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1985. 211 pp. Cloth, no price.

Few recent books are more significant for the doctrine of salvation than this one. The author is currently a Presbyterian minister in California and this volume is a revision of his doctoral dissertation done at the University of Aberdeen in 1982. It is a worthy follow-up to R. T. Kendall's invaluable work, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979), which in turn was based on Kendall's own D. Phil. thesis at Oxford.

The author's basic contention is of the highest interest to all members and friends of the Grace Evangelical Society. Bell's own statement of this deserves quotation:

The major thesis of this study is that, whereas Calvin taught that faith is fundamentally passive in nature, is centered in the mind or understanding, is primarily to be viewed in terms of certain knowledge, such that assurance of salvation is of the essence of faith, and is grounded *extra nos*, that is, outside ourselves in the person and work of Jesus Christ, Scottish theology, on the other hand, gradually came to teach that faith is primarily active, centered in the will or heart, and that assurance is *not* of the essence of faith, but is a fruit of faith, and is to be gathered through self-examination and syllogistic deduction, thereby placing the grounds of assurance *intra nos*, within ourselves (p. 8).

From this, of course, it is clear that Bell aligns himself unmistakably with Kendall. The same defection from John Calvin's doctrine of faith and assurance which Kendall so effectively documented for English Calvinism is to be found as well, Bell affirms, in the Federal theology of Scotland.

Indeed, in his first chapter Bell defends the conclusion reached by Kendall that the doctrine of universal atonement was fundamental to Calvin's doctrine of faith and assurance. He refutes the critiques of Kendall's position that have been offered by R. W. A. Letham, A. N. S. Lane, and Paul Helm. Bell concludes that Kendall is right in his contention that, if Christ died only for the elect, one is ultimately left without assurance of salvation.

Of special interest to readers of this Journal is the brief section (pp. 28-29) in which Bell discusses the place of works in Calvin's doctrine of assurance. Noteworthy is Bell's assertion (furnished with documentation from Calvin himself) that, "Calvin emphatically warns against looking to ourselves, that is, to our works or the fruit of the Spirit, for certainty of our salvation" (p. 28). Nevertheless, Bell is not wholly without criticism of some facets of Calvin's theology (e.g., double predestination: see p. 32). But by and large he stands firmly with Calvin's view of faith and assurance. Chapters 2 through 5 trace the loss of Calvin's view within Scottish Calvinism, while chapter 6 affirms that, in the Westminster Confession, "we have the codification of the same teaching on faith and assurance which we find in Scottish Federal theology" (pp. 127-28). Like Kendall before him, Bell concludes that the Westminster documents enshrine a view to which John Calvin himself would not have subscribed!

The final three chapters in Bell's work are a survey of the tensions and controversies within Scottish theology as some reacted against the stultifying effect of Federal theology's doctrine of saving faith. For Bell, the most impressive figure was John McLeod Campbell (chap. 9) who was able to escape the constrictions of Federalist thought and fundamentally to return to Calvin's view of the atonement and assurance. His reward for this, however, was condemnation by the General Assembly in 1831 and deposition from the ministry.

But Bell has written something quite a bit more than a mere historical survey. As he puts it in his conclusion, "The problems dealt with in this study are problems which continue to confront us" (p. 200). And so they do! In fact, it is for that very reason that no one truly interested in the contemporary controversy over the Gospel can afford not to read this book. It will not only give him historical perspective on the modern debate, but it will galvanize him with the realization that the

biblical insights of the great Reformers, like John Calvin, must be grasped afresh in every generation. And when grasped, they must also be proclaimed!

Zane C. Hodges

Associate Editor

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Mesquite, TX

Once Saved, Always Saved. By R. T. Kendall. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985. 238 pp. Paper, \$4.95.

R. T. Kendall, minister of the well-known Westminster Chapel, London, gained considerable notoriety in Puritan studies with the 1979 release of *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*. In this Oxford monograph Kendall argued that English Puritanism's doctrinal development of saving faith found its origin in John Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza, rather than in Calvin himself.

With *Once Saved, Always Saved* Kendall examines another important subdivision of salvation doctrine: the eternal security of the believer. Unlike *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, which is a piece of erudite historical scholarship, *Once Saved, Always Saved* is written at the popular level as an encouragement to the believer who is struggling with personal assurance of salvation and with the concept of eternal security.

As a fitting groundwork for his study, Kendall provides a brief testimony regarding his doctrinal pilgrimage from Arminian theology to a settled conviction of the biblical teaching of the eternal security of the believer.

The author launches into the doctrinal section of his book by clarifying key salvation terminology and by delineating the biblical propositions that are indispensable for salvation. Kendall suggests that saving faith has two aspects: belief in the resurrection of Christ, and the verbal confession of the deity of Christ before men (p. 35ff). The author draws this conclusion from his interpretation of Rom 10:9-10. (Kendall discusses this topic at length in *Stand Up and Be Counted: Calling for Public Confession of Faith*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984.)

Exception may be taken to Kendall's understanding of confession on the basis of several factors. First, Kendall admits that salvation occurs at the moment of faith (p. 25). Yet, this admission is inconsistent with his statement that public confession of belief in Christ makes one

a believer (pp. 41, 45). Second, the author acknowledges at one point that good works are subsequent to faith and not a condition of salvation (p. 25). However, a public confession of faith, to this reviewer, at least, would qualify as a good work. Third, a confession of faith before men may not be immediately forthcoming even in meetings where "public pledges" are sought. One could conceivably affirm the deity of Christ and fail to publicly express this affirmation on account of fear or other factors. Finally, a more favorable interpretation of Rom 10:9-10 is that Paul speaks of the conditions necessary for the *believer's* deliverance from the wrath of God presently active in the world (cf. Rom 1:18; 5:9-10). Rom 10:13-14 demonstrates that believers are in view and that belief in Christ precedes public confession.

In the chapter titled "A Sweet Clarification," Kendall maintains that one who has believed in the resurrection of Christ and who has confessed the deity of Christ before men ". . . will go to heaven when he dies no matter what work (or lack of work) may accompany such faith" (p. 49). His argumentation in this and the ensuing chapter, "Why Believe This Doctrine?," deals a death blow to the Arminian notion that continued good works serve as a condition to obtaining final salvation.

Kendall devotes a chapter apiece to the biblical doctrines of justification, adoption, and sanctification. He demonstrates that these doctrines add to the certitude of one's salvation inasmuch as it is God who effects the *results* of salvation and not man. A novel feature in Kendall's discussion of sanctification is his concept that carnal believers who continue in sin will forfeit spiritual sensitivity and intimacy in the present age. The author argues that this concept is the driving force behind the Pauline warnings given in 1 Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:21, and Eph 5:3-5. In this same connection, it is observed that the oft-neglected doctrines of the Judgment Seat of Christ and the believer's rewards play heavily in Kendall's eschatological understanding.

The author is quick to dispel the long-standing Calvinistic interpretations of Hebrews, James, and 1 John. Kendall points out that these NT books deal with erring believers rather than "professing believers." For the most part, the exegesis offered for select portions of these NT books is cogent and plausible.

True to his amillennial theology, Kendall sees "the kingdom of God" in the Pauline warnings (1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:21; Eph 5:3-5) as "the conscious presence of God" in the present age. However, this reviewer, as an avowed premillennialist, believes that a better case can be made for "the kingdom of God" as having reference to the *eschaton*. Kendall himself admits that godly living pays off, not only in this age, but also

in the kingdom age to come (p. 169).

Other points of dissent with the author would include: his *ordo salutis* which is typically Calvinistic, i.e., regeneration *before* faith, and then the witness of the Spirit (pp. 107, 110-11); his statements concerning the essence of saving faith (pp. 24-26); his threefold dissection of the Mosaic Law (p. 93); and various interpretive nuances presented in his theological argument (*passim*). Notwithstanding, these points of disagreement do not detract from the overall superiority of the book.

By and large, *Once Saved, Always Saved* is a commendable text seasoned with salutary pastoral and theological insight. Kendall effectively assuages any doubts concerning loss of salvation and personal assurance of salvation. Perhaps the most refreshing feature of *Once Saved, Always Saved* is the non-perseverance approach Kendall takes in his exposition of difficult NT texts. In brief, *Once Saved, Always Saved* is a welcome presentation that magnifies God's gracious capacity to provide everlasting salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gary L. Nebeker

Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Dallas, TX

Firstborn Sons: Their Rights and Risks. By George Henry Lang. Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc., 1984. 233 pp. Hardcover, \$14.95.

"Is it worthwhile to follow Christ? Does not being His disciple involve so great a loss and so much persecution and other trouble as to cause reasonable men to ask if it is worthwhile?" (p. 13).

These are the questions which Lang seeks to answer in this excellent study of the Scriptures. The rewards for faithful service to be given in the next age far outweigh the sacrifice and hardships of faithful obedience in this age. Lang's work, originally published in 1936, is in this sense a predecessor to Hodges' *Grace in Eclipse*.

Lang draws a clear distinction between justification by faith alone and sanctification by works of faith. Both works are rooted in the gracious work of Christ and the Spirit's work in our life. Justification is a gift to be received freely by faith alone, while sanctification is a prize to be won by faithful living (p. 143). Though sanctification should follow justification, as God has made ample provision, such is not the

case for every individual believer. Many choose to live for the "passing pleasures" of this age, and thereby fail to grow to maturity (p. 104). In such cases the believer, though eternally secure, fails to obtain those rewards which could be his, fails to attain to the first resurrection, misses out on the millennial kingdom, and fails to share in the reign and rule of Christ. The rewards of discipleship are great; they are available to every believer, in fact, they are his birthright, but he must run the race well to obtain them (1 Cor 9:24-27).

Lang's approach is dispensational and premillennial. Conley and Schoettle have republished a number of his works, along with those of Robert Govett, D. M. Panton, and G. H. Pember. All of these men hold to a "selective rapture" position, that only the faithful believer will be resurrected or raptured to enter the millennial kingdom. Lang relies on such passages as "watch therefore" (Matt 24:42), "be accounted worthy" (Luke 21:36), "attain to the resurrection of the dead" (Phil 3:11), and "the first resurrection" (Rev 20:4, 5) for this position. The rest of the saved are resurrected at the end of the thousand years of kingdom rule and enter the "eternal kingdom" (p. 212). The publishers themselves felt constrained to add in the preface and in a concluding note their disagreement with this position. At the same time they affirm the great contribution these men have made in the past and can have on present students of the Word. This reviewer must concur with the publisher on both points.

Lang begins with an explanation of God's kingdom program, and the place of Israel and the church (which are distinct) in that program. Israel as a nation will be the focal point of that future kingdom, with the Gentiles, through the church, sharing in the fruits of that era. The bulk of what follows is an examination of the glories of the millennial kingdom and the conditions for securing participation in those glories. Rewards include earning the title of "son," being identified as part of the holy bride of Christ, inheriting the kingdom, ruling and reigning at Christ's side, and increased intimacy with the Lord Himself. In reference to the "bride," only the faithful believer who has kept himself unspotted from defilement (Eph 5:26; Jas 2:27) will be part of the glorious bride of Christ as pictured in Revelation 19. The bride is clothed in "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev 19:8) and if one has not lived righteously how can one attain to that position, Lang asks? Extensive treatment is given to the following passages: Rom 8:14-17; Col 1:21-23; 2 Thess 1:5, 11; Phil 3:11, 12; 2 Tim 2:10-13; Heb 3:12-14; 6:1-12; 12:14-29.

Overall, this is a very helpful and challenging work. It clearly presents the privileges and risks of our birthright as children of God. Though

one may not agree with all its particulars, it sharpens one's focus of the kingdom's rewards as motivation for faithful service. In all the striving for rewards Lang never loses the perspective of God's grace as is evidenced by this statement: "No matter what is the privilege now known, or hereafter to be gained, all our standing and hope is based upon the atonement of Calvary" (p. 86).

Robert Oliver

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Govett on Philippians. By Robert Govett. Miami Springs, FL: Conley & Schoettle Publishing Co., Inc., 1985. 127 pp. Paper, \$5.95.

This practical study on Philippians is part of a series of commentaries by Robert Govett (1813-1901) published by Conley & Schoettle. Other works include commentaries on Isaiah, John, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Hebrews, 1 John, and the Revelation (2 vols.). This work is a reprint of Govett's title, *The Fourth Kingdom of Man and His City: Being the Argument of the Epistle to the Philippians*, first published in 1894.

The commentary's strengths include a high regard for the inerrant Scriptures, a clear distinction between the gift of eternal life and the rewards for faithful service, and a good analysis of Acts 16:12-40 as background to this Epistle. Govett sees the account in Acts as providing some clues to the central themes in Philippians: heavenly citizenship versus earthly citizenship (Phil 3:20; Acts 16:21, 37); sharing in the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil 3:10; Acts 16:22, 23); peace and joy in the midst of suffering (Phil 4:4-7; Acts 16:25). The Philippians must choose which kingdom they will live for: this present kingdom, as represented by Rome, or the kingdom which is yet to come (Phil 3:20).

Govett discusses at length the differences between justification received as a gift through faith (Phil 3:7-9) and sanctification by works of faith, which qualify a believer for reward in the Millennium (Phil 3:10-14). Govett views participation in the Millennium itself as a reward for faithfulness on the part of the believer. He argues that the unfaithful believer will be excluded from the millennial kingdom altogether. Thus, only the obedient Christian can "attain to the resurrection from the dead" (Phil 3:11). The unfaithful believer remains eternally secure, but forfeits participation in the first resurrection (cf. Rev 20:4, 5).

This reviewer does not agree with Govett's position on exclusion from the kingdom, but the author does give good arguments that should be considered. Like most commentators, he equates "entering" the kingdom with "inheriting" the kingdom. Unlike most commentators, he defines the concept in terms of reward or merit, which is the idea found in "inheriting." He fails to distinguish between "entering" the kingdom, which is solely dependent on childlike faith (Matt 18:3) and "inheriting" the kingdom, which is dependent on faithful obedience (Matt 18:4). Govett never clearly addresses the state of those believers not found worthy of the kingdom, except to say that they are not resurrected until after the millennial kingdom and that they remain eternally secure.

This position is one of the commentary's primary weaknesses. The work is almost a hundred years old, so it does not interact with any recent works or arguments. The style is expository and devotional, not technical. However, the author's love and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ comes through repeatedly in the book, which this reviewer found very refreshing. Govett's work is a brief, but very helpful examination of the Epistle to the Philippians.

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The Health and Wealth Gospel. By Bruce Barron. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987. 204 pp. Paper, \$6.95.

The gospel of healing and prosperity is the parent and child of the modern "faith movement" which has attracted millions of people and spawned some highly visible—and controversial—ministries. Barron's purpose in writing about the movement is to describe it and evaluate it as accurately as possible in order to "lay the groundwork for meaningful dialog and for resolution of conflict" between the movement and its critics (p. 12).

Barron begins his book with the description of an admittedly extreme case, the cult-like Faith Assembly of Indiana formerly led by the late Hobart Freeman. However, he goes on to give a brief survey of the rise of the more typical elements of the faith movement. He then presents the predominant teachings about healing and prosperity and carefully evaluates each. The three leaders he seems to refer to most

are Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and Robert Tilton. A separate chapter (chap. 9) calls attention to the weakness of or lack of good hermeneutical practices by the faith movement's leaders. The book ends with a chapter on unfortunate experiences caused by the excesses and bad theology of the movement, and a chapter suggesting a mediating position (and attitude) concerning healing and prosperity.

Barron is to be commended for a fair and substantial treatment of the faith movement's teachers and teachings. He describes the extensive effort to do primary research (even enrolling and graduating from Hagin's Bible School) in an appendix, but the reader will have no problem trusting his approach from the beginning. He professes to be a charismatic who embarked on the study due to concerns about extremes in the faith movement. He presents the teachings of the movement well and is just as honest in evaluating them. Barron views as the major flaw of the faith movement its inconsistent (or nonexistent) hermeneutic. He cites, principally, neglect of the context, the use of "revelation knowledge" ("The Lord told me"), and the abuse of the interpreter's authority in influencing others. Unfortunately, he makes no dispensational appeal to bridle the practice of claiming OT promises. Also, he does not deal at all with the effect of faith theology on the content of the Gospel. Barron is more concerned with the effect of faith theology on Christians.

Those who look for a scathing denunciation of the faith movement will not find it in Barron's book. He seeks to be as objective, fair, and conciliatory as possible. The result is that he succeeds in making the reader more cautious in regard to criticizing the movement while also making him aware of the deficiencies. The book is highly recommended for those who want an accurate look into the faith movement, but have no time for firsthand research. Readers will profit from Barron's evaluations of faith teachings and from his call for opposing sides to stop unfair accusations and begin honest dialog.

Charles C. Bing

Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Burleson, TX

Real Christians. By Charles Price. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1987. 174 pp. Paper, \$5.95.

Charles Price is a British evangelist who first published this book in Britain under the title *Christ for Real*. Unfortunately, like too many modern evangelists, Price fails to wed good theology with gospel preaching. His theology of salvation is unapologetically of the "Lordship" variety. It is not a well-developed theology, but a repetition of the standard and expected lines. In fact, the inevitable contradictions in such a system are quickly displayed by Price.

For example, though he admits at the beginning of the book that he was not fully surrendered to Christ at the time of his own salvation (p. 12), this possibility is later denied to others when he asserts, "The Christian life begins with surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ" (p. 48). Another contradiction appears over the idea of "free salvation." In a section entitled "The Cost of Free Salvation," Price makes the statement, "We talk about salvation being 'free,' and this is wonderfully true, but only in a limited sense. . . . It is free insofar that we cannot purchase it or earn it." But he goes on to say, "Only on the basis of paying the cost will we have the right to call ourselves 'Christian'" (pp. 41-42).

Price also shows some weakness in handling the Bible. Not many Scriptures are expounded, and some which are, are handled carelessly (e.g., Acts 19:1-5, where the reception of the Holy Spirit is equated with salvation, p. 118). The requirements for discipleship (Luke 14:26-33) are transposed on salvation, and, as expected, the expected exposition of the rich young ruler account is used to show that lack of surrender to Christ is the issue of salvation. Surprisingly, in light of the book's title, James 2 and 1 John are only mentioned in passing (in one sentence). Also amazing is the statement that "Jesus Christ never talked about salvation being free" (p. 42), since in John 4:10 Jesus describes salvation as a "gift" which is "given" if one merely "asks."

One benefit of Price's book is that it demonstrates the harmful implications of the Lordship Salvation doctrine upon one's method of evangelism. Price's own conversion to the Lordship doctrine came as he observed a friend counsel a person who was interested in becoming a Christian. The prospective convert was told, "Do not become a Christian until you . . . are willing to surrender everything to Christ" (p. 56).

Price's book is intended to be a call for the reality of Christ in the Christian life. Since his worthy goal is not built on good theology,

and he makes assurance of salvation elusive, the book will be of little help to Christians. Unfortunately, this book reflects a disturbing increase in the number of books and articles printed by this publisher which espouse Lordship Salvation (cf. Kevin Butcher's periodical review). Let it best serve to challenge those committed to the free Gospel of grace to recognize anew the need for evangelists who will preach the Gospel clearly.

Charles C. Bing
Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Burleson, TX

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

"A Critique of Zane Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege*: A Review Article," William G. Bjork, *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, December 1987, pp. 457-67.

Since its release in 1981, Zane C. Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege* has commanded considerable attention in the realm of soteriological study. Some within the evangelical community have responded favorably to the author's thesis. Such would argue that the book is marked by exegetical clarity, theological consistency, and the capacity to instill comfort to those who are troubled over personal assurance of salvation. At the same time, others within evangelical circles have not responded favorably to this book. Such would charge that questionable exegesis and false notions of grace undergird the flow of Hodges' thought.

In coming to the above conclusion, those who take issue with the book lean heavily upon theological and exegetical tradition as tried and true mechanisms of argumentation. William G. Bjork's critique of *The Gospel Under Siege* is a clear case in point where theological-exegetical tradition is pitted against various tenets of Hodges' thesis in an effort to uphold the status quo of Reformed salvation doctrine.

At the outset, the most distinguishing feature of Bjork's review is his extensive citation of the exegetical conclusions of a number of leading evangelical commentators. This approach to interpretive validation displays both positive and negative effects in Bjork's article. From a positive standpoint this approach provides a *Reformed consensus* of opinion regarding the interpretation of difficult NT texts. From a negative standpoint this approach reflects a superficial and less than judicious study of the *Scriptures themselves*. In his attempt to advance an argument against *The Gospel Under Siege*, Bjork juxtaposes the ideas of other writers without genuinely interacting with and confronting the views of Hodges himself. It would have been refreshing to see Bjork grapple with the texts under discussion and draw his *own* exegetical conclusions after having taken contextual congruence, biblical theology, grammatical style, lexical study, and grammar all into consideration.

Not only is the methodology of Bjork's review found wanting, but his argumentation is often inconsistent and based upon highly questionable premises. A few examples of this bear mention.

In discussing salvation in James 1, Bjork suggests that "James patterned his statement in v 21 about the saving power of the Word after the Jewish teaching that the Torah (the Word of God through Moses) was the means of eternal salvation" (p. 458). On the contrary, it seems most unlikely that James would use extra-biblical "Jewish teaching" as a pattern for spiritual salvation, since the bulk of Jewish extra-biblical literature from the general era of the early Church considered works as a basis for salvation (e.g., En 47:3; 81:4; 89:61; Apoc Bar 24:1; 4 Ez 6:20; Asc Isa 9:22; Ps Sol 9:9; Test Abr 13). Furthermore, it is important to note that in specific contexts in James, the verb *sōzō* refers to the preservation of one's physical life (4:12; 5:15, 20). This usage of *sōzein tēn psychēn* is well in accord with the OT concept of the preservation of one's physical life from death (cf. LXX, Gen 19:17; 32:30; 1 Sam 19:11; Ps 109:31; Jer 48:6). On the level of probability, it is best to take this as the sense of *sōzō* in 1:21 and 2:14 since contextual factors are more favorable to a physical life versus an eternal life interpretation (compare 1:15 with 1:21). Finally, the "eternal" concept of salvation is a largely dormant theme in OT theology. Therefore, it is better to suggest that obedience to the Torah provided the devout Jew with a standard through which covenant relationship with Yahweh was preserved, particularly in the physical sphere (Lev 18:5; Deut 16:20; Ezek 18:1-32; 20:11).

In attempting to counter Hodges' interpretation of 1 John 3:6 and 9, Bjork quotes at length from Stott's commentary on 1 John. This effort, however, backfires for several reasons. First, it is a mistake to insist that Hodges' view entertains the possibility of a Christian relinquishing responsibility for sin. Conceding the fact that both the flesh and the divine nature constitute the human psyche, Hodges would agree with Stott that "it is a person who sins or does not sin. . . ." This is precisely John's point in vv 6 and 9. The regenerate person who abides in Christ cannot sin because the practice of sin is never the normative experience of abiding in Christ. The regenerate person who sins demonstrates blindness toward God and thus shares in the sphere of satanic activity (3:8). Hence, by means of an absolute statement, John argues that there is no middle ground between sinning and abiding in Christ. Second, Stott's use of the durative present for *hamartanō* (vv 6 and 9) has been capably refuted in recent scholarly discussion. See, for example, Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, p. 126; I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, p. 180; and Stephen S.

Smalley, 1, 2, 3 *John*, pp. 159-60. By and large, Bjork appeals only to the commentary literature that favors his own position. This variety of special pleading makes for less than equitable scholarship.

Space does not permit a definitive rebuttal of Bjork's article. Suffice it to say, there are a number of other weaknesses with his presentation that deserve further critique. Yet, the most disturbing feature of his review is his unabashed pronouncement that works "confirm the sincerity of . . . repentance and the reality of . . . salvation. Such works provide assurance that one does indeed belong to God and is indwelt by His righteousness-producing Spirit (Rom 8:3-4, 12-17)" (p. 465). This statement can be considered true only in a secondary sense. Good works, in and of themselves, serve only a potential role in the assurance of salvation. The ultimate foundation for the assurance of salvation is faith in the promise of the Gospel itself (1 John 5:9-13). To hold otherwise conflicts with the biblical record and introduces a score of theological and pastoral problems.

In the final analysis, William G. Bjork's "A Critique of Zane Hodges' *The Gospel Under Siege: A Review Article*" is a disappointing appeal *ad populum* fraught with methodological weaknesses and less than persuasive argumentation. All things considered, the task at hand is not so much to defend and uphold *The Gospel Under Siege* as it is to understand and rightly interpret the Word of God. It is to this end that Bjork's review has fallen embarrassingly short.

Gary L. Nebeker

Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
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"This So-Called 'Lordship Salvation,'" Rich Wager, *Confident Living*, July/August, 1987, pp. 54-55.

Rich Wager's article is a helpful but brief treatment of many of the problems inherent in Lordship Salvation. The author boldly declares that the invitation to "receive Christ as Savior *and* Lord" is an erroneous statement of the condition of salvation, adding to the biblical terms of faith alone and in effect requiring the unsaved man to be "qualified for salvation by making Christ his Master" before he can trust Him as his Savior and be saved.

Wager posits five specific reasons why a Lordship gospel is unbiblical: (1) It emphasizes works over grace; (2) It ignores the fact that salvation

is a gift received by faith alone; (3) It ignores the depravity of man and his inability in his unregenerate state to do anything to please God—much less to make Jesus the Lord and Master of his life; (4) It undermines eternal security—if a regenerate man becomes carnal and ceases to submit to the Lordship of Christ it would seem that Lordship Salvation advocates would have to entertain the possibility of this man losing his salvation; (5) It incorrectly understands key biblical terms such as “Lord” and “repentance.”

Wager maintains that trusting Christ as Savior and Lord actually involves two decisions. First the unsaved individual must trust Christ as Savior in order to be saved from the lake of fire. Second, as a regenerate believer, he is to submit to Christ as the Lord of his life as he progressively matures and grows as a Christian. The author notes that the NT concedes that while some believers do consistently mature and grow in their submission and obedience to Christ as Lord, others do not (and are referred to by Paul as “carnal” in 1 Cor 2:15–3:4). Wager also points out that Rom 12:1–2 is a call to believers to practically acknowledge Christ as Lord in their lives as Christians. The article concludes with the author emphasizing the fact that the Bible calls on the unsaved man to come to Christ as his Savior by faith and calls on the believer to yield to the Lord Jesus by a life of faithfulness.

This article does surface some of the basic weaknesses of Lordship Salvation in an introductory fashion. However, a few words of constructive criticism need to be made. First, while the author does support several of his points with Scripture references, this procedure is sporadic both in quantity and quality. Several statements demanding direct biblical support have no reference at all. At other times Wager neglects to use the most obvious and best verse or passage to support his argument. Second, the treatment of the terms “Lord” and “repentance” is superficial and may well raise (at least in some minds) more questions than it answers. Also, other key terms such as “faith” are described but never specifically defined in the article. Third, the author omits any reference to eternal rewards (or loss of rewards) in his reference to the penalties that will befall the carnal Christian. Fourth, Wager erroneously breaks down Rom 12:1–2 into “two phases,” while actually the verse enjoins one comprehensive life-commitment to God.

Back to the Bible ministry is to be commended for reprinting this article (which first appeared in the Awana magazine, *Signal*, Nov/Dec 1986). This article will be helpful to the layman who is just beginning to study this issue. However, anyone looking for depth—biblically

and/or theologically—will need to move on quickly to weightier sources.

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"Does the Bible Teach Lordship Salvation?" Livingston Blauvelt, Jr., *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January–March 1986, Vol. 143, pp. 37-45.

There is a growing confusion among evangelicals concerning the question "What must I do to be saved?" The inclination of many to answer that to be saved a person must trust Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin *and* must *also* commit himself to Christ as Lord of his life, submitting to His sovereign authority, forces the issue: Is this view, so-called Lordship Salvation, biblical?

Blauvelt contends that Lordship Salvation is not sound. "This teaching is false," he says, "because it adds works to the clear and simple condition for salvation set forth in the Word of God" (p. 37). Convincing scriptural proof that "according to the Bible, salvation is always by faith alone" (p. 37) is supported by the powerful writings of Chafer. Blauvelt lists five arguments for Lordship Salvation and points out the weakness of each one.

First, the contention that "Lord" means "Master" in passages such as Rom 10:9 (thereby adding the making of Jesus Lord of one's life as a requirement to salvation) is disproven lexically, contextually, and theologically. The use of *Kyrios* in these passages suggests that confessing Jesus as Lord means recognizing the fact that He is God Himself. (*Kyrios* is the most frequent Greek equivalent for the Hebrew form of Jehovah.) The use of the *Kyrios* does not by itself imply that one must submit to His control.

After the thorough analysis of *Kyrios*, the brevity of the discussion of arguments two through five is disappointing. Though the discussion is not thorough, it does offer a good review of the critical issues on this debate:

1. The distinction between justification and discipleship.
2. The proper definition of repentance (*metanoia*) as a change of mind.
3. The fact that faith is simply trusting in Christ for eternal life and cannot imply commitment.
4. The obedience demanded in salvation passages is obedience to the command to turn to Christ for salvation.

A clear presentation of what one must believe to be saved is followed by concluding remarks proving the impossibility of so-called Lordship Salvation. In light of the current works-gospel inroads into evangelicalism, Blauvelt's clear presentation of the issues and concise refutation of the Lordship position provide a solid tool for the defense of the gospel of grace.

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"The Meaning of Discipleship," James Montgomery Boice, *Moody Monthly*, February 1986, pp. 34-37.

Boice very clearly and strongly presents a case for Lordship Salvation. The first major subheading in the article is entitled "Costly Grace." This article is devotional in nature and was adapted from Boice's book, *Christ's Call to Discipleship*, Moody Press, 1986.

Boice says there are several reasons for the lack of discipleship in the church today, and the first is "defective theology." "This theology separates faith from discipleship and grace from obedience" (p. 34). He goes on to say that in good times "preachers often delude them (people) with an easy faith—Christianity without the cross." Boice sees this as "cheap grace" and contrasts it with "costly grace" which he concludes is a "personal, self-denying, costly, and persistent following of Christ [which] is necessary if a person is to be acknowledged by Jesus at the final day." Lest some think he is speaking of temporal judgment or the Judgment Seat of Christ, he says these people are "far from Christ, devoid of grace and in danger of perishing forever" (p. 35).

The next section of the article lists the five elements of discipleship: obedience, repentance, submission, commitment and perseverance. Boice sees repentance as a turning from sin and a renouncing of sin. He concludes his paragraph on repentance by saying, "Anyone who claims to be following Christ while actually continuing in unrighteousness is deluded. Such a one is no Christian" (p. 36).

Boice does believe salvation is a past event and remarks that it is correct "to say that Jesus saved us by His death on the cross." But then he mentions present and future salvation and concludes the paragraph with Matt 10:22, "And you will be hated by all on account of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved" (p. 37).

The final paragraph of the article is a challenge to discipleship. The

author comments that "discipleship is not simply a door to be entered, but a path to be followed, and that a disciple proves the validity of his discipleship by following that path to the very end." He says, "To be a Christian is no light thing It is the hardest thing anyone can do" (p. 37).

While many of the things that Boice says about discipleship are true, the coalescing of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone and discipleship brings real confusion to the Scriptures. The Bible is clear that discipleship is costly and that disciples should count the cost before embarking on this path. But how do we reconcile that with the clear teaching that salvation is a free gift by faith in the work of Christ?

Boice does not see any contradiction in calling people to "costly grace" and saying that salvation is a free gift. This reviewer does not question the motives of Boice, but there does seem to be a conflict in saying that salvation will *cost me everything*, but it is *a free gift*. Even saying it is a free gift, but then a person "proves" he has the free gift only by giving his life to Jesus is contradictory.

Boice does use verses throughout the article to support his position, but since this is a devotional article there is not the depth of information to explore the context and meaning of the Scriptures used for his views. Some of the passages such as the parable of the ten virgins or the talents would be hotly debated even in circles that hold to Lordship Salvation.

This article could be valuable to demonstrate that there really is a difference in the presentation of the Gospel among evangelicals today. The major value of this article is to show the position that is held by many in the church today and to contrast it with the wonderful Gospel of Christ that offers: "Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17).

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"Must Christ Be Lord To Be Savior?" Everett F. Harrison and John R. Stott, *Eternity*, September 1959, pp. 13-18, 36, 48.

This 1959 article was surely a foretaste of the growing debate about Lordship Salvation. Two respected scholars offer in brief fashion the basic arguments for each position in a format that begins to appear as a debate. This is because Harrison sets forth his arguments against Lordship Salvation and Stott is allowed to defend that position while having the advantage of answering Harrison. It is stimulating reading.

Harrison begins by noting the RSV translation of Rom 10:9 ("Jesus as Lord"). He cites this as the basis for the growing popularity of the Lordship Salvation view, along with the practical problem of those who profess Christ but evidence little or no apparent change in life. He recognizes that the strength of the Lordship view lies in Christ's teaching on discipleship, and does a good job at showing how these passages cannot apply to salvation: "The word *disciple* answers to Teacher, not Savior" (p. 14). He proceeds with five arguments against the Lordship view. *First*, the examples of gospel preaching in Acts do not present Lordship as part of the appeal for salvation (2:38; 10:43; 13:38-39). *Second*, it is contrary to Christian experience in the NT and church history. (He uses as examples Peter and F. B. Meyer.) *Third*, Lordship doctrine undermines assurance of salvation. *Fourth*, it rules out the necessity of much of the practical teachings of the Epistles, since Christians should be already yielded to Christ (e.g. Rom 6; 12:1). *Fifth*, it introduces a subtle form of legalism, i.e., works-salvation. He then expounds his understanding of Rom 10:9, which he says refers to an admission of the "factual lordship" (objective sense) not the subjective and personal relationship to Christ. His overriding plea is that salvation must remain a free gift.

Stott seems at an advantage addressing the issue in second position. He obviously has read Harrison's part of the article. He begins with a pledge of allegiance to the belief that "salvation is by grace alone through faith alone" (p. 15). Then he defines the nature of saving faith, which to him (1) presupposes repentance (turning from sin) and is indissolubly linked to it, (2) includes obedience (Rom 1:5; 6:17; 16:26; Matt 11:28-30), and (3) issues in new life: "No interim period may be envisaged between the exercise of faith and the performance of works" (p. 18). He argues that it is inconceivable that a person might "accept the immediate purpose of our Savior's death (forgiveness) and reject the ultimate purpose (holiness)" (p.36). He also objects to Harrison's interpretation of Rom 10:9, claiming that the verse "implies" the idea "my Lord" as much as "the Lord" (p.18).

An immediate reaction to this article is to conclude that a much larger forum is needed for this debate. The brevity allowed by a single magazine article does not allow for the kind of exposition of key Bible passages which is needed. Thus Harrison is excused for not mentioning the many offers of free salvation in the Gospel of John and the important Scriptures which distinguish between justification and sanctification, such as Titus 2:11-14. Stott is likewise excused for not presenting and answering the interpretation of Rom 1:5 and 16:26 which interprets "the obedience of faith" as obedience to the command to believe in

Christ. One may also guess that the limitation of space prevented Stott from giving a satisfactory contextual explanation of why the discipleship passages (Mark 8:34; Luke 14:25-33) must be salvific in nature. It would also be nice to see Harrison respond to Stott, and so on, but this is an unrealistic expectation for a magazine format.

In spite of its brevity, this article will profit readers by making them aware of some of the chief arguments being used by both sides. It should stimulate further dialog and deeper study to find support for one's position. It should also whet one's appetite for more publications and forums which could address more thoroughly the issue of the condition(s) for salvation.

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"One-Verse Evangelism," Randy Raysbrook, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 34, 1986, pp. 28-32.

Raysbrook carefully begins his article by delineating his intention to once and for all put to rest the usage of "fuzzy and unclear" presentations of the Gospel. He then attempts to present a "simple way to communicate the gospel using just one Bible verse and the Bridge illustration" (p. 28). In terms of technique and mechanics it seems that Raysbrook accomplishes his task. For example, there is no doubt that carefully dissecting and explaining one clear Gospel text is much less confusing to the non-Christian than using several unfamiliar and more complicated texts. Furthermore, the "Bridge illustration" should be extremely helpful in visually communicating the message of the Gospel. Raysbrook is also to be applauded for his choice of an extremely appropriate text (Rom 6:23) and for a very accurate beginning to his presentation of the content of the Gospel itself. His explanation of man's predicament (sin and death) and God's provision (Jesus Christ and eternal life) is excellent and easily understood.

However, Raysbrook's clarity begins to fade into confusion when he describes how man can appropriate God's provision and apply it to himself. Where the reader expects to find the concept of "faith" given as the only means by which man can receive God's gift of eternal life, Raysbrook invites the non-Christian to receive that gift by "making Jesus Lord" and allowing Christ to have "total control" of his life. He

goes on to suggest that this is accomplished only when the unbeliever "confesses and surrenders." "Confession" occurs when there is agreement with God that "there are things in our life that are wrong and that we want Christ to forgive us as we turn away from our sin" (p. 31). To "surrender" involves allowing Christ to be "the final authority in our lives" to the extent that we live only "to please Him" (p. 31). Finally, in a closing paragraph Raysbrook adds the concepts of "repentance" and "faith" (both of which remain undefined), and suggests that all of these things must be verbalized in prayer in order to receive the gift of eternal life. In summary then, in order for an unbeliever to cross the bridge from eternal death to eternal life, he must accomplish nine spiritually sophisticated activities, all of which require a fair degree of maturity and effort on the part of the individual making the decision. Suddenly, Raysbrook's "Bridge illustration," which began with the laudable goal of clarifying the gospel, has in effect accomplished quite the opposite.

Raysbrook's errors, though certainly unintentional, are both obvious and numerous.

1. *Logically* — A gift is no longer a gift if the receiver is required to do anything (including making moral promises) other than making a choice to accept.

2. *Theologically* — Though Raysbrook suggests that "Christ purchased [eternal life] by paying for it with His life" (p. 31), the emphasis in the article is not on the sufficiency of Christ's death but on *how much we must pay in order to receive* the benefits of His death.

In addition, whereas the NT clearly distinguishes between the moment of justification and issues relating to the Christian life (cf. Rom 1-4 and 5-8), Raysbrook implies rather that matters relating to growth and maturity *must* be dealt with at the moment of regeneration. Though justification and sanctification are logically related (as Eph 2:8, 9 is to 2:10), the latter must not be made to be a condition for the former if the acquisition of eternal life is to remain truly free.

3. *Grammatically* — In Rom 6:23 the unbeliever is not commanded to "make Jesus Lord" in order to receive eternal life. Instead, the term "Lord" is used descriptively of Jesus Christ, whom Paul is declaring to be the Sovereign of the church. In fact, nowhere in Scripture is the unbeliever commanded to "make Jesus Lord" in order to be justified before God.

4. *Lexically* — The key theological term "repent" is only briefly mentioned and never defined. "Confession," which means to "agree

with" or "acknowledge," is extended to include "desiring Christ to forgive us" and "turning from sin." Ironically, the word "believe," the NT term most often linked to the appropriation of eternal life, is only mentioned in passing and never elaborated upon or further defined.

In a written communiqué to this reviewer in August 1986, Raysbrook stated firmly that he had not intended in his article to confuse the Gospel or in any way communicate that man contributes to his salvation. Nevertheless, in an article designed to clarify and clear up the Gospel, Raysbrook has inadvertently further clouded the issue by taking a call to believe in the finished work of Christ and turning it into a call to promise various moral reforms in order to receive eternal life.

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A HYMN OF GRACE

By Grace I Am an Heir of Heaven

By grace I am an heir of heaven:
Why doubt this, O my trembling heart?
If what the Scriptures promise clearly
Is true and firm in every part,
This also must be truth divine:
By grace a crown of life is thine.

By grace alone shall I inherit
That blissful home beyond the skies.
Works count for naught, the Lord incarnate
Has won for me the heavenly prize.
Salvation by His death He wrought,
His grace alone my pardon bought.

By grace! These precious words remember
When sorely by thy sins oppressed,
When Satan comes to vex thy spirit,
When troubled conscience sighs for rest;
What reason cannot comprehend,
God does to thee by grace extend.

By grace! Be this in death my comfort;
Despite my fears, 'tis well with me.
I know my sin in all its greatness,
But also Him who sets me free.
My heart to naught but joy gives place
Since I am saved by grace, by grace!

—Christian L. Scheit
(Translated from the German
by H. Breuckner)

the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* infections has increased in the United Kingdom [10]. In the United States, the incidence of *S. flexneri* infections has increased in the 1990s, with a peak in 1994 [11].

There is a paucity of data on the incidence of *S. flexneri* infections in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype of *Shigella* from patients with shigellosis in the United Kingdom [12]. In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was the most commonly isolated serotype of *Shigella* from patients with shigellosis in the United Kingdom [13]. In the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* infections in the United Kingdom has increased [14]. In the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* infections in the United Kingdom has increased [15].

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