

Journal of the  
**GRACE**  
Evangelical Society

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*"Falls Alone In Christ Alone"*

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial statements. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses, income, and any other financial activity.

The second part of the document provides a detailed breakdown of the accounting process. It starts with the identification of the accounting cycle, which consists of eight steps: identifying the accounting cycle, analyzing and journalizing the transactions, posting to the ledger, preparing a trial balance, adjusting the accounts, preparing financial statements, and closing the books. Each step is explained in detail, with examples and practical advice.

The third part of the document focuses on the preparation of financial statements. It covers the balance sheet, the income statement, and the statement of owner's equity. It explains how these statements are derived from the accounting records and how they provide a comprehensive view of the company's financial position and performance.

The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of internal controls. It outlines various control procedures, such as segregation of duties, authorization, and documentation, which are essential for preventing errors and fraud. It also discusses the role of the auditor in verifying the accuracy of the financial statements.

The fifth part of the document provides a summary of the key concepts and principles of accounting. It emphasizes the importance of accuracy, objectivity, and transparency in financial reporting. It also discusses the role of the accountant in providing reliable financial information to management and stakeholders.

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# POST-EVANGELICALISM CONFRONTS THE POSTMODERN AGE

## A Review of *The Challenge of Postmodernism*

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*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*  
Mesquite, Texas

In the cloistered halls of academia one of the newer buzz words is *postmodernism*. Postmodernism expresses the widely held view that modernity has somehow come to an end and that we have entered the postmodern age. Obviously there is a kind of pretentiousness to this perspective, but perhaps after all this concept is true.

That is certainly the opinion of most of the contributors to the volume entitled, *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, ed. David S. Dockery (Wheaton, IL, BridgePoint, the academic imprint of Victor Books, 1995). Here in a collection of no less than 23 different essays, stretching over 400 pages, a variety of writers from a variety of schools assesses what postmodernism means for the evangelical community.

In the process of evaluating the present and future impact of postmodern ideas, the writers also open an unintended window on the state of evangelical thought in America today. The view afforded by this window is far from reassuring. Thus in this review article we will not only talk about postmodernism but also about what could be described as *post-evangelicalism*.

### I. What Is Postmodernism?

Many readers of this journal have probably already heard of postmodernism. I met the concept recently in an editorial in a major newspaper. It has become one of those floating terms in the language which are recognizable but still somewhat vague in meaning. The writers in this book for the most part are fairly well agreed as to its specific significance.

According to these writers postmodernism indicates the end of the modern period, which began with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century and extended into the latter half of the twentieth century, by some reckonings into the 1980s. In the first of his two essays, Thomas C. Oden of Drew University makes this definite statement:

By *postmodern*, we mean the course of actual history following the death of modernity. By *modernity* we mean the period, the ideology, and the malaise of the time from 1789 to 1989, from the Bastille to the Berlin Wall.<sup>1</sup>

By this timeframe, the postmodern era has barely begun. We might well ask whether it is not a bit heady to announce the dawn of a new age within its first decade!

Most of the contributors to this volume would agree with the assessment expressed by David S. Dockery of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary when he writes:

As we move into the twenty-first century, a new way of viewing the world has emerged. The “modern” way of thinking, that dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has become obsolete. The modern ideas are no longer relevant.<sup>2</sup>

This change of thinking, however, turns out to be primarily a rejection of modernity’s confidence in human reason as a tool for attaining truth as well as of its optimistic belief in the inevitability of human progress. According to Oden, among the casualties are modern empiricism and idealism which “in 200 years emerged, gained dominance, peaked, and receded.”<sup>3</sup> Oden follows shortly with this withering statement:

The enchantment of modernity is characterized by technological messianism, enlightenment idealism, quantifying empiricism, and the smug fantasy of inevitable human progress. We have fooled ourselves on all counts.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas C. Oden, “The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality,” *The Challenge of Postmodernism* [hereafter in these notes: *TCOP*], 20.

<sup>2</sup> David S. Dockery, “The Challenge of Postmodernism,” *TCOP*, 13.

<sup>3</sup> Oden, “Death of Modernity,” *TCOP*, 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

Christians, however, should not rejoice prematurely in the demise of modern thought, since the perspective that replaces it in so-called postmodernism is equally inhospitable to Christian faith. In his own interesting assessment of postmodern thought, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, points out that the postmodern perspective rejects all "meta-discourses" which claim universal validity. In the postmodern worldview, therefore, it is maintained that "universal truth claims are impossible. All discourse is particular, limited, and insular, and it inevitably breaks down into the competing language games operating among different communities of meaning."<sup>5</sup>

It will be obvious to the reader by this point, that postmodernism is in fact a form of radical skepticism about the knowability of truth. Another way to say this is that we are in a period marked by a crisis of epistemology. The routes taken by so-called modernity to the attainment of knowledge have proved to be dead-end streets. The optimism of modernity about the attainability of universal truth has been replaced by a profound skepticism which amounts to a definitive defeatism. Man can only attain relative knowledge with limited validity for himself and others of his community, but he must abandon the effort to find truth universally applicable to all men.

Clearly in so far as this climate prevails (and the writers agree that it does, at least in academic circles), Christianity's claim to possess universal truth to which all humanity is accountable will face tough sledding.

## II. Evaluating Postmodernism

One effect of postmodernism is to give fresh impetus to an interpretive process known as *deconstruction*. In deconstruction the truth claims of any given text are torn down so as to reveal the supposed biases which underlie it and which invalidate those claims. By this method Western history, for example, can be treated as a means by which the white male seeks to assert his power over other cultural communities.

Carl F. H. Henry, also of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, describes deconstruction like this:

Deconstructionism strips reality and written texts of inherent meaning. It reduces language to but a social construct mirroring the interpreter's personal perspective. Consequently, every interpreter is

<sup>5</sup> R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The Integrity of the Evangelical Tradition and the Challenge of the Postmodern Paradigm," *TCOP*, 71.

free to handle the text selectively, that is, to deconstruct it, and to re-fashion favored segments into fresh readings that reflect one's own preferences without evident anchorage in the text.<sup>6</sup>

It is plain that such an approach to the Scriptures robs them of any inherent authority and places the interpreter *above* the text rather than *under* it. What the interpreter will hear is not the voice of the Lord, but his own voice. And in postmodernism that is all the interpreter really wants to hear! From one point of view postmodernism is the ultimate attempt to place man in authority over the Scriptures rather than place the Scriptures in authority over man.

This is hardly new. After all, modernity placed human reason and scientific knowledge above the Scriptures. In postmodernism this perspective simply becomes more crass.

Although some wish to begin the period of postmodernism at the end of the 1980s (as we saw earlier), the *term* postmodernism is said to have been first used by John Cobb in 1964. But as early as 1960, Dick Jellema had spoken of "the post-modern mind."<sup>7</sup> In addition, a number of earlier names are associated with the rise of postmodern thought, among them being Jacques Derrida, Richard Rorty, and Michel Foucault.<sup>8</sup> The case of Foucault has special interest. Mohler has this significant assessment of him:

At this point the example of Michel Foucault is instructive. One of the most celebrated figures of postmodernism for the last twenty years, Foucault was himself a period piece of the Paris intelligentsia. His deconstruction of the moral tradition was demonstrated to the observing world by his own radically "liberated" homosexual lifestyle, his extended arguments for pederasty, and his experimentation with hallucinogenic drugs.

In Foucault, the Enlightenment project reaches its dead-end. Evident here is a shift from the radical subjectivism of the Enlightenment's left wing to the absolute deconstruction of meaning when radical subjectivism reaches its conclusion. Foucault's famous notion of the "death of the author" is perhaps the clearest rejection of any objective meaning. Communal understandings are undermined and subverted. All that remains is the task of ideological and moral genealogy, a task Foucault believed was left unfinished with the death of Nietzsche.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "Postmodernism: The New Spectre?" *TCOP*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 35 and 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Mohler, 72-73.



This type of thing sounds very much like Romans 1, where Paul writes:

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness . . . (Rom 1: 28-29a).

A Christian assessment of postmodernism, therefore, must take its moral component fully into account. The urge to sexual freedom and perversion is by no means unrelated to the rejection of universal truth and universal standards of morality. The postmodern mind does not “like to retain God in (its) knowledge.” Thus to dismiss His knowability is also to dismiss the moral code of biblical revelation and to set man “free” (or so he thinks). We shall be greatly deceived if we think that rational arguments will be effective in restoring a belief in ultimate standards and values. In the postmodern society we shall have to depend (as we always should have done) on the convicting and enlightening work of the Holy Spirit.

As some of the writers in this volume indicate, a possible plus for the evangelical movement is that we may be able to escape the spell of rationalism and empiricism by which modernity enthralled some evangelical thinkers. In addition, as John A. Sims of Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee, has noted, “Defending against the claim that scientific rationality represents the only legitimate method of enquiry into reality . . . is an intellectual burden that evangelicals no longer have to bear.”<sup>10</sup>

One of the more penetrating critiques of postmodernism found among the essayists of *The Challenge of Postmodernism* is that of C. Ben Mitchell, Director of Biomedical and Life Issues for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. He describes postmodernism as “rabidly self-refuting.” This, he says, is because “by denying the possibility of truth, it effectively squelches every effort to set forth, recognize, or aspire to truth.”<sup>11</sup> He goes on to note:

Self-avowed pluralists who espouse this pluralist doctrine thus become the worst form of imperialist—denying to others what they themselves claim to have. That is, epistemological agnosticism is, in fact, a covert claim of knowing the truth about truth. “That no one can or should claim to know the truth” is a truth claim.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> John A. Sims, “Postmodernism: The Apologetic Imperative,” *TCOP*, 329.

<sup>11</sup> C. Ben Mitchell, “Is That All There Is? Moral Ambiguity in a Postmodern Pluralistic Culture,” *TCOP*, 272.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

To put it another way, radical skepticism about the possibility of knowing universal truth is itself an act of faith! The radical skeptic can say that he himself does not know the truth, and that might be true enough. But the claim that he *cannot know* the truth is an unverifiable assertion. All that he really ought to say is that he does not *believe* he can know the truth, but that in fact he could be wrong!

Christians are sometimes afraid to engage skeptical people in the marketplace of ideas. But they should not be. The rejection of knowable universal truth is a perverse act of faith based mainly on man's reluctance to know it—since to know truth is to be accountable to it. Man's rejection of accountability is in fact the bitter root from which postmodern thought has grown. The Christian who understands this is well-armed to challenge his postmodern world with the claims of a Gospel of grace intended for every individual and to allow the Holy Spirit to bring to people the necessary conviction and illumination.

God is not defeated by the relativism of postmodern thought any more than He was defeated by the rationalism and empiricism of modernity. God's Word remains "like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces" (Jer 23:29).

One of the most effective critiques of postmodernism among all the essayists in this volume is offered by its only female contributor, Kathryn R. Ludwigson of Toccoa Falls College in Toccoa Falls, Georgia. Her essay is entitled, "Postmodernism: A Declaration of Bankruptcy." As a professor of literature Ludwigson is particularly attuned to the postmodernist view of language, which she scorns. Her description of this is a tour de force:

How then did language originate? Human beings playing word games with each other, enjoying a playful itinerary of words only, answer the postmodernists, for the imposition of meaning on a thing is really only an illusion, nothing more than an interpretation of some other thing. This in turn will be seen only as an interpretation as well: not mirrors (re)presenting reality as the moderns had said, but a labyrinth of mirrors reflecting neither the outer world of nature nor the inner world of subjectivity, reflecting only endless circularity—an *ex-centric* worldview. There are no facts, remember; the world is an illusion. Derrida, the most popular exponent of postmodernism, has said: "There is nothing outside the text; all is textual play with no connection with original truth" [*italics original*].<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Kathryn R. Ludwigson, "Postmodernism: A Declaration of Bankruptcy," *T COP*, 283.

This view represents, of course, an unbridled attack on special revelation as found in the Scriptures.

The modern period often trained its guns on special revelation, too. Sometimes it was said that the limitations of human language guaranteed that divine truth could only have a partial and flawed disclosure in so faulty a vehicle. At other times, as in existentialism, the early Christian encounter with reality was muddied by the culture-bound perspectives of the first century writers of the NT. Modern man was called upon to bridge the gap between the biblical writer's horizon and the horizon of the modern interpreter. A literal reading of NT revelation was unthinkable to the modern mind and thus (to use the term associated with Rudolf Bultmann) there was a need to "demythologize" that revelation to make it acceptable to modern man.

Now postmodernism has taken the final step and has dismissed language itself as a legitimate conveyor of truth. To the postmodernist, all communication is theory-laden and can never point to ultimate reality of any kind. It is, however, interesting to note that *postmodernists continue to try to tell us this by using language*. Ought they not to give up the communication process altogether? The fact that they do not indicates that the philosophy of postmodernism defies common sense. The belief that we can truly communicate—even about ultimate truths—is deeply engrained in the human psyche and in human experience. That the postmodernists deny this belief, while continuing to act upon it, reduces their perspective to something dangerously close to farce.

### III. The Evangelical Response

In this reviewer's judgment, Evangelicals need not worry about the postmodern age as if we had entered a period when evangelism will be more difficult than ever. On the contrary, as we have seen, postmodernism is rightly called "rabidly self-defeating." An ideology that defies both common sense and human experience has little going for it. It is in fact a large target for Christian witness which is designed to expose just that aspect of it. The question, "How can you be sure you can't be sure?" is a worthy opening gambit for a discussion with intellectually-oriented unbelievers.

On the other hand, until postmodernism has more deeply infected society as a whole, Christians will probably find it poses little or no barrier to our witness to the ordinary man in the street. It is not yet clear whether this current academic fad will become more than a fad and will characterize a long period of Western intellectualism, or whether it will

pass rapidly from the scene and prove itself to be indeed a fad and nothing more.

It has been characteristic of American scholars in the evangelical movement to hop aboard any widely popular trend in academia and to ride it as though it were the wave of the future. Perhaps postmodernism is the wave of the future: the essayists in *The Challenge of Postmodernism*, for the most part, seem to think so. But that remains to be seen.

An alternative possibility is that postmodernism is, as Kathryn Ludwigson suggests, simply a manifestation of the bankruptcy of modernism. From this perspective, postmodernism may be viewed as expressing the philosophical and intellectual exhaustion of the Western world. Such an exhaustion seems to have characterized the Greco-Roman world as the First Advent of the Savior approached. It may well be that the void represented by postmodern thought will be filled by the final philosophical and religious lie, namely, the new world religion to be sponsored at the end of the age by the Beast and the False Prophet of Revelation.

In the meanwhile, as we await the Second Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, what should we be doing? Here again, Ludwigson challenges us with her approach:

More diligently, more fervently, more prayerfully than ever before we need to keep preaching the truth of the Scriptures, inspired by God and suitable for instruction, correction, and reproof (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16). We must show the flaws of the post-modernist "thinking." Recognize the lies of Lucifer in the Garden: "You will be like God" (Gen. 3:5). We have to diligently catechize our children, young people, and adults so that they really know what they believe. And we must make use of the plethora of multimedia available in our increasingly video-dependent culture. The medium may not be the message, but for the MTV generation and beyond the medium must be one that rivals the vehicles of delivery in the popular culture.

In summary, the Apostle Paul's admonishment is ever the more relevant in dealing with the postmodern context: "when they will not endure sound doctrine" ...then "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 4:3; 1:13, KJV).<sup>14</sup>

It would be hard to state it better than this!

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 291.

#### IV. The Rise of Post-Evangelicalism

There is no doubt that *The Challenge of Postmodernism* is a stimulating and informative discussion of the postmodernist perspective. Anyone who wishes an effective introduction to the subject will find this volume easily fills that need. The contributors, as well as the editor, deserve our thanks for making these essays available.

But not everything in this book will leave all Evangelicals feeling comfortable. On the contrary there is a great deal here that makes one wonder where evangelicalism is really heading. More than that, it seems to this reviewer that we meet here a form of evangelicalism (not in every writer of course) that is disturbing. It would not be amiss to describe this form as *post-evangelicalism*.

This is no more evident anywhere than in the concluding essay. The writer is Thomas C. Oden, who alone among the contributors is allowed to offer two essays—the second and the twenty-third. The fact that Oden is allowed to speak the last word is probably significant. Oden it appears has had an unusual intellectual journey. Let him tell this in his own words:

After spending more than half my adult life as an avid advocate and defender of modernity (from Marx through Nietzsche and Freud to Bultmann, with stops along the way with Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers, Alexander Lowen, Martin Heidegger, and Eric Berne), what has changed for me is the steady slow growth toward consensual ancient classical Christianity with its proximate continuity, catholicity, and apostolicity. This has elicited from me a growing resistance of faddism, novelty, heresy, anarchism, antinomianism, pretensions of discontinuity, revolutionary bravado, and nonhistorical idealism.<sup>15</sup>

Of particular interest to most *JOTGES* readers is the reference to “antinomianism” which, in the contemporary theological context, is likely to refer in some way to the doctrine of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. In fact, *The American Heritage Dictionary* gives as its only definition of *antinomian* the following: “A member of a Christian sect holding that faith alone is necessary to salvation.” Its current use by those of Reformed persuasion is not much different than this dictionary definition, although it often carries overtones of licentiousness. Oden’s reference to it is troubling.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas C. Oden, “So What Happens after Modernity? A Postmodern Agenda for Evangelical Theology,” *TCOP*, 405.

Our concern with Oden's perspective is not lessened by the concluding paragraph of this essay (and thus of the entire book!) where he writes as follows:

Finally, we plead the aesthetic beauty of *retrogression* [italics added], not to twentieth century fundamentalism, not to American revivalism of the nineteenth-century, not to the eighteenth-century pietism, nor to the seventeenth-century Protestant orthodox scholasticism, or to sixteenth-century classic Reformation teaching, but to the future through the route of classic Christian exegesis of the first five centuries, the ancient ecumenical tradition to whom all Christians—Catholic, Protestant, and Liberal—have a right to appeal.<sup>16</sup>

One is tempted to ask what a statement like this is doing in a volume purporting to represent *evangelical* thought. As T. F. Torrance has shown in his volume, *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers*, the Pauline doctrine of grace had already been lost by all these fathers. But on reflection one is tempted to say that Oden is reading the tea leaves correctly. The recent, controversial efforts by some Evangelicals to find common ground with Roman Catholics is a fairly obvious signal that significant change is brewing in the evangelical community. Oden simply reflects a perspective that has gained favor with many other Evangelicals to one degree or another. But if Oden has spent half of his "adult life" espousing causes associated with Marx, Nietzsche, Bultmann, Heidegger, etc., we may be excused if we find no incentive to follow him on this latest turn in his thinking.

A somewhat similar appeal is made by Kurt A. Richardson of South-eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He writes:

Based upon the recognition of the longing for a recovered vitality of Christianity, there are fellow believers throughout the diversity of denominations who need our collaboration under the singular lordship of Christ. Whether this is post-liberal or post-fundamentalist, the bitter heritage of elitism and separationism must be abandoned. In addition, a global perspective of the church—the incomparable international network of Christians—will require a determined commitment to the irenic principle of dwelling at peace with those who stand under the lordship of Christ and His commission to the church.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 406.

<sup>17</sup> Kurt A. Richardson, "Disorientations in Christian Belief: The Problem of De-traditionalization in the Postmodern Context," *TCOP*, 65.

This comes as close as almost any of the essayists come to defining what they mean by a “Christian,” but the statement is far from clear. Here, it would appear, the criterion employed is whether the person “stands under the lordship of Christ.” But in theory this could be said of the members of almost any Christian communion—Protestant, Catholic, charismatic, etc.—quite irrespective of their answer to the biblical question, “What must I do to be saved?” As Philip Janowsky has pointed out in his little book, *The Evangelical Essential: What Must I Do to be Saved* (reviewed elsewhere in this journal), the doctrine of justification by faith alone must be that essential. When it is not, we may question whether we have true evangelicalism at all.

Sadly missing from the volume under review is any clear-cut insistence that the truth-claims of Christianity include an emphasis on what our Lord called the “narrow gate” to eternal life (Matt 7:13). That is to say, there is only one way of salvation: by faith alone in Christ alone. If modern evangelicalism embraces the view that there is considerable latitude possible in expressing the Gospel to a postmodern world, it will be exposing its own inherent doubts about the possibility of knowing the biblical Gospel in its exactitude. By so much, it will then deserve to be called *post-evangelicalism*.

Especially disappointing in this volume is the essay entitled, “The Pauline Gospel in a Postmodern Age.” Its author is another faculty member at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Mark A. Seifrid. Seifrid clearly yields ground to the contemporary flow of Pauline scholarship, the impetus for which is especially found in the writings of E. P. Sanders and James D. G. Dunn. This mood-swing in Pauline thought attempts to soften Paul’s rejection of “works” to a rejection of self-righteous, Pharisaical works done for merit. But Paul, it is claimed, does not deny that works must flow from justification if one is to be finally accepted before God.

Thus Seifrid can write about Qumran that “the Qumran community attributed a sanitizing, atoning efficacy to its deeds. Yet it did so without in any way sacrificing its *sola gratia* stance: God was the source of these works and the salvation that accompanied them.”<sup>18</sup> The reader will be interested to know that these remarks follow a quotation from the Qumran document 1QS 11:2, 3, which reads:

For I belong to the God of my vindication and the perfection of my way is in his hand with the virtue of my heart. And *with my righteous*

<sup>18</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, “The Pauline Gospel in a Postmodern Age,” *TCOP*, 199.

*deeds* [italics in Seifrid's quotation] he will wipe away my transgressions.<sup>19</sup>

If, as Seifrid claims, this amounts to *sola gratia*, it is not Paul's concept of *sola gratia* in any sense whatsoever (not to mention that it is not the great Reformers' view)! The confusion that now reigns in Pauline studies among Evangelicals goes a long way toward explaining why many of them have no problem with a rapprochement with Roman Catholicism. The ecumenical spirit reflected above in Oden has many proponents among Evangelicals. The danger is that, in many Christian communities, anything resembling true evangelicalism may be submerged if the trend toward theological accommodation continues.

*The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement* is well worth reading. It is a helpful warning about the dangers of postmodernism. But this explicit warning has a subtext not intended by the writers. This subtext is an urgent cautionary reminder of the dangerous direction which the evangelical movement has taken.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



# THE BIBLICAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN ETERNAL SALVATION AND ETERNAL REWARDS: A KEY TO PROPER EXEGESIS

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## I. Introduction

A number of books have been written recently which attempt to harmonize two NT themes: judgment according to one's works and justification by faith.

Sometimes the explanation given is hard to follow. Some authors seem to feel that justification is by faith apart from works and yet final salvation is by faith plus works.

For example, Judith Gundry Volf writes,

Paul's certainty that God will faithfully accomplish God's purpose to save Christians completely and finally does not mean, however, that he views this process as "automatic." The present is characterized by the eschatological tension. Both the reality of salvation and the power of evil await the completion of their salvation while enduring testing and afflictions in the present. Subjection to antagonistic forces at work in such tribulation can even threaten their salvation. Moreover, they have yet to appear before the judgment seat at which occasion their final destiny will be made manifest. Will they be accused and condemned after all?

It is in the very context of these dangers that Paul affirms the certainty of Christians' final salvation . . . Christians are more than conquerors in tribulations and will come through the final judgment unscathed (Rom 8:28-39).<sup>1</sup>

This is confusing. How is it possible that Paul "affirms the certainty of Christians' final salvation" and yet at the same time asserts that Chris-

<sup>1</sup> Judith Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 283.

tians await a final judgment in which they may be “condemned after all”?

The problem here is failure to recognize a distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards. This is widespread today. Blomberg, who feels that there is no distinction between eternal rewards and eternal salvation, writes concerning five texts which deal with the possibility of receiving crowns (1 Cor 9:25; 1 Thess 2:19; 2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4):

*A majority of commentators agree in each of these five instances that our texts are not at all talking about degrees of rewards in heaven but simply about eternal life.<sup>2</sup>*

It is my contention that we will often miss the meaning of the text if we fail to recognize the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards.

I have selected two sample passages to examine. In each case I will present two interpretations: one which understands the passage as dealing with eternal salvation and one which understands it as dealing with eternal rewards.

## II. Two Test Passages

### A. First Corinthians 9:24-27

*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. The eternal salvation view

Blomberg argues that Paul was here speaking of eternal salvation and that he was uncertain that he possessed it. He writes:

In 1 Cor 9:25, Paul compares our perseverance to the athlete striving after an Olympic crown. But unlike a race on a track in which there can be only one winner, “we” [Christians] all should compete for “the crown that will last forever.” This “crown” is the same as the “prize” of vv. 24, 27, which one fails to receive if one is “disqualified” (*adokimos*) . . . Eternal life and death are at stake here, not gradations of reward.

<sup>2</sup>Craig Blomberg, “Degrees of Reward in the Kingdom of Heaven,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, June 1992, 163, emphasis added.

A too simplistic understanding of “eternal security” has probably led many Christians to doubt that Paul could have seriously considered not “making it to heaven.” But true Reformed doctrine recognizes that saints are those who persevere. No Biblical text offers assurance of salvation for people who flagrantly repudiate Christ without subsequent repentance. Anthony Hoekema captures the sense of 1 Cor 9:26-27 quite well: “Only as he thus continued to discipline himself did Paul feel justified in claiming his spiritual security in Christ. He did not dare to claim this blessing while being careless and indolent in his daily battle against sin. And neither may we.”<sup>3</sup>

## 2. The eternal rewards view

There is a major difference theologically and practically between the eternal salvation view and the eternal rewards view. According to the latter view, Paul was sure he had eternal life, but he was not sure he would be approved by Christ at His Judgment Seat and receive the rewards that go along with that approval.

Hodges writes concerning this passage:

Paul compares the Christian life to a racecourse in which winning is not automatic for any runner, not even for himself . . .

Again, there is no thought here of the loss of eternal life. Such a loss is impossible, as our Lord Himself made clear. But the apostle can indeed envision the possibility that even he—a preacher to others—might lose the reward that God grants to successful runners . . .

No Christian life can be pronounced a success until it *ends* successfully. The race is not over simply because we have been running it for years.”<sup>4</sup>

## B. Philippians 3:11, 14

*If, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead . . . I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

### 1. The eternal salvation view

“The Problem of Doubt in Philippians 3:11” is the title of a thesis adopting this perspective.<sup>5</sup> The author, William R. Johnson, says: “One

<sup>3</sup> “Degrees of Reward,” 163.

<sup>4</sup> Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation*, 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> William Randall Johnson, “The Problem of Doubt in Philippians 3:11,” Dallas Theological Seminary, 1979.

can never be absolutely sure that he will persevere to the end until the end.”<sup>6</sup>

He goes on: “There can be relative assurance of such perseverance. Paul expresses this in Philippians 3:11. He had seen what Christ had done in his life so far.”<sup>7</sup>

Since he is writing from the Reformed perspective, Johnson then assures the reader that “the loss of assurance as treated in this thesis could never indicate more than that an individual never possessed salvation to begin with.”<sup>8</sup>

Johnson concludes, “Paul seeks sanctification if perhaps he may attain to the resurrection of the dead. As long as his attitude is always on the goal *and the striving required to reach it*, he may have relative assurance of reaching it. Should he ever stop running, resting on his present achievements, or should he begin a lifestyle of habitual sin, such would be an indication that he might not truly know God.”<sup>9</sup>

## 2. The eternal rewards view

A thesis entitled “The Out-Resurrection of Philippians 3:11,” adopted the rewards interpretation.<sup>10</sup> In it the author, Phil R. Williams, says:

*Exanastasis* occurs in three other places [in the NT], in addition to Philippians 3:11. In each of these three instances . . . it [speaks] of a special, select, limited resurrection. It is used metaphorically with this same significance in Philippians 3:11. It is the same as the “better resurrection” of Hebrews 11:35, and is resurrection to greater glory and higher reward, won on the basis of faithfulness to Christ, and likeness to Him.<sup>11</sup>

There is a variation on this interpretation. I have argued elsewhere (*The Grace Evangelical Society News*, August 1991) that v 11 does not deal directly with eternal salvation *or* eternal rewards. Paul was hoping to attain to a quality of life here and now which manifested resurrection power. He was seeking to live *now* in the same manner in which he would live *forever* (cf. Heb 12:14).

According to this view the theme of eternal rewards is still present. In v 14 Paul indicates that he is striving to know Christ in his experi-

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 51 (emphasis added).

<sup>10</sup> Philip R. Williams, “The Out-Resurrection of Philippians 3:11,” Dallas Theological Seminary, 1955.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 40.

ence and to attain *now* to a resurrection type of life, *so that he might receive the prize (brabeion, cf. 1 Cor 9:25)* of the upward call of God in Christ. That prize, as in 1 Cor 9:24-25, is the approval of Christ and the rewards that attend such approval.

**C. Which View Does the Text Support?**

There are several strong reasons to conclude that the rewards view is the best understanding of the texts in our test passages.

First, the salvation view demands the conclusion that Paul was unsure of his own salvation. That is, however, impossible apart from clear evidence of a complete mental breakdown on Paul’s part. There is, of course, no evidence in the NT or in extrabiblical literature of Paul having experienced a major breakdown.

Paul came to faith in Christ by a dramatic encounter with the risen Lord (Acts 9:3-6; 22:6-16). He made it clear that he received the Gospel from Jesus Himself (Gal 1:12). He repeatedly asserted in his epistles that he believed in Christ and that he had eternal life and could never lose it. His certainty of his standing with God was based on his faith in the promises of God:

“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

“ . . . 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”

Gal 2:16

“ . . . you all are partakers with me of grace”

Phil 1:7

“ . . . giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light”

Col 1:12

“I know whom I have believed”

2 Tim 1:12

“To Titus, a true son in our common faith”

Titus 1:4

“ . . . according to His mercy He saved us”

Titus 3:5

See also Rom 4:23-25; 1 Cor 3:9-15; 2 Cor 5:1-21; Gal 1:12; 2:4-10; 1 Thess 2:4; 2 Tim 2:11-13.

In addition, in his letters to churches Paul called himself an apostle of Jesus Christ (cf. Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; etc.).

Surely he knew that there were no unsaved apostles (cf. 1 Cor 12:1-31, esp. v 28)! Equally certain is that he wouldn't have called himself an apostle if he had any doubt about whether he was saved or not.

Any view that requires the conclusion that Paul was uncertain of his salvation should be rejected on that basis alone.

Second, the term *brabeion*, used in the NT only in our two test passages, most naturally fits with the eternal rewards interpretation. *Brabeion* means a *prize*. This prize can be compared with those won by competitors in an athletic contest (cf. 1 Cor 9:24-25). Competitors in a race who lost were not executed. They were not excluded from the kingdom in which they lived. They did not forfeit their citizenship. They did, however, miss out on the prize and the special privileges attendant to it.

Third, to suggest that "striving [is] required to reach [the goal of eternal salvation]," as the salvation view suggests, requires that Paul completely contradict his doctrine of justification by faith apart from works. Surely Paul would not contradict the Gospel which he preached. He was adamant to maintain its purity (cf. Gal 1:6-9; 5:12).

Fourth, the salvation view appeals to theology before exegesis. Blomberg admits that his understanding of 1 Cor 9:24-27 is influenced by dogmatic concerns: "True Reformed doctrine recognizes that saints are those who persevere." This leads him to the following syllogism:

All Christians persevere.  
Paul wasn't sure he would persevere.  
Conclusion: Paul wasn't sure he was a Christian.

The syllogism appears airtight. However, it is flawed because one of the premises is wrong. All Christians do *not* persevere. In fact, 1 Cor 9:24-27 suggests that perseverance is neither automatic nor guaranteed.

We thus turn now to consider the various problems which result from misinterpreting passages which deal with eternal rewards.

### III. Difficulties Which Arise from Failing to Recognize this Distinction

#### A. Distorting the Gospel Message

If passages like 1 Cor 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 refer to obtaining eternal salvation, then believers must work to obtain it:

"Run in such a way that you may obtain it" (1 Cor 9:24).

“I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified” (1 Cor 9:27).

“I press toward the goal of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:14).

However, we know from many NT passages that this is not the case. Eternal salvation is absolutely free to the recipient (John 4:10; Rom 3:24; 4:3-8; Eph 2:9; Rev 22:17). Jesus paid the whole price. We pay nothing. We are saved the moment we believe Jesus’ promise to give eternal life to all who trust Him for it (John 5:24; 6:47).

Unlike eternal salvation, eternal rewards are not free. They are earned by work done. Paul said in 2 Cor 5:10 that “all [believers] must 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.” Similarly, the Lord Jesus said that He will “reward each according to his works” (Matt 16:27). Eternal salvation is not “according to what [one] has done” and is not “according to [one’s] works.”

In some places eternal salvation and eternal rewards are contrasted in the same paragraph. For example, in 1 Cor 3:14-15 Paul said: “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.” The unproductive believer is saved even though his works are burned up. However, if a believer’s works endure the test of fire, then in addition he will be rewarded. Compare also Rom 14:8-12; 2 Tim 2:11-13; Rev 22:14-17.

Since eternal rewards are not the same as eternal salvation, there is no contradiction of the Gospel in passages conditioning eternal rewards on perseverance in good works.

To understand passages like 1 Cor 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 as being Gospel passages is to distort the Gospel by suggesting that ongoing good works are a requirement for obtaining eternal salvation.

## **B. Undermining Assurance**

Obviously if the apostle Paul could not be certain he had eternal life, neither can anyone.

Reformed exegetes do not view this as a problem. In fact, they view ongoing doubt about one’s standing with God as an important impetus to perseverance. For example, MacArthur writes, “Periodic doubts about one’s salvation are not necessarily wrong. Such doubts must be con-

fronted and dealt with honestly and biblically" (*The Gospel According to Jesus*, revised edition, p. 214). Shortly thereafter he writes:

It has become quite popular to teach professing Christians that they can enjoy assurance of salvation no matter what their lives are like. After all, some argue, if salvation is a gift to people who simply believe the gospel facts, what does practical living have to do with assurance? That teaching is nothing but practical antinomianism. It encourages people living in hypocrisy, disobedience, and sin by offering them a false assurance (p. 215).

Since assurance in the Reformed view is conditioned upon ongoing perseverance, assurance is something less than certainty.

As long as one looks to his works to discern whether he is saved or not, he will *never* be sure he has eternal life. If one fails to recognize the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards, certainty is lost.

### C. Improperly Motivating Obedience

As mentioned above, for those who do not distinguish between eternal salvation and eternal rewards, doubts about one's salvation are viewed as an important motivation to good works. However, such a motivation is seriously flawed.

Believers should not fear going to hell. Jesus guarantees to give eternal life to all who trust Him for it (John 6:47). Paul proclaimed that there is nothing which can separate us from the love of God in Christ (Rom 8:38-39). It is impossible to trust Christ for eternal life and at the same time fear going to hell. The two are incompatible.

This is not to suggest that one who doubts his salvation is necessarily unsaved. It is sadly possible for genuine believers to lose their assurance (though not their salvation).

To be motivated to obey God out of fear of hell is to return to Rome. Such a motivation is not pleasing to God for He promises that those who believe in Christ will never be judged to determine their eternal destiny (John 5:24).

In addition to adopting an improper motive, those who miss the distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards jettison a proper motivation. Eternal rewards are held forth in Scripture as a powerful motivation for believers to obey God. Believers should set their hearts on laying up treasure in heaven (Matt 6:19-21) and on ruling with Christ (1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21). While eternal life is an absolutely



free gift, eternal rewards are earned by work done. Only by remaining faithful and diligent can any believer earn the right to rule with Christ forever (2 Tim 2:12; Rev 3:21).

#### IV. A Grace Gospel Hermeneutic

If a given interpretation of a passage requires that eternal salvation be earned or preserved by works which the believer must do, then that interpretation should be rejected as impossible. The analogy of faith requires that we understand difficult texts in light of the simple ones. There are many simple texts which assert that eternal salvation is neither earned nor preserved by works which the believer does (cf. Rom 4:4-8; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5).

If a passage clearly conditions something upon good works which a person must do, then the passage is either showing the impossibility of salvation by works (e.g., Rom 2:13), or is not dealing with the Gospel at all (e.g., the two sample passages).

John 6:28-29 appears to be an exception, but it isn't. There the expression "good work" (singular) is used rhetorically to refer to believing the Gospel. The Jews thought they had to do good works (plural) to obtain everlasting life. Jesus said the work (singular) they needed to do was to believe Him. Jesus was not talking about good works in the Pauline sense. He was talking about obeying God's command to believe in His Son (cf. Acts 5:32; 6:7; 1 Pet 2:7). Eternal salvation is conditioned upon faith, not upon good works.

Words like *salvation* (*sōzō*, *sōtēria*), *inheritance* (*klēronomeō*, *klēronomia*), and even *eternal life* (*aiōnion zōē*) are not technical terms which always refer to eternal salvation from hell. On some occasions they refer to eternal rewards which believers can earn. See, for example, 1 Pet 1:5,9; Gal 5:19-21; 6:7-9.

Exegetes should be open to the possibility that a given text may be dealing with eternal rewards and not eternal salvation.

#### V. Theological Principles Which Grow Out of This Distinction

The following are a number of points which naturally follow if there is indeed a distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards:

- Believers can and sometimes do fall away.
- All will not have an equal experience in the kingdom. Some will have more abundant lives than others.

- Salvation is a gift, but rewards are earned.
- Salvation can't be lost, but rewards can be.
- Assurance of salvation is absolute, but assurance of rewards is not absolute.
- There is no future judgment of believers to determine their eternal destiny. There is a future judgment of believers to determine the quality of their eternal experience.

## VI. Conclusion

Two NT themes, justification by faith and judgment according to one's works, can best be understood and harmonized by realizing that there is an author-intended distinction in the NT between eternal salvation and eternal rewards. The former is a gift, is apart from works, and is received by faith alone. The latter is earned, is conditioned upon ongoing good works, and is received by faith plus works.

If we fail to recognize the distinction between passages which deal with eternal salvation versus those which deal with eternal rewards, we will misunderstand quite a large number of NT texts. In addition, a number of practical difficulties will result. The Gospel becomes garbled. Assurance of salvation is eliminated. And motivations for obedience are muddled.

First Corinthians 9:24-27 and Phil 3:11-14 show the importance of this study and strongly support the thesis of this article. The biblical distinction between eternal salvation and eternal rewards is a key to proper exegesis.

# THE CONDITION FOR SALVATION IN JOHN'S GOSPEL\*

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Biblically and historically, justification through faith in Jesus Christ (or salvation by grace through faith) has been the center of the Christian Gospel. Recently, Carl Henry called justification "a doctrine in crisis."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, not only the nature of justification is being challenged (imputed versus imparted righteousness) as he notes, but its condition of faith alone is also being challenged. If evangelical Christianity is to remain distinct from all other religions and aberrations, then defense of *the Faith* must begin with defense of *faith* as the only condition of justification (which we here call salvation).

There is a great controversy within our churches and theological schools threatening the unconditional Gospel of grace by compromising faith alone as the condition for salvation. From the beginning of the church, defense of the Faith focused largely on the apostles' explanation, reiteration, and defense of faith alone as the condition of salvation. This is the explicit concern of the epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and it surfaces as well in some other epistles, such as Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and First John. Centuries later, the battle cry of the Reformation was *sola fide*, and so perhaps it must be heard again today.

The evangelical church is in need of a decisive authoritative voice in defense of *sola fide* as the condition and confirmation of salvation. This must include an overwhelming argument that faith alone saves as well as a delineation of what faith is and what it is not.

Actually, the church has always had such a voice, but that voice has

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<sup>1</sup> Carl F. H. Henry, "A Doctrine in Crisis," *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 38 (March 1995), 57-65.

been muzzled or ignored to a great degree. The church needs to listen to the Gospel of John to shape its understanding of the condition for salvation.

John's Gospel explicitly states that it was written to bring people to salvation. Yet its message and language does not receive preeminent treatment in the Gospel debate. When it does, its simple message is often obscured or tainted by theological baggage or presuppositions.

In this article, I will discuss the purpose of John's Gospel and why it should be determinative in our discussion of the condition for salvation. I will discuss John's use of the word *believe* in his Gospel and show how John's analogies for belief support faith alone as the one and only condition for salvation. Also significant is what John does *not* use to present the condition for salvation. Obviously, there will be very important practical implications from this study.

## I. The Purpose of John

John's Gospel is distinguished from the Synoptic Gospels by its unique selection of material not found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is commonly observed that 92% of its material is unique when compared to the Synoptics. It is also commonly agreed that this material presents a more doctrinal reflection in contrast to the more historical approaches of the Synoptic accounts. This can be clearly seen when John's prologue is compared to those of the Synoptics. Also, assuming a later date for John could posit a more mature theological expression of the Gospel and the condition for salvation related to the relevant issues of the day.<sup>2</sup>

These unique features should give extra weight to what John says about salvation and how it is obtained. Most helpful, however, is John's own statement of purpose.

A propitious distinctive of John's Gospel is his unequivocal statement of why he wrote it. He declares in John 20:30-31:

*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

<sup>2</sup> See Moisés Silva, "Approaching the Fourth Gospel," *Criswell Theological Review* 3 (1988), 25. A later date is a common conclusion, notwithstanding J. A. T. Robinson's earlier dating argued in *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976) and *The Priority of John*, ed. J. F. Coakley (London: SCM, 1995). Carson's date is AD 80-85. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 85-86.

Three corresponding emphases are evident in this purpose statement. First, it declares Jesus is the divine Son, the revelation of God: "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This merely continues the obvious emphasis on Jesus' deity in the Gospel. It also explains why John declares in v 30 that only certain miracles were recorded. Besides the explicit statements, it is commonly observed that deity is revealed through the selection of miraculous signs that Jesus performs (cf. 10:37-38; 14:10-11) and the "I am" statements He makes.<sup>3</sup> In short, the book begins and ends with Christ's deity.

A second emphasis, more germane to our discussion, is the presentation of belief as the proper response to this revelation about Jesus Christ: "that you may believe." The evangelistic intent is obvious.<sup>4</sup> It is hardly necessary to show that Christ's deity revealed by word or miracle in this Gospel is typically followed by someone believing or by an appeal to believe.

Furthering the argument for evangelistic intent is the third emphasis that presents eternal life as the result of belief: "that believing you may have life in His name."<sup>5</sup> Since Jesus Himself is life (1:4; 14:6), eternal life is defined in terms of quality and experience more than quantity and duration (10:10).<sup>6</sup> Eternal life is not an end, but the beginning of a relationship with the living God through Christ (17:3) that is enhanced through a subsequent life of faith. It has been said that the only thing better than winning a million dollars is spending it! John shows that faith in Christ secures the prize but also enjoys the prize. Thus the discourse to the disciples in chapters 13-17 easily fits into this purpose of deepening our present experience of the eternal life God shares with us who believe.<sup>7</sup>

John's purpose was to induce and foster faith in the Son of God for eternal life. One commentator expressed John's purpose as the "birth,

<sup>3</sup> See Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 350 n. 43, 365, 447, and C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), 345.

<sup>4</sup> Whether the present or aorist tense of *pisteuō* is taken in 20:31, the evangelistic intent is preserved. See Silva, 22, and D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 106 (1987), 640.

<sup>5</sup> Carson, "Purpose," 648.

<sup>6</sup> Dodd, 149; Rudolf Bultmann, "zaō," *TDNT*, 2:870.

<sup>7</sup> Carson, "Purpose," 649-50. He shows how chapters 13-17 can support an evangelistic purpose, though we may not agree with his approach.

growth, and completing of faith in the disciples."<sup>8</sup> The church at large has always taken John's purpose in 20:31 at face value and understood this Gospel's intent to lead people to faith and a full life. Through the ages, believers have probably used John more than any other piece of literature to confront people with the Gospel. A modern illustration of this is the millions of pocket Gospels of John that have been distributed for over a century to share the Good News.

## II. How the Condition for Salvation Is Presented

We can now observe some peculiarities about how John states and pictures the condition for salvation.

### A. The Clear Condition

Given John's clear purpose, we would expect to see a clear condition for receiving eternal life, and we do. That condition is most frequently expressed by the verb *pisteuō* "believe," which is used 98 times in John (compared to 34 times in the Synoptics and 16 times in the rest of the NT). The significance of its verbal form is that it is presented as a response to the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. It is not static, but dynamic.

Much discussion has focused on the use of the verb *pisteuō* either absolutely, or with the prepositions *eis* and *epi*, or with the dative case or *hoti*. While some would claim these constructions indicate different *kinds* of faith,<sup>9</sup> a long discussion can be shortened by noting the many exegetes and theologians who recognize that all these combinations refer to saving faith.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1980), 227.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Gentry, "The Great Option," BRR 5:55-56; George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 272; Dodd, 184.

<sup>10</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), 494; Rudolf Bultmann, s.v. "*pisteuō*," TDNT 6:203; Richard Christianson, "The Soteriological Significance of *PISTEUŌ* in the Gospel of John," (Th.M. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1987); Gordon H. Clark, *Faith and Saving Faith* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1983), 101; Elizabeth Jarvis, "The Key Term 'Believe' in the Gospel of John," *Notes on Translation* 2 (1988): 46-51; Morris, 337; E. Herbert Nygren, "Faith and Experience," *The Covenant Quarterly* 41 (August 1983): 41-42; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 1:561.

Likewise, both Morris and Tenney grant that *believe without* an object implies no less than *believe with* an object as when prepositions are used.<sup>11</sup> The prepositions *eis* and *epi* may emphasize the object of faith, but do not distinguish another *kind* of faith.

The construction of *pisteuō* with the dative is also clearly used for salvation, as in 5:24. Jesus said, "whoever hears my word and believes Him who sent me has eternal life."<sup>12</sup> The similarity of *believe* with the dative and *believe in* is seen in 6:29-30 and 8:30-31. It is exegetically impossible to separate their meanings in those passages. To *believe* Christ is to *believe in* Him, and vice versa. Thus the slightly less certain construction is clarified by John's favorite term for saving faith, *believe in*.

The *pisteuō* plus *hoti* construction also denotes saving faith. While some may argue that this combination denotes an intellectual acquiescence that falls short of effectual faith, it seems obvious that one cannot *believe in* unless he or she also *believes that*. As Nygren argues, "Each implies the other . . . In fact, if one really believes *that*, one can hardly not believe *in*."<sup>13</sup> We find the *hoti* construction in two passages that clearly discuss the condition for salvation. John 8:24 says "if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins." The other passage is no less than John's purpose statement, 20:31 (cf. also 1 John 5:1).

Morris's summary statement on the various uses of *pisteuō* recognizes the essential meaning of trustful reliance for them all:

The conclusion to which we come is that, while each of the various constructions employed has its own proper sense, they must not be too sharply separated from each other . . . Whichever way the terminology is employed it stresses the attitude of trustful reliance on God which is basic for the Christian.<sup>14</sup>

Faith, then, when represented by *pisteuō* in its various forms denotes trust in something or someone. It assumes assent to the truthfulness and trustworthiness of a person or what is claimed. In John, faith is trustful reliance on Christ's promise to give eternal life to those who believe.

<sup>11</sup> Morris, 337; Merrill C. Tenney, "Topics from the Gospel of John, Part IV: The Growth of Belief," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (July 1968): 343.

<sup>12</sup> Here the NIV is quoted rather than the NKJV, which inserts the preposition "in." The NKJV, following the KJV, probably felt the dative allowed for the addition, as did the Jerusalem, NEB, and CEV.

<sup>13</sup> Nygren, 42.

<sup>14</sup> Morris, 337.

## B. The Consistent Effect

Another pattern we see is the consistent effect of believing, which is salvation. Though sometimes faith is underdeveloped, faulty, weak, or minimal, it is always sufficient for eternal life. Since faith alone is sufficient, assurance is possible. Jesus said that whoever believes “has” (present tense) eternal life and “has passed” (perfect tense) from death into life (5:24). This is the present possession of the believer. The blind man who was given sight was able to declare “Lord, I believe!” (9:38), though it took him some time to come to that point of faith. In John, salvation is not conditioned on *how* one believes, but *whom* one believes, or not the *kind* of faith, but the *object* of faith.

If this is the case in the clear preponderance of uses of *believe* in John’s Gospel, then the burden of proof lies on anyone who would except two passages which are admittedly troublesome, 2:23-24 and 8:30-31. While we must relegate an explanation of these passages to an appendix, we state our conclusion here: There is persuasive evidence in both passages that belief results in salvation. There are no convincing reasons for pleading here a special use of *believe* that falls short of salvation.

## C. The Comparative Pictures

While there is one condition for salvation, John may represent that condition with figures of speech designed to *illustrate* the response of faith.

**Look.** In 3:14-15 the anticipated response is to *look* upon Christ and His work for eternal salvation, as the Israelites looked upon the serpent on a pole in the desert for their physical salvation (Numbers 21). The point of the illustration is the simple look of faith. This is quite contrary to the author who writes, “In order to look at the snake on the pole, they had to drag themselves to where they could see it.”<sup>15</sup> Such exegesis is theologically driven and violates the clear intention of the serpent illustration as used by our Lord.

**Hear.** Similarly, John uses *hearing* to represent believing. More than the physical sense is involved. To hear is to listen, but also to accept as true, as we understand with the colloquial expression, “I hear you.” Belonging to Jesus as His sheep is conditioned upon hearing His voice of truth (10:16, 27), as also is obtaining eternal life (5:24). The unbelief of the lost is due to their not hearing God’s word (8:43, 47).

**Enter.** Speaking metaphorically of Himself as the door to the sheepfold, Jesus also pictures the response of faith as *entering* the door

<sup>15</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 45-46.



(10:9). To enter correlates with faith in that both express one's trust for protection from the threat of the enemy.

**Feed.** The notion of *feeding* on Christ (6:57), including eating His flesh and drinking His blood (6:54), is another analogy of the faith that obtains eternal life, as is clear in 6:35 and 6:47. This is similar to the drink of living water (eternal life) offered to the Samaritan woman (4:10, 14). To eat and drink is to appropriate or receive something upon which life depends. There is no work or merit associated with these activities. Rather, the benefit is from what is appropriated, which corresponds to the object of faith, which is Christ.

**Come.** Another metaphor for faith is expressed by the word *come*. In 5:40 coming to Christ obtains eternal life. In 6:35 *come* is equated with both eating and believing. Coming, drinking, and believing are used synonymously in 7:37-38 as the condition for salvation. To *come* is to trustingly approach Christ for help. It entails no human merit or effort.<sup>16</sup>

**Receive.** Another word that may represent faith is *receive*. The promise that any who receive Christ will become children of God is closely linked to believing in 1:12. *Believe* appears to be in apposition to *receive* here in order to explain it.<sup>17</sup> In 1:12 to receive is to welcome or accept as true the person or words of Jesus Christ (3:11, 32-33; 5:43). This is in contrast to those who "did not know" and "did not receive" Jesus as the Christ in 1:10-11.

These pictures of faith all denote receptivity, agreement, or trust. All are essentially simple activities and essentially passive. None communicates the idea of merit, work, effort, or achievement. Neither do they communicate an exchange of one's life or the ongoing submission of one's life to Jesus as Master in order to obtain eternal life.

When we observe the clear statements in John about the condition for salvation, the effect of this condition, and the pictures of this condition, we conclude that John presents faith alone in Christ alone as the only condition for salvation.

### III. How the Condition for Salvation Is Not Presented

Just as we pay attention to the peculiarities present in John's Gospel, we also note what is peculiarly *absent*.

<sup>16</sup> To come *to* Christ for salvation should not be confused with come *after* Christ, which is the expression used for the commitment of following Christ in a life of discipleship. See Matt 16:24; Luke 9:23; Johannes Schneider, s.v. "*erchomai*," in *TDNT* 2 (1964): 66; Wolfgang Bauder, s.v. "*opisō*," in *NIDNTT* 1 (1975): 492-93.

<sup>17</sup> Westcott, 9.

### A. The Absence of Qualifiers

It is extremely significant that we do not see qualifiers with the word *believe*. John does not condition salvation on whether one “really believes” or “truly believes.” Neither does he speak of “genuine faith,” “real faith,” or “effectual faith.” There is only one kind of faith. One either believes in something or he does not. Therefore, those who speak of “spurious faith” or “false faith” are psychologizing faith as the Scripture neither does, nor provides a basis for doing.

In contrast, John *does* use qualifiers to distinguish the real from the fraudulent in other concepts. He speaks of the “true light” (1:9), “true bread” (6:32), “true vine” (15:1), “true worshipers” (4:23), and “true God” (17:3). When he shows that even the unsaved can be referred to as *disciples* (6:60-64), he later calls the saved who adhere to His word “disciples indeed” (8:31).

### B. The Absence of Other Conditions

Also in John, we do not see other conditions attached to faith or any condition replacing faith. For example, the word *repent* does not even occur once in John. In spite of the strained efforts of some to impose repentance on the salvation accounts in John,<sup>18</sup> we find the opposite. In the incident of the woman at the well (4:1-26), Jesus’ disclosure of the Samaritan woman’s multiple mates would have been a perfect time to call her to repentance from this sin. Instead we find eternal life offered on the condition of asking (4:10) and drinking (4:14), both expressions of believing.

Of course, this is no problem to those who view repentance as a change of heart needed for salvation. Faith is the more specific way of expressing this change of heart because it focuses on Christ and His salvation from sin. Paul seemed to overlap the two concepts in the phrase “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Neither do we find the condition for salvation stated as surrender or commitment of all of one’s life to Jesus as Master.<sup>19</sup> Salvation is totally and absolutely free and is not conditioned on human merit. It is what

<sup>18</sup> E.g., see MacArthur’s comments on the conversion of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. MacArthur, Jr., 40, 46, 54, 58. Also see Walter J. Chantry, *Today’s Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970; reprint, 1985), 48-49.

<sup>19</sup> Some try to make this point from *pisteuō* in 2:24. See the appendix for a discussion.

one receives, not earns, merits, or barter for. It will be given freely to whoever asks (4:10).

Similarly, we do not find salvation conditioned on continual obedience. If anything, we could argue that John's Gospel purposefully introduces us to those who believed in Jesus as Savior, but were less than fully committed as disciples or were partially obeying Him. Martha believed and was obviously saved (11:27; and we can assume Mary and Lazarus were too), but there is no indication that she followed Christ in the fullest sense of leaving home and family. Less than full confession and commitment are also found in the "secret disciple," Joseph of Arimathea (19:38). Some would argue that Nicodemus was also in this category (cf. 19:39). In addition, the Jewish rulers mentioned in 12:42 believed in Christ, but did not confess Him publicly for fear of being ostracized by the other Jewish leaders.<sup>20</sup>

The significance of John's lack of embellishment of faith and the absence of any other conditions emphasizes this one condition as the sole and sufficient means of obtaining eternal life. In terms of the data, what is present and what is absent, there is an overwhelming case presented in John for faith alone in Christ alone as the only condition for salvation. This is in perfect agreement with his purpose stated in 20:31.

John has spoken definitively on what it takes to be saved. His presentation carries the weight of his purpose for writing, "that you may believe." Let the debate over the Gospel begin with John's Gospel, unless we would accuse him of preaching half a gospel or easy-believism, or charge him with compromising the Gospel, acquiescing to the modern culture, or cheapening the Gospel. If we are to defend *the* Faith, then we must begin by defending faith alone in Christ alone, a simple, unconditional, non-meritorious response of accepting and trusting in God's promise.

<sup>20</sup> Agreeing that the rulers were saved are: J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary in the Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols., The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928), 2:452; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols., The Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 2:487; Morris, 605. Verse 42 is introduced by a strong adversative (*homōs mentoi*), denoting an exception that contrasts these believers with the nation which Isaiah prophesied would not believe (12:37-41). This verse offers hope that individuals within the nation could still be saved. If they were not actually saved, the contrast is muted and made meaningless.

#### IV. Some Practical Implications

If John has written *the* book on how to be saved, then we should submit our thinking to it and allow our ministries to be shaped by it. Yet how often do we hear salvation explained in terminology not found in the Bible or confused with other demands Jesus makes of those already saved?

Here are some important implications which flow from our study of John's presentation of salvation:

First, we must *give people something to believe*. Since it is the *object* of faith that saves, there must be meaningful content about that object, which is Jesus Christ Himself. We should present Jesus as the Son of God who died for our sins (1:29) and rose again. Content-less emotional appeals are not enough. It will do no good to call people to believe in something empty or erroneous.

Second, we must *invite people to believe* in Christ as their Savior. Christ's revelation demands a response. But let us invite them to *believe*, not "ask Him into your heart," "give your life to Christ," "surrender to Him as Lord," or any other unbiblical notions. This kind of unclear, erroneous, and confusing language will obscure the simple message of *sola fide*. We should be prepared to explain what it means to believe with appropriate illustrations or comparisons.

Third, we can *assure* people of their salvation on the basis of their having believed in God's Word. Faith in God's promise of eternal life is not the only form of assurance of salvation, but it is *sufficient* assurance to which any other assurance is secondary. Let's not lead them to conditions that are certainly not found in John's presentation.

Fourth, we must emphasize God's *Free Grace* in our Gospel. It is for those who ask, receive, or believe. We must keep salvation as simple (though not always easy) as John did. We should normally be positive in our approach, not condemning. If we choose to preach repentance, we must explain what it means and how it relates to faith so that it does not become another condition for salvation. But let us also admit that it was important enough to John that repentance *not* be included in his *Gospel of Belief*. To John, *the* sin that condemns is unbelief, and the only cure for this in his Gospel is belief.

*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 (3:18).*

## APPENDIX

## Does Belief Result in Salvation in John 2:23-24 and 8:30-31?

## John 2:23-24

The reaction of Jesus in v 24, "Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men," causes many to argue that those in v 23 who "believed in His name when they saw the signs that He did" did not believe unto salvation. They argue that: 1) These only believed in Christ's name, not His person; 2) They only believed in the signs, not in Christ as Messiah; 3) Jesus rejected their faith in v 24.

In answer, we first observe that there is no explicit denial of the reality of true faith in this passage. "Believed in His name" in v 23 would more normally be taken to refer to salvation as in 1:12, 3:18 (negative), and 20:31. It is commonly agreed that the construction *pisteuō eis* is John's premier technical term for saving faith. Why did John use this language when he could easily have used a different expression?

Second, though signs prompted this faith, faith had as its object "His name," not His signs. Faith prompted by signs is seen elsewhere in John (1:47-49; 2:11; 4:52-53; 10:41-42; 11:42, 45; 20:26-29). Jesus even encouraged faith based on signs (1:50-51; 10:37-38; 14:11) and the apostle John expected signs to induce faith (12:37; 20:31). The ultimate miraculous sign, the resurrection, was expected to prompt faith as well.

Third, the use of *pisteuō* in v 24, usually translated "commit," is evidently a word-play on the use of *pisteuō* in v 23. It is used to indicate Jesus' lack of confidence in these believers based on His supernatural knowledge of their level of commitment. Nothing explicit is said about their salvation experience. If it is assumed they were genuinely saved, Jesus did not want to commit Himself in the sense of further disclosure and an intimate relationship with them which is conditioned upon obedience and full confession of faith (14:23; 15:14-15). The immature commitment of "untrustworthy believers" is a subtle motif in John (9:22; 12:42-43; 19:38).<sup>21</sup> It simply makes more sense to interpret the unclear clause, "Jesus did not commit Himself to them" in light of the clearer language of "believed in His name." Jesus would not reveal more of Himself to those not fully confessing Him.

<sup>21</sup> For an excellent development of this motif, see Zane C. Hodges, "Untrustworthy Believers—John 2:23-25," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 135 (April-June 1978): 139-52.

## John 8:30-31

Again, a clear statement about saving faith is doubted by some because of what follows. Though v 30 says, “many believed in Him,” using the clear *pisteuō eis* construction, v 31 refers to them as “those Jews who believed Him” with the *pisteuō* construction lacking a preposition. Also, the condition for discipleship given in v 31 is equated with salvation and it is claimed the hostility of these false believers continues (vv 33 ff.) and Jesus calls them “children of the devil” (v 44).

As for the first argument, we have already shown how *pisteuō* without the preposition does not prove faith is inadequate for salvation. The immediate context (v 24) verifies that salvation can be expressed by *pisteuō* without the preposition.

Second, the condition for discipleship in v 31 should not be construed as an admonition to unbelievers. The opposite is indicated by the emphatic pronoun *hymeis*, which distinguishes the believing Jews from the rest of the Jews who oppose Jesus. Besides, Jesus does not admonish these believers to *enter* His word, but to *abide* or *continue* in it. The aorist subjunctive “if you abide” indicates a difference among the believers, as does the qualifier *alēthōs*, “indeed”. These who are assumed to be in His word through faith are now given the condition of abiding for further knowledge of the truth and freedom in Christ. Elsewhere in John, intimate discipleship is conditioned on love and obedience (e.g., 13:35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:4, 7, 10, 14).

Third, the hostile objections of v 33 ff. reflect the continuing hostility of the unbelieving Jews, a major motif of this section. In v 33 the abrupt change of tone from vv 30-31 resumes this motif, making it unnecessary to identify the speakers; the Jews had raised objections from the start of the dialogue (vv 13, 19, 22, 25). John’s commentary in v 30 is inserted before Jesus’ remarks to notify the reader of a change of focus by Christ before the opposition resumes in v 33. It is characteristic of John to insert these editorial explanations (cf. vv 27-28). The objection of v 33 is totally out of character with the inclination of those mentioned in vv 30-32, as is also the declaration that those opposing Christ are children of the devil (v 44).

Saving faith is the most reasonable way to understand this passage. Such an interpretation prevents Christ, who says in v 45, “you do not believe Me,” from contradicting John in vv 30-31 who said they both “believed in Him” and “believed Him.” It is certainly better than calling these people “unbelieving believers.”

# DOES PHILIPPIANS 1:6 GUARANTEE PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION?<sup>1</sup>

## Part 1

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### I. Introduction

Like Psalm 23 or Prov 3:5-6, the simple promise of Phil 1:6 is claimed by many Christians for comfort and encouragement, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."<sup>2</sup> They understand the verse in a general way to imply that God is presently sustaining us in His grace, and that this divine ministry continues a process which began at salvation.<sup>3</sup> Others find in the verse a more specific theological teaching: Progressive sanctification cannot fail because God has sovereignly ordained that His "good work" of salvation will continue in both sanctification and final glorification.

But Christians often find consolation in biblical truths that are not really found in the passages that they claim. And sometimes theologians base their theological systems on inappropriate conclusions from the

<sup>1</sup> This and a second article are a slightly modified version of a paper presented at the November 1995 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society. Some changes reflect the valuable critiques of others who have read that paper.

<sup>2</sup> Unless noted differently, English translations are from the NASB.

<sup>3</sup> I do not object to finding in Phil 1:6 the general principle that God is faithful to his children. Maxie D. Dunnam, "Philippians," *The Communicator's Commentary*, ed. Lloyd J. Ogilvie (Dallas: Word Publishers, 1982), 8:260, appears to approach the verse this way: "The Christian has no right to expect to fare any better in his own self-effort than the non-Christian. What the Christian can count on is a God who keeps faith. The truth of Philippians 1:6 is that . . . 'God is faithful' . . ." See also Theodore H. Epp, *Christ Preeminent: Studies in Philippians* (Lincoln, NE: Back to the Bible, 1980), 31-32.

prooftexts they employ. Any so-called promise of Scripture or theological teaching must stand or fall in light of valid exegetical investigation. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate in the immediate and the broader context of the whole letter that Phil 1:6 does *not* intend to teach the concept that God guarantees the sanctification of His children. Therefore, it cannot justifiably be used to affirm that God's sovereign grace prevents the possibility of prolonged, serious failure in the Christian life.

## II. Overview of Positions on Philippians 1:6

Surprisingly, only two basic options can be culled from commentaries and interpretive research on Philippians.

### A. The "Good Work" Is God's Gift of Salvation/Sanctification

A wide variety of scholars perceive Phil 1:6 as addressing the work of salvation and sanctification in the life of the believer.<sup>4</sup> This might be la-

<sup>4</sup> Merrill C. Tenney, *Philippians: The Gospel at Work* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 41, but on p. 42, he admits that in 1:7 there is an allusion to the gift; John Calvin, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 228–30; Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, translated by James W. Leitch (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1962), 17, who denies that 1:6 has even a glimmer of reference to the Philippians' financial help, but on p. 16 views the *koinōnia* of 1:5 as the Philippians' active advance of the Gospel; Kenneth Grayston, *The Epistles to the Galatians and to the Philippians* (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 81; Homer A. Kent, Jr., "Philippians," *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1978), 11:105; J. Hugh Michael, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, Moffatt New Testament Commentary (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1928), 13; H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Philippians and Colossians, and to Philemon*, 4th ed., translated by John C. Moore, rev. and ed. Wm. P. Dickson, preface and supplementary notes by Timothy Dwight (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1889), 13–14; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), 709–710; Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Kenneth Barker (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 52; Judith M. Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance: Staying In and Falling Away* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 33–47; Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse, F. F. Bruce, and Gordon D. Fee (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 85–88.



beled the “traditional view” because of its wide popularity in laymen’s commentaries.<sup>5</sup> But certain theologians claim v 6 as a key text for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints—the teaching that true Christians will persevere in faith and holiness.<sup>6</sup> Thielman summarizes this theology with a succinct interpretation of the verse: “Those who will

<sup>5</sup> Bruce B. Barton et al., *Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, Life Application Bible Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995), 27–28; Robert G. Gromacki, *Stand United in Joy: An Exposition of Philippians* (Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1980), 39–41; John F. Walvoord, *Philippians: Triumph in Christ*, Everyman’s Bible Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), 28; David L. Hocking, *How to Be Happy in Difficult Situations: Studies in Philippians* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1975), 26–27; Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Joyful* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1975), 29–30, applies v 6 to salvation but recognizes it may refer to the Philippians’ gift.

<sup>6</sup> Many commentators and theologians mistakenly assume that “eternal security” and the “perseverance of the saints” are but *two names for the same doctrine*; Robert H. Stein, *Difficult Passages in the New Testament: Interpreting Puzzling Texts in the Gospels and Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), 352; Alvin L. Baker, “Eternal Security Rightly Understood,” *Fundamentalist Journal* (September 1984): 19–20; W. Boyd Hunt, “The Perseverance of the Saints,” *Basic Christian Doctrines*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), 238; Edwin H. Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972), 69. Some note that they are not the same. Arguing *for* perseverance and *against* eternal security: L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 4th rev. and enlarged ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), 546; throughout the book, John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus: What Does Jesus Mean When He Says “Follow Me”?* rev. and expanded ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994); *Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993). Arguing *against* perseverance but *for* eternal security: R. T. Kendall, *Once Saved, Always Saved* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 19–22; indirectly throughout the book, Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990); directly throughout the book, Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1989); *The Gospel Under Siege: Faith and Works in Tension*, rev. and enlarged ed. (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1992); Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings: A Study of Eternal Security and the Final Significance of Man* (Hayesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1992).

be saved in the future live holy lives in the present.”<sup>7</sup> In his book, *Faith Works*, MacArthur references Phil 1:6 six different times—as much as or more than any other verse, showing the centrality of its concepts for his theology. It is generally assumed that the theological meaning he assigns to the verse is the only viable interpretation. No exegesis of the passage, discussion of the context, or refutation of any alternative interpretations is offered.<sup>8</sup> He explains his theology in this way:

That ongoing work of grace in the Christian’s life is as much a certainty as justification, glorification, or any other aspect of God’s redeeming work . . . [Phil 1:6 is quoted] . . . Salvation is wholly God’s work, and He finishes what He starts. His grace is sufficient. And potent. It cannot be defective in any regard.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Frank Thielman, *Philippians*, NIV Application Commentary Series, ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 39. While evangelicals like Thielman might vehemently deny that they teach a works-salvation, it is intensely difficult to avoid drawing this conclusion from such statements.

<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, *Faith Works*, 24, 33, 71, 110, 185, 192. An author should not always be faulted just because a particular verse is not discussed in depth. In this case, however, the verse is used so repeatedly and is so fundamental to his theology that one might ask for a more thorough treatment. Compare also where the verse has an assumed meaning, Stein, *Difficult Passages*, 256, 263, 288, 348.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 33. Elsewhere MacArthur (*ibid.*, 192) writes, “They [professing believers] can be sure that if their faith is real it will endure to the end—because God himself guarantees it . . . (Phil. 1:6).” And again (*ibid.*, 24), “Real faith cannot be defective or short lived but endures forever (Phil. 1:6; cf. Heb. 11).” Yet later, quoting Phil 1:6 again (*ibid.*, 71), he qualifies the sanctification process: “Sometimes the process is slow and arduous; sometimes it is immediately triumphant.” It seems weightless theologically to argue for a particular view of sanctification from the fact that God’s grace is not defective. If God’s grace is not defective when the process of sanctification proceeds rather slowly or even stops for a limited period of time, why is it defective when the process seems *extremely* slow or stops for an *extended* period of time? One could even argue for sinless perfection in this life based on the theology that God’s grace cannot be “defective.” Quoting Phil 1:6 in *The Gospel According to Jesus*, 189, MacArthur comments, “The work of salvation cannot ultimately be thwarted.” This reasoning is not conclusive either. One who believes that glorification, but not progressive sanctification, is guaranteed for the Christian will concur that “God’s work of salvation cannot ultimately be thwarted.”

The importance of the verse under discussion for Reformed theology is noted by Hendrikus Berkhof. He observes that in the discussion of the perseverance of the saints, its defenders always point to seven key passages, one of which is Phil 1:6.<sup>10</sup> Baker does just this, citing Phil 1:6 as one of six major passages that teach the doctrine.<sup>11</sup> Historically, such confessions as the French Confession of Faith of 1559 (Article XXI) claim the verse for perseverance:

We believe also that faith is given to the elect not only to introduce them into the right way, but also to make them continue in it to the end. For as it is God who hath begun the work, He will also perfect it.<sup>12</sup>

### B. The “Good Work” Is the Philippians’ Gift/Participation in Advancing the Gospel

The average Christian is sometimes surprised to learn that there is a viable alternative to interpreting Phil 1:6 as a reference to salvation. In fact, there are many commentators who view the good work that God began in the Philippians as their partnership with Paul in advancing the Gospel. Some among those who hold this interpretation view the generous monetary support given to Paul as more prominent and explicit in Phil 1:6,<sup>13</sup> while others find in the verse a lucid but indirect reference to the gift. The Knox translation best captures the nuance of 1:6, where the gift is more primary: “Nor am I less confident, that he who has inspired this generosity in you will bring it to perfection, ready for the day when Jesus Christ comes.”<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Hendrikus Berkhof, “The Christian Life: Perseverance and Renewal,” *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 156. For example, well-known Reformed theologian, Robert Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (1878; reprint edition, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), 707, begins his whole discussion on perseverance by citing Phil 1:6.

<sup>11</sup> Baker, “Eternal Security,” 20.

<sup>12</sup> “The French Confession of Faith,” in *The Creeds of Christendom*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 3:371. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) cites Phil 1:6 in the first paragraph of Chapter XVII, “The Perseverance of the Saints” (*ibid.*, 636).

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, “Philippians,” *Wuest’s Word Studies* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), 2:32, states that “the good work is giving to missions.”

<sup>14</sup> *The Holy Bible: A Translation from the Latin Vulgate in Light of the Hebrew and Greek Originals* (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1950).

Eadie may be representative of those who understand 1:6 as slightly broader than, yet inclusive, of the financial gift. He states that the *koinōnia* (fellowship) of 1:5 includes “all that belongs to the defence and propagation of the gospel.”<sup>15</sup> Swift is also quite clear in expressing this view of 1:6:

His [Paul’s] confident hope was that God would perfect (*epiteleseī*) them in their work of the gospel and that it would bear fruit from then

<sup>15</sup> John A. Eadie, *A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, ed. W. Young, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 9. Cf. also Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1983), 20–22; James A. Brooks, “Exposition of Philippians,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 23 (Fall 1980): 23–36; Donald Guthrie, *Epistles from Prison: Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon*, Bible Guides, ed. William Barclay and F. F. Bruce (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 32; J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians*, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965), 84; C. J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and to Philemon* (London: Parker, Son, and Bourn, 1861), 7; Dillow, *Servant Kings*, 205–206; C. R. Erdman, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians: An Exposition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1932), 42, finds in 1:6 a promise that the Gospel will continue to advance through the Philippians (and others) until Christ’s return. He uses Matt 24:14 as a cross-reference. Francis X. Malinowski, “The Brave Women of Philippi” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (April 1985): 61, defines *koinōnia* in 1:5 as the Philippians’ financial gift to Paul but does not give his opinion of 1:6–7. L. A. Wiesinger, *Biblical Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistles to the Philippians, to Titus, and the First to Timothy*, Clark’s Foreign Theological Library, translated by John Fulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1851), 30; Alfred Barry, *Ellicott’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, ed. C. J. Ellicott (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, n. d.), 8:66; Timothy Dwight’s notes in Meyer, *Philippians*, 47–48, favor this view.

Some authors understand 1:6 to suggest both salvation and participation in the advance of the Gospel. George Panikulam, *Koinōnia in the New Testament: A Dynamic Expression of Christian Life* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 82–84, finds 1:5–7 to express the entire response of the Philippians to the Gospel—their acceptance, spread of, and life in the Gospel. Marvin R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1897), 8, sees the beginning of the “good work” to be their reception of the Gospel (salvation), and the carrying forward to the day of Christ to involve their participation in the promotion of the Gospel.

till the day of Christ. In brief, verse 6 speaks of the perfecting of the Philippians' *koinōnia* ("partnership") and of them as *koinōnoi* ("partners") in the gospel.<sup>16</sup>

Most scholars claiming this interpretation—whether suggesting that the gift is primary or secondary—include with the Philippians' generosity other factors that contributed to their partnership with Paul. These include such matters as their sympathy for and cooperation with the apostle, and their united struggle for the Gospel. On the other hand, Hodges views the "good work" of 1:6 as a specific reference to the Philippians' most recent gift (discussed in chapter 4), not as a general reference to their past generosity or present cooperation in the Gospel.<sup>17</sup> Despite these variations and distinctions, the financial gift/participation in the advance of the Gospel will be considered as a single interpretive viewpoint.

It is the thesis of this article that when all the evidence is in, interpreting the "good work" of v 6 as a reference to salvation/sanctification becomes a highly artificial interpretation imposed on the text. The analysis that follows will seek to demonstrate this.

### III. Analysis and Solutions

#### A. Thematic and Structural Considerations

The meaning derived from 1:6 must be in harmony with 1) the nature of an epistolary introduction, and 2) the structure of the letter as a whole. The rationale for this will become evident as we proceed.

##### 1. Philippians 1:6 and an Epistolary Introduction

Philippians is often thought to have no central thematic organization.<sup>18</sup> Swift, however, has argued for a clear structure and theme for the epistle.<sup>19</sup> After a salutation (1:1–2), the introduction to the book com-

<sup>16</sup> Robert C. Swift, "The Theme and Structure of Philippians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141 (July–September 1984): 237.

<sup>17</sup> Hodges, *Siege*, 95. Hodges's understanding has the advantage of handling the singular *ergon agathon* ("good work") quite naturally.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Jewett, "The Epistolary Thanksgiving and the Integrity of Philippians," *Novum Testamentum* 12 (1970): 49; William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Philippians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), 37–38; Vincent, *Philippians*, xxxi; Eadie, *Philippians*, xxx; Loveday Alexander, "Hellenistic Letter-Forms and the Structure of Philippians," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37 (1989): 94–95, finds a structure but not a theme.

<sup>19</sup> Swift, "Theme and Structure," 236.

poses 1:3–11.<sup>20</sup> The body of the epistle encompasses 1:27–4:9. Philippians 1:12–26 comprises a “biographical prologue” in which significant motifs of the introduction are developed and through which a transition is made to the body of the letter. The epilogue (4:10–20) corresponds to and balances the prologue proper (1:3–11).<sup>21</sup>

Repeated research on epistolary introductions has now agreed that such introductions function as a formal device that announces the central themes of a letter.<sup>22</sup> Drawing especially upon the core of the introduction, vv 5–7, Swift concludes that the entire theme of the book is the Philippians’ partnership in advancing the Gospel. He reasons that this theme ties the book together as a coherent whole.<sup>23</sup> Commenting on the role of 1:6, he observes:

The *ergon agathon* (“good work”) in verse 6 must be interpreted by the *koinōnia* of the previous verse. This exegetical point is frequently

<sup>20</sup> Doxology (cf. 1:11b, “to the glory and praise of God”) and an eschatological climax (cf. 1:10b, “until the day of Christ”) are two characteristics that finalize the epistolary introduction. Disclosure formulas such as found in 1:12 (“Now I want you to know, brethren, that . . .”) are frequently used to introduce a new development in an epistle. Jack T. Sanders, “The Transition From Opening Epistolary Thanksgiving to Body in the Letters of the Pauline Corpus,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 355, 361.

<sup>21</sup> It is debated whether the body of the letter begins with 1:12 or 1:27. Duane F. Watson, “A Rhetorical Analysis of Philippians and Its Implications for the Unity Question,” *Novum Testamentum* 30 (1988): 61, finds 1:3–26 as the *exordium*. But it is common to take the disclosure formula in 1:12 as the transition into the body of the letter. Compare L. Gregory Bloomquist, *The Function of Suffering in Philippians* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 147; Ben Witherington III, *Friendship and Finances In Philippi: The Letter of Paul to the Philippians* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 7, 43. See also n. 20 above.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Schubert, *Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings* (Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1939), 25–26, 76–77; Jewett, “Epistolary Thanksgiving,” 53; David E. Garland, “Philippians 1:1–26: The Defense and Confirmation of the Gospel,” *Review and Expositor* 77 (1980): 328; Robert W. Funk, “The Letter: Form and Style,” in *Language, Hermeneutic, and the Word of God* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), 257, 269; Ronald Russell, “Pauline Letter Structure in Philippians,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25 (September 1982): 306. Schubert (*ibid.*, 77) sees 1:5 and 1:7 as “topic sentences which find their development in the body of the letter.”

<sup>23</sup> Swift, “Theme and Structure,” 236–37. Several rhetorical analyses locate the central proposition or theme of the book at 1:27–30; Watson, “Philippians,” 59, 65; Witherington, *Philippians*, 53.

noted by commentators, though few of them consistently restrict it enough to this sense. This writer holds that verse 6 refers *restrictively* [italics original] to the perfecting of the Philippians as workers for the gospel, and to the perfecting of their works in the cause of the gospel. *Many exegetes, failing to note this, have thus failed to see that verses 3–6 contain a thematic summary of the entire epistle* [italics added] . . . Verses 3–6 then, are a cameo of the entire epistle. They introduce the main theme, the Philippians' partnership in the gospel.<sup>24</sup>

Even if one is not convinced with Swift that 1:6 describes *the central theme* of the book, this much is clear: The prologue of Philippians, like that of any true NT epistle, contains in seed form all the significant concepts that are developed in the letter. But this understanding of the epistolary introduction militates against impressions that 1:6 refers to the salvation/sanctification process, since the theme and unity of the book cannot be adequately explained using this conception.

## 2. The Harmony of the Prologue and Epilogue

Not only does the introduction to Philippians announce the topics of the letter, it uniquely corresponds to the epilogue, as noted above. Jewett, citing Schubert, observes that 4:10–20, with its central discussion concerning the Philippians' gift to Paul, is even more closely related to the epistolary "table of contents" (1:3–11) than any other portion of the letter.<sup>25</sup> Both verbal and conceptual links between the two units are striking and force on us the need to interpret the introduction in light of the gift motif in the conclusion.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 237–38. A defense of his theme or how it is unfolded within the letter is the purpose of Swift's entire article.

<sup>25</sup> Jewett, "Epistolary Thanksgiving," 53.

<sup>26</sup> The harmony of 1:3–11 with 4:10–20 is a vivid illustration of the unity of the epistle. To the contrary, some scholars such as John L. White, *The Form and Function of the Body of the Greek Letter*, second edition corrected (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1972), 75; Funk, "Letter," 272; and Dieter Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), 63, 67, argue for the composite nature of the letter. For a brief bibliography of those works that defend multiple letters or the unity of the book, see Watson, "Philippians," 80, nn. 107 and 108. Watson (84, 88) offers the rhetorical analysis of the book as settling the debate in favor of unity.

Dalton has observed four of these parallels and how they evidence an *inclusio* that binds the whole letter together.<sup>27</sup> Two common elements relate to the use of *koinōnia* (1:5 with 4:15) and cognates (1:7 with 4:14) that occur in both paragraphs. A third element relates to the inception of this partnership: “from the first day until now” (1:5) and “at the first preaching of the gospel” (4:15).<sup>28</sup> Finally, a reciprocal attitude of compassion is expressed in identical phrases found in 1:7 and 4:10.

Besides Dalton’s four common elements, at least four others can be identified. First, the parallel between 1:3 (“I thank my God [*eucharistō tō Theō*]”) and 4:10 (“I rejoiced greatly in the Lord [*echarēn en Kyriō megalōs*]”) can be established on the fact that *eucharistō* and *chairō* are etymologically related.<sup>29</sup> Philippians 4:10 is also parallel with the reference to *chara* (“joy”) in 1:4. Second, the Greek phrase *kalōs epoiesate* (“you have done well”) in 4:14 is used elsewhere of doing good works.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it forms a striking correspondence with the “good work” of 1:6. Third, the mention of the day of Christ<sup>31</sup> in 1:6 is recalled in the Bema (Judgment Seat of Christ) terminology of 4:17 (“to your account,” *eis*

<sup>27</sup> William J. Dalton. “The Integrity of Philippians,” *Biblica* 60 (1979): 101, comments, “Thus we have four common elements at the beginning and the end of the letter. It does seem fitting that the central idea should be that of partnership, since in fact this theme dominates the whole text.” Also noting this *inclusio* is Peter T. O’Brien, “Divine Provision for our Needs: Assurance from Philippians 4” *Reformed Theological Review* (January–April 1991): 28; cf. also Schubert, *Form*, 77.

<sup>28</sup> Martin, *Philippians*, TNTC, 47, also regards these two phrases to be identical in meaning.

<sup>29</sup> Sanders, “Epistolary Thanksgiving,” 360, n. 14, observing this parallel between 1:3 and 4:10, comments, “Probably there was no material distinction made among early Christians between rejoicing and giving thanks.” Schubert, *Form*, 77, also parallels these words. The synonymous nature of the two words is demonstrated in Phlm 4 with 7 and 1 Thess 5:16 with 17. Cf. also Silva, *Philippians*, 235; Gerald W. Peterman, “‘Thankless Thanks’: The Epistolary Social Convention in Philippians 4:10–20,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 42 (1991): 269.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Luke 6:27, “do good [*kalōs poieite*] to those who hate you”; cf. also Matt 5:44 (Majority Text); 12:12. In a book about good works, Jas 2:8, 19 should be allowed to carry this nuance. For a similar phrase, but with *kalon* instead, note Gal 6:9, “let us not lose heart in doing good [*kalon poiountes*]”; see also Rom 7:21; 2 Cor 13:7; Jas 4:17.

<sup>31</sup> Kent, “Philippians,” 108, specifies the same phrase in 1:11 as the time when believers will be evaluated to determine the value of the fruit they have produced in their lives. Cf. also Michael, *Philippians*, 13; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 83.



*logon hymōn*). Taken together, both passages appear to focus on the eschatological significance of the Philippians' benevolent gift.<sup>32</sup> Fourth, while 4:8 ("whatever is right . . . let your mind dwell on," *dikaia . . . logizesthe*) concludes the body of the epistle, it may subtly stimulate the reader to reflect back to the introduction, preparing the way for 4:10–20. It was in the introduction that Paul demonstrated "thinking what was right" (1:7 "it is only right to feel," *dikaion . . . phronein*).<sup>33</sup>

Both individually and collectively, these parallels cannot easily be dismissed. Since the prologue and the epilogue correspond with each other, the subject of the Philippians' financial support of the Gospel must not be treated as peripheral to the book's theme. Next to Second Corinthians 8–9, the discussion of the financial contribution of the Philippians in 4:10–20 is, after all, the second most extensive passage on NT giving in all the epistles. Its frequent mention in Philippians also testifies to its centrality for the book (2:17;<sup>34</sup> 25–30; 4:10–20). The chart below catalogs the similarities that relate 4:10–20 to 1:3–7.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Parallels Between Philippians 1 and Philippians 4*

Philippians 1:3–7	Philippians 4:10–20
1:3 <i>I thank my God [eucharistō tō Theō mou]</i>	4:10 <i>But I rejoiced in the Lord echarēn en Kyriō</i> greatly
1:4 offering prayer <i>with joy [meta charas]</i>	
1:5 <sup>36</sup> <i>your participation [koinōnia] in the gospel</i>	4:15 <i>no church shared [ekoinōnēsen] with me in the matter of giving and receiving</i>

<sup>32</sup> Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 84, suggests this for the 4:17–19 passage.

<sup>33</sup> *Phronein* ("to think") and *logizesthai* ("to consider") seem to overlap in meaning. Of three places where they fall within a close range of each other, two of them are found in Philippians (3:13 and 15; 4:8 and 10). In 1 Cor 13:11, the other close proximity of the two words, an overlap also seems evident.

<sup>34</sup> The Greek words (or cognates), *thysia* ("sacrifice") and *leitourgia* ("service"), undoubtedly imply the giving of money in Philippians (2:25, 30; 4:18) and elsewhere (2 Cor 9:12; Rom 15:27). Cf. Colin O. Buchanan, "Epaphroditus' Sickness and the Letter to the Philippians," *Evangelical Quarterly* 36 (1964): 158–59.

<sup>35</sup> Further parallels between 4:10–20 and Paul's prayer in 1:9–11 need not be discussed.

<sup>36</sup> Also cited by Dalton; see n. 23 above.

1:5<sup>37</sup> your participation *in the gospel from the first day* [*eis to euangelion apo tēs prōtēs hēmeras*]      4:15 *at the first preaching of the gospel* [*en archē tou euangeliou*], after I departed from Macedonia

1:6 He who began a *good work* [*ergon agathon*] in you      4:14 *you have done well* [*kalōs epoiēsate*] to share with me

1:6 [He] will perfect it *until the day of Christ Jesus* [*achri hēmeras Christou Iēsou*]      4:17 *the profit which increases to your account* [*ton karpon ton pleonazonta eis logon hymōn*]

1:7<sup>38</sup> it is right for me to *feel this way about all of you* [*touto phronein hyper pantōn hymōn*]<sup>39</sup>      4:10 you have renewed your *concern for me* [*to hyper emou phronein*]. Indeed, *you have been concerned* [*ephroneite*]

1:3 for all your *remembrance of me* [*epi pasē tē mneia hymōn*] (Moffatt NT)<sup>40</sup>

1:7 *it is only right for me to feel this way* [*estin dikaion emoi touto phronein*] about you all      4:8 whatever is *right* [*dikaia*], . . . let your mind *dwell on these things* [*tauta logizesthe*]

1:7<sup>41</sup> *in my imprisonment* [*en te tois desmois mou*] . . . you all are *partakers* [*synkoinōnous*] of grace with me      4:14 *to share with me* [*synkoinōnēsantes*] *in my affliction* [*mou tē thlipsei*].

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> The phrase *phronein* (“to think”) plus *hyper* (“on behalf of”) appears in the NT only in 1:7 and 4:10, making the passages purposefully interrelated (David E. Garland, “The Composition and Unity of Philippians,” *Novum Testamentum* 27 [1985]: 162, n. 75). By showing the Philippians how much he loved them, Paul hoped to gain their continued affection for him and partnership with him. Cf. Reumann, “Contributions,” 455, who calls the two uses of this phrase “friendship language.”

<sup>40</sup> Schubert, *Form*, 77, cites the parallel of 1:3 with 4:10 and 18. But see n. 42 below.

<sup>41</sup> Also cited by Dalton; see n. 23 above.

### B. Exegetical Considerations: The *Koinōnia* of 1:5

It is generally accepted in modern editions of the Greek NT that Phil 1:3–7 constitutes one long sentence. This helps form a contextual unit. In v 3, Paul expresses his thanks to God for the Philippians each time he brought them before God in prayer.<sup>42</sup> The expressed reason<sup>43</sup> for this thanks comes in 1:5, with v 4 expressing a grammatically parenthetical thought.<sup>44</sup> Paul's thanksgiving was specifically for the church's participation (*koinōnia*) in the advance of the Gospel. It is widely admitted that *koinōnia* in 1:5 alludes to the gifts Paul received from the Philippian church. Nevertheless, many commentators quickly pass over this fact

<sup>42</sup> It is attractive to translate *epi pasē tē mneia hymōn* (not as "in all my remembrance of you," 1:3, NASB) but as a reference to the Philippians' love for Paul ("for all your remembrance of me"), taking *hymōn* as a subjective genitive. Peter T. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings in the Letters of Paul* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1977), 41–46; Schubert, *Form*, 71–82; Volf, *Perseverance*, 42, n. 206; Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 59–60; Jewett, "Epistolary Thanksgiving," 53; Garland, "Defense," 329–30; Reumann, "Contributions," 411. Schubert and O'Brien argue quite convincingly for this viewpoint. But the use of the noun *mneia* ("remembrance") with a genitive personal pronoun is always objective in the NT and the LXX. Cf. 1 Thess 1:2 and Philemon 4, where the construction appears in an introductory thanksgiving. See Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 16–17; Fee, *Philippians*, 77–79. The Philippians' love for Paul comes later in the introduction (1:7).

<sup>43</sup> Scholars widely agree that in 1:5 *epi* has a causal force; Schubert, *Form*, 73.

<sup>44</sup> Roger L. Omanson, "A Note on the Translation of Philippians 1:3–5," *Bible Translator* 29 (April 1978): 244–45; Schubert, *Form*, 61, 73; Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 82. Cf. the Amplified, RSV (but not the NRSV), "thankful for your partnership." Vincent, *Philippians*, 6, holds that (1) *eucharisteō* ("I give thanks") is left without an object unless it is tied to 1:5, and (2) *deēsis* ("petition") plus *poioumai* ("I make") is never found with *epi* ("for, because of") to mark the cause for prayer. The partnership of the Philippians is not the cause of Paul's petition (1:4) but the cause of his thanksgiving to God (1:3). For similar constructions where *epi* plus the dative follows *eucharisteō* or a cognate and expresses the object of thanks, see 2 Cor 9:15 and 1 Cor 1:4. On the other hand, others connect 1:5 with what immediately precedes: "I make my petition with joy because of your partnership." Translations reflecting this construction with 1:4 include NIV, NEB, TEV. For the best defense of this latter viewpoint, see Kent, "Philippians," 107. Cf. also Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 18–19; Fee, *Philippians*, 75–76.

and interpret the word as a mystical union with Christ (salvation)<sup>45</sup>—a concept derived more readily from the English translation “fellowship” than from the Greek. This word group (*koinōnia*, “partnership”; *koinōneō*, “to share”; *synkoinōneō*, “to share together with”; *synkoinōnos*, “fellow-partner”) does not primarily imply association with another person (e.g., with Christ). The basic concept implies a participation with another in a common cause or goal, i.e., a “sharing” or “having something in common with another.”<sup>46</sup> The English words “partner” or “partnership” frequently satisfy the connotations behind these Greek words.<sup>47</sup> While the word group can have a general connotation, it frequently carries a specific idea of sharing financially or forming a partnership through financial giving.<sup>48</sup> In this manner, it is sometimes translated “contribution” or a related term.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Lightner, “Philippians,” 649; Reumann, “Contributions,” 441; Kent, “Philippians,” 105; Lenski, *Philippians*, 707–709.

<sup>46</sup> J. Y. Campbell, “*KOINŌNIA* and Its Cognates in the New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 51 (1932): 353.

<sup>47</sup> Fee, *Philippians*, 82, makes an unnecessary distinction between sharing something in common with another and partnership.

<sup>48</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated by Walter Bauer, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. *koinōneō*, 438 (hereafter referred to as BAGD), list Phil 4:15 under the meaning, “give or contribute a share.” Under *koinōnia*, their entry (ibid., 438–39) states “abstr. for concr. sign of fellowship, proof of brotherly unity, even gift, contribution.” Romans 15:26 is listed here, but 2 Cor 8:4 should also be included. A few texts that may have connotations of sharing financially or materially are regularly overlooked. Contextually, Acts 2:42 (*koinōnia*) carries this significance. In the early church, believers continued to have all things in “common” (*koinos*, Acts 2:44; 4:32), evidencing a unique unity. Other passages that directly or indirectly relate to money include Rom 11:17 (“fellow partners,” *synkoinōnos*, where money is implied in *piotēs*, “rich”), Rom 15:27 (*koinōneō*, “to share”; cf. 15:26), Gal 6:6 (*koinōneō*), 1 Tim 6:18 (*koinōnikos* = “generous”), and Heb 13:16 (*koinōnia*; cf. 13:5). Cf. also Phlm 17 (see v 18) and Luke 5:10 where Simon, James, and John were “partners” (*koinōnoi*) in business.

<sup>49</sup> A small sample includes “contribution,” “contribute,” and “contributing” in Rom 12:13 (*koinōneō*) of the RSV, NRSV, NASB; in Rom 15:26 (*koinōnia*) of the RSV, NASB, NKJV, KJV; and in 2 Cor 9:13 (*koinōnia*) of the RSV, NASB. The words “distribution” and “distributing” are found in 2 Cor 9:13 of the KJV and in Rom 12:13 of the NKJV.

That Paul is thinking directly of the Philippians' contribution financially when he uses *koinōnia* in 1:5 is supported by the following reasons: First, Paul brings together in chapter four the verb *koinōneō* (4:15) and the compound verb *synkoinōneō*<sup>50</sup> (4:14) to identify the gift they had sent him in his imprisonment. The compound noun *synkoinōnoi* ("fellow-sharers") is used in 1:7<sup>51</sup> and expresses a unity that the Philippians have with Paul in his imprisonment, and in defending and vindicating the Gospel. The *koinōnia* of 1:5 must essentially be the same as the *synkoinōnoi* in 1:7.<sup>52</sup> This implies an inextricable connection with the gift motif in 4:10–20. At the same time, it ties together the concepts in 1:5–7, and demands an interpretation that treats all three verses as a flow of thought. In other words, 1:6 cannot go uninfluenced by the conceptions of the Philippian gift portrayed in 1:5 and again in 1:7, and finally in 4:10–20. It may also be added that from this vantage point, four of the six uses of *koinōnia* and its cognates in Philippians focus on the gift motif.<sup>53</sup> We may go so far as to say that rarely (if ever) does *koinōnia*

<sup>50</sup> Fee, *Philippians*, 91, n. 7, wants *koinōnia* and *synkoinōnoi/synkoinōneō* to be synonymous. But we side with Campbell, "KOINŌNIA," 363: "The very existence of the compound suggests that the idea of association with someone else was not always felt to be expressed plainly by *koinōnia*; otherwise there would have been no point in using the compound . . ."

<sup>51</sup> This is all the more dramatic when it is considered that the compounds, *synkoinōneō* and *synkoinōnos* are rare. The noun appears elsewhere only in Rom 11:17 and 1 Cor 9:23; the verb appears elsewhere only in Eph 3:11.

<sup>52</sup> Bloomquist, *Philippians*, 145, views 1:7 as simply a fuller expression of 1:5. Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 84, reasons that v 7 in context confirms the fact that *koinōnia* must go beyond mere spiritual, mystical union with Christ.

<sup>53</sup> The other two uses (both are *koinōnia*) may also have some allusion to the Philippian gift. In Phil 2:1 *koinōnia* (*koinōnia pneumatōs*, "fellowship of the Spirit") is cited in BAGD, 439, under the definition, "generosity, fellow-feeling, altruism." Therefore, *pneumatōs* is not an objective genitive ("if there is any partaking of the Spirit"; Fee, *Philippians*, 191), but a genitive of source or origin ("if there is any generosity inspired by the Spirit") or a subjective genitive ("partnership prompted by the Spirit"; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 66; Kent, "Philippians," 121; Silva, *Philippians*, 103). In Phil 3:10, Paul's desire to share (*koinōnia*) Christ's sufferings must be understood in light of his commission to advance the Gospel; Victor C. Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agōn Motif: Traditional Athletic Imagery in the Pauline Literature* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1967), 116–19, 145, 150. Paul's sufferings in prison are described as undergone for the sake of the Gospel (1:7, 12–13, 16) and the Philippians' gift is described as a partnership with Paul in his sufferings (*synkoinōneō*, 4:14). The Philippians are

or its cognates refer to salvation.<sup>54</sup> To take the *koinōnia* here as equivalent to salvation would be a rare use of the term indeed.

Second, *koinōnia* followed by *eis*<sup>55</sup> cannot be taken to imply “sharing in the gospel [by faith].”<sup>56</sup> Hawthorne astutely agrees:

Hence, it is easy to see in this expression *koinōnia hymōn eis to euangelion* a clear reference to the gift(s) that the Philippians had sent

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bound together with Paul in this common task of advancing the Good News. Combining 3:10 with 4:14 shows the continuity between the apostle’s struggle for the Gospel and the similar struggle of the Philippians specifically mentioned in 1:30. Suffering is only the negative aspect of the struggle. Among other things, their struggle for the Gospel particularly involved an active participation with Paul through their sacrificial giving even in times of poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8:2). The common struggle described in 1:30 does not demand an identity of action with Paul, e.g., persecution or suffering (ibid., 122). This is evident in 4:14, where the Philippians “shared” Paul’s affliction exclusively by their sacrificial gift to him. Cf. Campbell, “*KOINŌNIA*,” 361, 366. So, Paul’s request to know the *koinōnia* of Christ’s sufferings (3:10) may be an indirect challenge for the Philippians to continue their sacrificial giving (i.e., their struggle/suffering) for the sake of promoting the Gospel, even though he is in prison. If he longed for the benefits of experiencing these sufferings, they were certainly right in longing to participate with him financially in these sufferings. Through giving to Paul’s Gospel, they too were “sharing Christ’s suffering” (3:10).

<sup>54</sup> In 1 Cor 1:9 *koinōnia* is the most frequently cited reference in this regard. If the uses in the rest of the book (10:16, 18, 20; cf. also 9:23) are allowed to impact 1:9, the meaning takes a different turn entirely. The only other verses that could be claimed are 1 Pet 5:1, 2 Pet 1:4, and 1 John 1:3, 6-7. While an extended defense cannot be offered, 1 Pet 5:1 most likely speaks of a future reward. The sharing in the divine nature in 2 Pet 1:4 relates to sanctification, i.e., becoming like Christ (see the context in 1:5-11). First John 1:3, 6-7 deal with the issue of the believer’s present intimacy or harmony (“fellowship”) with Christ. In the context of 1 John 1, the two conditions for *koinōnia* are walking in the light and confessing our sins—conditions that are never mentioned in the Gospel of John or any NT text as conditions for salvation. Faith and salvation are a prerequisite to this *koinōnia*, not its essence.

<sup>55</sup> Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 82, refers to this construction as a “dynamic activity in progress.” O’Brien, *Thanksgiving*, 24, n. 22, calls the use of *euangelion* in 1:5 and throughout the book a *nomen actionis*. Cf. also Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 81.

<sup>56</sup> Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 19; O’Brien, *Thanksgiving*, 24-25; Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 82; Wiesinger, *Philippians*, 29-30; Bloomquist, *Philippians*, 145; contra F. Hauck, s.v. “*koinos*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B.

to Paul . . . in order to make it possible for him to spread the gospel. The same preposition, *eis*, follows *koinōnia* here as in Rom 15:26 and 2 Cor 9:23. The Philippians were partners (*koinōnoi*) with the apostle in the proclamation of the good news, *not in the sense that they shared the same faith with him or were co-evangelists with him*, but that they supported him financially in his mission work [italics added].<sup>57</sup>

Third, suffering,<sup>58</sup> evangelism, and salvation<sup>59</sup> may be auxiliaries to the Philippians' *koinōnia*, but cannot be the central element(s) in it.<sup>60</sup>

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Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 3:805 (hereafter referred to as TDNT), who sees the phrase as "participation in the saving message of Christ." Every other context in which *koinōnia* is followed by *eis* ("to, toward") is a context with monetary concerns (Phil 4:15; Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8:4; 9:13). Fee resists this implication, reasoning that the use of *koinōnia* followed by *eis* in 2 Cor 9:13 and Rom 15:26 is distinct. (Neither Fee nor Hawthorne mentions the same construction in 2 Cor 8:4.) In his view, these verses speak of gifts given *to* (*eis*) people, while Phil 1:5 has in view a partnership *for* the furtherance of the Gospel—not a gift to Paul. Fee's perspective presents an artificial distinction between a gift to Paul and a gift to advance Paul's Gospel. The verb *koinōneō* followed by *eis* is used in Phil 4:15 of a gift to Paul's preaching ministry, but is treated identically to the recent Philippian gift to his needs (4:14, 18).

<sup>57</sup> Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 19. On the same page, he clarifies his point: "This understanding of *koinōnia* does not exclude, however, a reference to the Philippians' faith, their own efforts at evangelism, nor to their intercession for the progress of the gospel in the world." Cf. also Campbell, "KOINŌNIA," 371.

<sup>58</sup> Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, translated by Melancthon Williams Jacobus and John M. Trout et al., reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1953), 1:524, does not believe that at this time the Philippian church was undergoing extensive persecution. The *agōn* ("struggle") of 1:30 is much broader than suffering. See n. 53 above. Cf. also Watson, "Philippians," 78, *contra* Bloomquist, *Philippians*, 158, who finds the Philippians' suffering more extensive.

<sup>59</sup> Fee, *Philippians*, 84, seems guilty of circular reasoning. First, he reads his interpretation of 1:6 (salvation) into 1:5: "In light of v. 6, this might even include 'participation' by themselves having responded to the gospel and thus becoming Christ's people in Philippi." Later he reads this conclusion from v 5 back into v 6. Objecting that v 6 refers to the material support of the Philippians (ibid., 85), he argues: "The clause is best understood, however, in terms of their relationship to Christ and the gospel in the broader sense argued for in v. 5."

<sup>60</sup> *Contra* Panikulam, *Koinōnia*, 84; Fee, *Philippians*, 83, n. 51, 88. Many who include the Philippian gift as the signal evidence of the *koinōnia* (but do not take the term to specify salvation), also emphasize that the term is to be understood in a wide sense that includes suffering, evangelism, etc.; O'Brien, *Thanksgiving*, 24–25; Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 81.

This is evident, since (1) the self-ambitious brothers mentioned in 1:14–17 were true believers (1:14–15), were active in a bold evangelism that proclaimed the true Gospel (1:18), and may have suffered for the Gospel in their efforts.<sup>61</sup> But they certainly did not have any *koinōnia* with Paul, as is clear from 1:16 (Majority Text) or 1:17 (Critical Text). A key purpose of Paul in writing the letter—to encourage a unified partnership for the sake of the Gospel—stands against any interpretation that includes these brothers in the *koinōnia* with Paul and the Gospel. Also, (2) where the Philippians are said to have *koinōnia*, the emphasis falls more on their sharing in Paul's trials than on their own (1:7; 4:14).<sup>62</sup> Unity (1:27; 2:2–4; 4:2), joy (1:25; 2:18; 4:4), and godly living (1:27; 2:16) are undoubtedly foundations to the *koinōnia*. However, the Philippians' exemplary affection for Paul (1:17; 4:10)<sup>63</sup> and (probably) their prayers (1:19)<sup>64</sup> are more directly associated with *koinōnia*.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, it is the sacrificial gift to Paul that forms the essence of their partnership and the "good work" instigated by God.

Fourth, the Philippian partnership in the Gospel is defined in context by the limiting phrase, "from the first day until now." The thought of the "first day" is picked up conceptually in 1:6 and stated as what God had begun among them (in them or by them). The "now" can be identified as the time at which the letter was written. More precisely it is the very time Paul received the recent gift from the Philippians.<sup>66</sup> But what or when is the "first day"? If the *koinōnia* refers to salvation, then the "first day" marks the point at which many in the church believed the

<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, they may not have suffered for the Gospel but used this to despise others who did. Since Paul was being persecuted for the Gospel, they may have rejected him as spiritually weak, and taken pride in their strength and fleshly achievements (cf. 3:2–16); Garland, "Defense," 332–33.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Pfitzner, *Agōn Motif*, 118. See also n. 53 above.

<sup>63</sup> When the Philippians gave to the Jerusalem collection, they also gave themselves to the apostle, demonstrating their affection for him through giving (2 Cor 8:5). In 2 Corinthians, their affection and their gift are common elements in *koinōnia*.

<sup>64</sup> Prayer, however, is not clearly identified with *koinōnia* in Philippians. But Rom 15:30 confirms the role of prayer in a cooperative struggle with Paul for the Gospel; Pfitzner, *Agōn Motif*, 122; O'Brien, *Thanksgiving*, 199.

<sup>65</sup> The other factor specifically mentioned as a constituent element of *koinōnia* is grace (1:7). This will be discussed in Part 2 of this article.

<sup>66</sup> "The article 'the' [in the Greek phrase, *achri tou nyn*, "until the now"] is a delicate Pauline finger pointing to the gift which the Philippians had just sent . . ."; Wuest, "Philippians," 32. Cf. also Wiesinger, *Philippians*, 30–31.



Gospel. But in saying “until now,” Paul designates a pivotal and significant moment. In what sense, then, have they shared in salvation “until now”?<sup>67</sup> This becomes a theological and interpretive impasse. By mentioning that this *koinōnia* has gone unbroken “until now,” Paul hints at a future contingency. If *salvation* were under discussion, he should have thanked God for their *eternal* fellowship with Christ and the Gospel.

Further, if the *koinōnia* refers to the point of new birth, then the first day would likely be individualistic, differing for each believer at Philippi.<sup>68</sup> But the sense of the text is corporate—a “first day” for the congregation as a whole. The corporate nuance of the passage is strengthened by the unusual threefold repetition of “all of you” in the prologue (*pantōn hymōn* in vv 4, 7; *pantas hymas* in v 8).

On the other hand, if the *koinōnia* refers to the Philippian participation financially with Paul in spreading the Gospel, then a clear harmony exists between 1:5–7 and 4:10–20. In 4:15,<sup>69</sup> Paul marks the beginning

<sup>67</sup> According to Barth, *Philippians*, 15–16, *koinōnia* in conjunction with “until now” must be a “second allusion [besides 1:3] to the financial support received.”

<sup>68</sup> It is not impossible for Paul to lump a significant portion of the congregation together as having experienced salvation within the same short period of time (i.e., the first few weeks of his initial outreach among them during his second missionary journey). However, this would require taking *hēmera* (“day”) in a broad sense. Against the broad sense of “day” is the fact that *hēmera* is modified by “first” (*prōtēs*). The only other reference to this Greek phrase, “first day,” on the lips of Paul is actually the identical prepositional phrase (lacking the article), *apo prōtēs hēmeras*, in Acts 20:18 (“from the first day that I set foot in Asia”). Here it appears rather literal and expresses a fresh beginning in Paul’s ministry—similar to Phil 1:5 taken in light of 4:15 (see n. 71 below). No non-literal examples can be found in the NT in which *hēmera* is used with an ordinal. Cf. Paul’s literal use of *oktaēmeros* (“eighth day”) in Phil 3:5. Grayston, *Philippians*, 81, and Kent “Philippians,” 105, suggest that the “day” relates to the day the church was founded. One may stress a literal day with this approach. But only Lydia and her household were won to the Lord that specific day (Acts 16:14–15). The jailer and his household came to faith “many days” later (see Acts 16:18 and the incident of the slave girl, which chronologically precedes the jailer’s salvation). If the “first day” represents the beginning of the Philippians’ evangelistic efforts, one must also minimize the phrase. Cf. O’Brien, *Thanksgiving*, 25, n. 27, who suggests that “one ought not to press the expression ‘from the first day until now,’ as though the Philippians became missionaries at the very moment they believed.”

<sup>69</sup> Dalton, “Integrity of Philippians,” 101, and Schubert, *Form*, 77, also link 4:15 with 1:7 as noted above.

of the Philippians' contributions to him as the first point at which he preached the Gospel<sup>70</sup> after leaving Macedonia (4:15; NASB, "at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia").<sup>71</sup> The Philippians initiated a partnership with Paul from the very first time he proclaimed the Good News beyond their Macedonian borders. Not only that, but even while in Thessalonica,<sup>72</sup> Paul's first stop after Philippi

<sup>70</sup> Cf. 4:15 in the Amplified ("in the early days of the Gospel ministry") and the NEB ("in the early days of my mission"). In the nine uses of *euangelion* in Phil (1:5, 7, 12, 16, 27; 2:22; 4:3, 15), the stress surely falls on the progress and vindication of the Gospel, not on its content or reception. Cf. Grayston, *Philippians*, 81.

<sup>71</sup> For a similar approach, see Reumann, "Contributions," 440. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor*, 191, n. 42, translates, "But, Philippians, you also know that when first starting out on [my] mission [that is to say], when setting out from Macedonia . . ." The phrase, *en archē tou euangeliou* (4:15, lit. "at [in] the beginning of the gospel"; NASB "at the first preaching of the gospel") does not describe when Paul departed from Macedonia or the reception of the Gospel by the Philippians (NIV, "in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia"). It describes the time and circumstances in Paul's ministry when the Philippians made their gift. We might paraphrase, "No other church was a partner with me financially when I left Macedonia and began again to preach the gospel." The NASB would reflect this viewpoint more clearly if the comma between "gospel" and "after" were deleted: "at the first preaching of the gospel after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me . . ." This perspective takes the aorist, *exēlthon*, in a pluperfect sense ("after I had left"); Fee, *Philippians*, 441, n. 13. When Paul left Macedonia for Corinth and began to preach the Gospel again, he was backed financially by the Philippians (2 Cor 11:8–9). This understanding of the phrase, *en archē tou euangeliou* (4:15), seems to have eluded many commentators. They then struggle with how Paul thought of his ministry in *Philippi* as the "beginning" of the Gospel. Cf. Ralph P. Martin, "Philippians," *New Century Bible* (Greenwood, SC: Attic Press, 1976), 165; Hawthorne, *Philippians*, 203–204. Or they explain the awkwardness of the sentence as "careless" or "casual" because Paul could not have literally entered into partnership with them (i.e., began a close friendship with them at their salvation) *after* he left Macedonia; Fee, *Philippians*, 441, n. 13. By switching the clauses, the TEV contributes to the confusion: "that when I left Macedonia, in the early days of preaching the Good News." These problems are all solved if we conceive of the beginning (=the preaching) of the Gospel mentioned in 4:15 to take place *after* Paul left Macedonia.

<sup>72</sup> Kent, "Philippians," 156, is correct in viewing 4:15 as the more substantial gift, given to Paul at Corinth. Then Paul recalls (4:16) the earlier, smaller gifts that were given even while he was in Thessalonica. This is supported by state-

(Acts 17:1; 1 Thess 2:2), he received financial aid from the Philippians on several occasions.<sup>73</sup> Their financial help formed a one-of-a-kind cooperation, so that he could say that no other church participated with him in this manner when he entered Achaia.<sup>74</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Unlike many problem passages, the interpretive alternatives to Phil 1:6 are few. Commentators line up in two broad camps. Most common is the interpretive approach that understands the verse to address the ongoing sanctification and final eschatological salvation of the Philippians (and all Christians) that God began in them. Despite the

ments in the Thessalonian epistles where Paul explains that he needed to work for his living while staying there (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7–8). This interpretation gives full weight to the ascensive force of the first *kai* (“*even in Thessalonica*”) in the sentence.

<sup>73</sup> In 4:16, the NIV reads, “again and again,” implying repeated times. Leon Morris, “*kai hapax kai dis*,” *Novum Testamentum* 1 (1956): 205–208, followed by Reumann, “Contributions,” 439–40, suggests that in 4:16, the first two uses of *kai* are to be taken as correlative and translated, “*Both (kai) in Thessalonica and (kai) more than once [in other places].*” If this reading is correct, Paul received one gift while at Thessalonica and several gifts elsewhere. Under this interpretation, he could have received support while in Berea, but none while in Corinth. Fee, *Philippians*, 445, is probably right to reject this way of handling the idiom. Paul definitely received Philippian aid while at Corinth (2 Cor 11:9); Reumann, “Contributions,” 440.

<sup>74</sup> “No other Pauline community of which we know had so good a record in financial benevolence”; (Reumann, “Contributions,” 453). Philippi may not have been the only assembly to give to Paul’s needs, but at least the only one that gave specifically toward the advance of the Gospel when he entered Achaia. The stress in the passage is that the Philippians gave to Paul’s apostolic ministry at the very point that he began his outreach beyond their own region, Macedonia. The collection for the poor believers in Jerusalem is not directly mentioned in Philippians 4. Second Corinthians 11:8 (“I robbed other churches by receiving support from them,” NIV) may imply that another church from Macedonia (perhaps Thessalonica) personally assisted Paul. But with regard to the collection, little or no mention is made elsewhere of other churches in Macedonia that made a contribution; Richard R. Melick, Jr., “The Collection for the Saints: 2 Corinthians 8–9,” *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (1989): 106. If the letter to the Galatians was written early, they were instructed in giving to those who taught them the Scriptures (Gal 6:6–8; cf. also 1 Cor 16:1). But no record exists that they ever supported Paul.

widespread popularity of this viewpoint, many commentators and scholars find that this interpretation violates the *mise-en-scène* of the passage. This article has been in agreement with this criticism. Instead, the verse speaks of the Philippians' joint venture with Paul by means of one or all of their financial contributions to his Gospel mission.

In the verses leading up to 1:6, no hints can be found to encourage us to handle the verse as an overview of the salvation/sanctification process. A true epistolary introduction prepares the reader (and listener)<sup>75</sup> for all the major themes to be addressed in the rest of the letter. Salvation/sanctification as a primary thematic development in Philippians as a whole seems absent, while a gift motif stands out as a dominant subject of 4:10–20. Partnership in the Gospel is also a significant concern for Paul, and the disunity in the Macedonian congregation threatened this partnership (1:27; 4:2). The striking harmony of 1:3–7 and 4:10–20 favors an approach to 1:6 that will highlight the Philippians' gift to Paul.

The *koinōnia* of v 5 cannot exegetically be interpreted as the communion of the Philippian believers with Christ at new birth. Instead, (1) the use of the term and its cognates within Philippians (especially 1:7; 4:14, 15), (2) the combination of *koinōnia* with the following preposition *eis*, and (3) the limiting phrase "from the first day until now" all apply satisfactorily to the united participation Paul and the Philippians had in spreading the Gospel. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles, preaching and defending the Gospel. The Philippians joined him by their sacrificial monetary gifts, even most recently while he was in prison.

The second installment of this article will focus on vv 6–7, examining the meaning of "good work," the concepts of "began" and "complete," and the relevance of the parallel of 1:3–7 with 2 Corinthians 8–9.

<sup>75</sup> Epistles were consciously designed for public as well as private reading. D. Brent Sandy, "Form and Function in the Letters of the New Testament," *New Testament Essays in Honor of Homer A. Kent, Jr.*, ed. Gary T. Meadors (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1991), 54–55.

# A Voice from the Past: PRIEST OR PROPHET?\*

W. H. GRIFFITH THOMAS<sup>1</sup>

## I. Introduction

In the Bible the fact of a ministry is clearly recorded. In the OT the ministry consists chiefly of two orders or classes of men—the priests and the prophets—each with its own sphere more or less clearly defined, and with a work of great importance and absolute necessity, because of divine appointment.

The essence of the priesthood was the representation of man to God; the essence of the prophetic office was the representation of God to man. Anything else done by a priest or prophet was accidental and additional, and not a necessary part of his office. The essential work of the priest was expressed in sacrifice and intercession, and may be summed up in the word *mediator*. The essential work of the prophet was expressed in revelation and instruction, and may be summed up in the word *ambassador*. The priesthood meant propitiation, and the prophetic office meant revelation. The priest was concerned with the way of man to God; the prophet with the will of God to man. The two offices were thus

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Even more timely a question for *our* day, in light of current trends in evangelicalism as a whole, are Dr. Griffith Thomas's warnings—originally addressed to his own Church of England constituency. Ed.

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complementary, and together they fulfilled the requirements of the relationship between God and man.

## II. New Testament Silence on a Class of Believers as Priests

The ministry of the NT is equally clear and unequivocal, but with certain great and notable differences. In the NT there is absolutely nothing about a special order or class of men called priests. The only priesthood, apart from the Lord's priestly work, is the spiritual priesthood of *all* believers. There is, however, much that answers to the essential ministry of the OT prophet, but with the difference that ministry in the NT is not confined to any one class of believers: it is the privilege and duty of all. There are most assuredly diversities of gifts in that ministry, but ministry generally and of some kind is for all. Indeed, the various gifts are for the express purpose of "equipping the saints for their work of ministering" (Eph 4:12, Greek).

Whether, then, one thinks of the ministry of the priest or of the prophet, it is clear from the NT that there is no class of believers to which spiritual functions belong exclusively as of absolute right and divine appointment. What is required for "decency and order" is quite another question, and though important and essential, is assuredly secondary to the above-named fundamental principle of the NT.

From these differences between the OT and NT, it is easy to notice the silence of the NT as to any special order of priests, and its insistence on the ministry of the Word.

### This Silence Is a Simple Fact

Not a single reference can be found in the NT to a special human priesthood. In the Lord's instructions to His disciples and apostles in the four Gospels, not a word is said about a special priesthood. In the first book of general church history, the Acts of the Apostles, not a hint of such a priesthood is given. The epistles to the Corinthians give the first detailed picture of one particular apostolic church but they include no sign of any such priesthood. Hebrews, the great doctrinal epistle for Jewish Christians, has nothing in it about priests except the Lord's priesthood. The three epistles of pastoral and ecclesiastical instructions, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, say nothing about any special priesthood. Nor do the mature writings of the two great apostles of the circumcision, Peter and John, include any trace whatever of a human priesthood. This evidence taken separately in its parts is striking, but taken as a whole it is completely overwhelming.

### This Silence Is a Striking Fact

Here are 27 books, covering a period of at least 40 to 50 years,<sup>2</sup> referring to the foundation and early history of the church amid differences of place, country, race, capacity, and conditions of life. Yet there is no provision for a special order of priesthood. It is also striking because all the writers (with the one probable exception of Luke) were Jews, and as such were steeped in sacerdotal ideas, language, and associations from their earliest childhood. The apostles use sacrificial and sacerdotal language on several occasions to describe certain elements and aspects of the gospel. For example, in Rom 15:16 Paul speaks of his preaching as his sacred and sacrificial service, and his Gentile converts as his sacrificial offering. But as the context shows, this is manifestly spiritual and symbolical in meaning, and is at once descriptive and illustrative of his work as a "prophet" or preacher of the gospel. But not one of the apostles ever used the word *hiereus*, a sacrificing priest, to distinguish a Christian minister from a layman. The avoidance of this term is remarkable.

Westcott is said to have observed in some of his lectures at Cambridge that this avoidance was the nearest approach he knew to verbal inspiration. Some would venture to go a step further and claim it as an unmistakable example of the superintending control of the Holy Spirit in the composition of the Scriptures. Humanly speaking, the chances against avoiding the use of *hiereus* in this connection are like 10,000 to 1. Indeed, it may be said that to refuse to explain it by the guiding of the Holy Spirit is to require for its explanation what is virtually a miracle of human thought, foresight, and mutual prearrangement among several writers.

If it be said that the question is one not of words but of things, one may note Lightfoot's reply that "This is undeniable: but words express things, and the silence of the Apostles still requires an explanation."<sup>3</sup> Neither the word nor the thing can be discovered in the NT.

### This Silence Is a Significant Fact

This is what Lightfoot calls "the eloquent silence of the apostolic writings."<sup>4</sup> There is no mention of the subject in the NT because there

<sup>2</sup> The period covered may be much less than this if the entire NT was completed before A.D. 70 as some NT scholars suggest. Ed. note.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1879), 264.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

is no place for it and no need of it. In the Jewish economy a mediatorial priesthood was necessary because of man's alienation from God, because sin was not put away, and because the way to God was not open. But now sin has been put away, the way into the holiest is manifest, and for this Christ the divine high priest is all and in all. This is the burden of the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews: the one and only, inviolable, undelegated (*aparabaton*, Heb 7:24) priesthood of the Lord. Christ's priesthood is unique, perfect, and permanent, and as long as He is priest there is no room for and no need of any other mediator.

This silence as to a special human priesthood shows that such a priesthood is irreconcilable with the letter and spirit of apostolic Christianity. In this respect "Christianity stands apart from all the other religions."<sup>5</sup> It is the "characteristic distinction of Christianity"<sup>6</sup> to have no such provision. Where there is no repeated offering there is no need of an altar; where there is no altar there is no sacrifice; where there is no sacrifice there is no priest. The benefits of the sacrifice once for all offered are now being continually bestowed by Christ and appropriated by the penitent believer without any human mediator because "the kingdom of Christ . . . has no sacerdotal system."<sup>7</sup>

However, the argument has been frequently used that ministerial priesthood, or the priesthood of the ministry, is only the universal priesthood of believers expressed through their representatives. It is said that as the human body acts through its members so the church as the body of Christ acts through the ministry as its instruments and that consequently when the "priest" is exercising his ministerial functions it is really the church acting through him.

### Answers to the Priestly Argument

To this line of argument the following seven answers may be given.

1. The NT is entirely silent as to this special and, as it were, localized priesthood. Surely, if the ministry had been regarded as exercising a priesthood distinguishable from the priesthood of all believers, or regarded as the priesthood of the church in a specialized way, it would have been necessary to show that this ministerial priesthood existed in the early church. Yet there are no priestly functions associated with the Christian ministry as such in the NT. Instead, the priesthood of all believers is inherent in their relation to Christ. This is the divine warrant

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 181.



for it and there is no such warrant for any narrower or modified form of it.

2. Is it not at least unsafe, even if not perilous, to base such a novel and far-reaching claim on a metaphor, the figure of the human body?

3. The scriptural use of this metaphor never differentiates between the spiritual body and its instruments but only between members.

4. The modern use of the metaphor now in question proves too much, for while in the natural body certain members alone can act and "minister" in certain ways, as the hand does in one way and the foot in another, in the scriptural concept of the Body of Christ, each member has real "priestly" functions ("that which every joint supplieth," Eph 4:16). These differences of function are only of degree, not of kind, and do not constitute the ministry a special and localized priesthood, a position which would involve a difference of kind.

5. This idea of a ministerial priesthood as expressive of the universal priesthood is a novel and significant departure from the older and still generally accepted idea of the sacerdotalism of the Christian ministry. It represents an almost entire shifting of the ground. The prevalent conception of the priesthood of the ministry has been that of an order of men in direct touch with Christ, and acting as such *on* the body rather than *for* it. But the new use of the metaphor really implies that the instruments act *for* the body and *through* the body, in the sense of not being *immediately* in contact with the Head. The older sacerdotalism maintains that the priesthood receives and represents "an attribute of grace distinct from" that received by the church, "by virtue of which grace, men are brought into such relationship with God that through this instrumentality they obtain the promised blessings of the covenant under which they live."<sup>8</sup> But this view involves much more than a concentration of the priesthood of the whole of the church in a part of it. It represents another line of grace different from the general one in kind as well as in degree. Yet Scripture knows nothing of two separate lines of grace, one from the Head direct to the church and the other from the Head to the ministry.

The older and newer views of the priestly character of the ministry are therefore incompatible, and sacerdotalists cannot have both. It is impossible on any true analogy to distinguish between the spiritual body and its ministerial organs in such a way as to make the organs the *instruments* of the body, according to the new view, and yet *in authority over it*, according to the old view. Upholders of ministerial priesthood must

<sup>8</sup> T. T. Carter, *On the Priesthood* (n.p., n.d.), 99.

choose between these positions, though for neither of them is there any warrant or authority in the Word of God.

6. The functions of the Christian ministry are those of a personal medium, not of a priestly mediator. They are prophetic, not priestly; they are exercised on behalf of Christ rather than on behalf of the church; and they represent the Head rather than the body. And even so far as they may be said in certain aspects to represent the church, the functions are "representative and not vicarial."<sup>9</sup> In short, the essential idea of the ministry is *diakonia*, not *hieratum*, service not sacerdotalism, and it can never be too frequently asserted that the fundamental concept of the Christian ministry is that it represents God to the church rather than the church to God, that it is prophetic and not priestly.

7. There is no function or office of the Christian priesthood which cannot be exercised by any and every individual believer in Christ of either sex, wherever and whatever they may be. Differences of function in the Christian *ministry* there are, but in the Christian *priesthood* there are none. Thus it is concluded that the NT has a simple, striking, and significant silence on any new and special order of priests.

Along with this silence as to any new order of priests, the NT insists on the ministry of the Word.

### III. NT Emphasis on the Ministry of the Word

#### The Nature of the Ministry

The ministry is twofold, for evangelization and edification; one is to the sinner and the other is to the saint. At least seven series of titles are associated with the ministry, which show the character and necessity of it in the church. The minister is a herald (*kēryx*), a messenger of good news (*euangelistēs, apostolos*), a witness (*martys*), an ambassador (*presbeuō*<sup>10</sup>), a servant (*diakonos*), a shepherd (*poimēn, oikonomos*), a teacher (*didaskalos, prophētēs*). The variety and fullness of these words plainly show the paramount importance placed on the ministry of the Word.

#### The Message of the Ministry

There are two phrases that sum up this message, one referring chiefly to its relationship to God and the other to its relationship to man. "The

<sup>9</sup> Lightfoot, *Philippians*, 267.

<sup>10</sup> To have been perfectly consistent Dr. Thomas could have used the noun *presbutēs* here rather than the verb *presbeuō*. However, only the verb actually occurs in the NT. Ed.

Word” is the message as it expresses the mind of God. “The gospel” is the message as it describes its destination for and acceptableness to man. At least seven titles are associated with “the Word”: the Word of God (and the Word of Christ and the Word of the Lord), the Word of reconciliation, the Word of salvation, the Word of grace, the Word of righteousness, the Word of truth, and the Word of life. There are also seven titles connected with “the gospel”: the gospel of God, the gospel of Christ, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of salvation, the gospel of peace, the gospel of the kingdom, and the gospel of the glory of God.

These various aspects, so clear, so full, so important, may all be summed up in three well-known passages: “It is I” (the person of Christ); “It is finished” (the work of Christ); and “It is written” (the Word of Christ). They represent salvation provided, salvation wrought, and salvation assured. This is essentially the complete yet remarkably varied message of the ministry of Christianity.

### **The Purpose of the Ministry**

The ministry of the Word is intended to bring God and man face to face—God revealing, man responding. It claims to do for man all that he needs or can need. Regeneration, sanctification, edification, and glorification are all associated with the Word of God, and at every step of the Christian life the ministry of that Word finds its place and power.

This purpose becomes realized in the response of man through faith. The Word of God and faith are correlatives, and faith is emphasized in the NT because it is the only, as it is the adequate, response to the revelation of God. Faith brings the soul into direct contact with God, and the result is “righteousness through faith.” The gospel is the power of God to salvation because in it is revealed God’s righteousness from faith to faith, having faith as its correlative and channel from first to last (Rom 1:16-17). Faith responds to God’s Word and appropriates Christ as God’s righteousness “for us” for justification, and God’s righteousness “in us” for sanctification.

This is the NT “ministry of the Word,” and all of it is ministerial and instrumental, not mediatorial and vicarious. Who are believers “but ministers through whom men believe”?

### **The Permanence of the Ministry**

This NT ministry is a permanent one. In Christ’s last days on earth He commanded, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15). Among Paul’s concluding exhortations was “Preach the Word”

(2 Tim 2:2). Peter's last teaching emphasizes the Word of God. John's closing writings exhort believers to "abide in the truth."

The permanent ministry of the Word is a threefold guarantee to the church. It guarantees the church's *purity, progress, and power*. Whenever this ministry has been neglected, the course of the church has been deflected; and whenever, as at the Reformation, this has been predominant, her purity has been prominent. This is the explanation of every backsliding, the secret of every recovery.

Whenever the ministry of the Word has been honored, there has been extension; whenever it has been neglected, there has been stagnation. Missionary work at home and abroad finds its full impetus in the ministry of the Word.

The ministry of the Word is a protection against all foes and is for the good of all friends. *Sacerdotalism sees justification by faith as her most powerful enemy, and assails it with the most virulent opposition. Since the Word cuts at the roots of all priestly power, warfare is waged today against justification by faith.*<sup>11</sup>

This truth brings the soul into direct, conscious, blessed, satisfying contact and union with Christ, and thereby dispenses at once and forever with a human mediator. Christ is thereby present and no longer merely represented.

The ministry of the Word, too, is a great power against neo-Anglicanism.<sup>12</sup> As the sacerdotal element goes up, the ministry of the Word proportionately goes down. If the priest is exalted, the teacher is deposed, for the inherent tendency of ritualism is directly opposed to that of the preaching and teaching ministry of the Word of God. As people are saturated with the truth of Scripture, they will find in it their power against all ritualistic practices.

<sup>11</sup> Italics added by editor to highlight today's even worse situation in Protestantism.

<sup>12</sup> The Anglican Church ("Church of England") is divided into three branches, though outwardly one: the "broad" (=liberal), the "high" (=priestly, imitative of Roman Catholicism), and the "low" (=evangelical) church. The term *low* is not meant to be an insult, but describes the church as it came out of the Reformation, with emphasis on the Word of God, not ritual. Of course, by free church standards, even "low" Anglicanism seems rather "high." Dr. Thomas was a staunch advocate of biblical truth within the Anglican communion. In the U.S.A., he commented that, as his daughter Winifred Griffith Thomas Gillespie confided to this editor, he usually found the Episcopal church "high or dry." Note: Footnotes 2-8 are part of the original pamphlet, the others are ours. Ed.

The ministry of the Word is also powerful against the worldliness of the church and the local congregation. Let the standard of the Word be uplifted and pressed on heart and conscience, and the worldly devices and elements in church life will fall away and die. The message of the Word for holiness of heart and life will soon settle questionable methods of church finance, church life, and church work. And all this will be so because of its power to "edify" the believer. More and better Bible classes, more expository teaching in sermons, more individual meditation in the Word will soon show its blessed effects in the individual and congregational lives of churches.

#### IV. Conclusion

The Word of God should therefore be highly honored. Honor it in the soul, in the home, in the study, in the pulpit, in the congregation, in the college, in the university, in the seminary, in the nation. Preach it out of a full heart, a clear mind, a strong conviction, and a consistent life. Receive it by faith, welcome it by love, and prove it by obedience. Then believers need have no fear for present or future, for the Word is still the seed that quickens, the sword that pierces, the light that guides, the hammer that breaks, the meat that strengthens, the milk that nourishes, and the honey that delights, because it is "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet 1:23).



Grace in the Arts:  
AN EVANGELICAL  
MUSICAL GENIUS:  
“J.S.B.: S.D.G.”

ARTHUR L. FARSTAD

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*  
Dallas, TX

I. Prelude

J.S.B.

The initials “J.S.B.” are some of the greatest in all musical history, and certainly in the top two or three in great *Christian* music. The *J* is for Johann, German for John. The *S* is for Sebastian (pronounced ze-BAH-styahn), the name of a Roman soldier who became a martyr by being “darted” to death by his company for being a Christian.<sup>1</sup> The *B* is for Bach, German for *creek* or *brook*.

Were it not for Bach’s ancestor’s loyalty to the Reformation, it is likely that such a scripturally oriented musician would never have lived. Some time before 1597, a baker named Veit Bach left Hungary for his native Germany to protect his Lutheran heritage against the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in his area. He again became a baker, and, more important, the forefather of a host of German musicians by the name of Bach, including the greatest, Johann Sebastian.

S.D.G.

In the Latin Bible at Romans 16:27 and Jude 25 we find the words “*Soli Deo Gloria*”—“to the only God be glory.” This was to become J.S.B.’s motto. He would sign his works—whether sacred, such as the *St. Matthew Passion*, or “secular,” such as the light-hearted *Coffee Cantata*, with these letters: S.D.G.

Actually, to Bach there was no difference between sacred and secular. *All* works, he maintained, should be to the glory of God.

<sup>1</sup>Paintings of the martyrdom of St. Sebastian will be found in most classical art galleries.

### Libretto by Luther

It has been well said that Bach is one of the greatest interpreters of Luther. Both came from the same part of Germany. Both loved music. Both loved and fathered large families (Bach: 20 children by two excellent wives—his first wife died). Both loved orthodox Protestant doctrine. Later in life, Bach clung to Lutheran orthodoxy when it was becoming less fashionable. He also had a strong “pietistic” flavor to his Evangelical Lutheranism: he stressed a warm, personal faith in God through his Savior.

### Music Rooted in Luther

The types of music approved and practiced by the Lutheran congregations of Bach’s time were deeply rooted in the great Reformer himself. Wohlfarth’s words are worth quoting at some length:

The Protestant cantorship was a creation of Martin Luther and his musical collaborator, Johann Walter, near the beginning of the sixteenth century. Luther loved music: “Youth should always be familiarized with this art, for it makes for fine and capable persons. I give *musica* the next place after *theologia*, and the highest honor.” For Luther, music was intrinsic to education: “Whoever has no desire or love for it and is not moved by such lovely wonders must surely be an uncouth clod, who does not deserve to hear beautiful music!” In worship music appeared to him as an indispensable means for proclaiming the divine good tidings. Here he differed significantly from the representatives of the Swiss Reformation, Zwingli and Calvin, who perceived sensual danger in the arts.

For I am not of the opinion that all the arts should be struck down by the gospel and perish, as some spurious spiritualists would gladly see happen. Rather I would see all the arts, but especially music, in the service of Him who created and bestowed them.

Besides simple hymns for congregational singing, of which he himself wrote many, Luther most loved and marveled at the exalted art of polyphony. He fervently encouraged its nurture among the cantors of the larger churches. What especially filled him with astonishment was the so-called *Tenorsatz*, that is, the art of joining other contrapuntal voices to a given melody. Indeed, such art actually appeared to him as a proof of the divine origin and nature of music:

But where natural music is refined and polished by art, there one first sees and recognizes the great and perfect wisdom of God in his miraculous work of music. The most rare and marvelous musical creation of all occurs when a simple melody or *tenor* (as the musicians call it) is



joined by three or four or five other voices, joyfully playing and skipping around it, decorating and adorning that simple, ordinary melody most wonderfully in various ways, with various sounds, as if in some heavenly roundelay of dance.

Such frankly ecstatic musical enthusiasm as Luther's upon hearing polyphonic chorale motets had not been uttered since the *Confessions* of St. Augustine. With what joy would Luther have eavesdropped on the chorale cantatas created from his own melodies by Bach, two hundred years later!<sup>2</sup>

### Bach's Consecration

Not only did our musician consecrate all his works of a Christian nature "to the only God's glory" (S.D.G.), but he also believed everything should be *ad gloriam Dei*<sup>3</sup> (to God's glory).

When a Frenchman writes favorably of a German, as André Pirro does of Bach's religion, we do well to listen closely:

Bach . . . dreamed of consecrating *ad gloriam Dei* all forms of magnificence, even those born outside the church. A semi-Pietist by his personal fervor, mystic reading matter and feeling for Scripture, Bach was, nevertheless, strongly attached to Lutheran orthodoxy. Furthermore, what savored of Pietism in the religion of his choice came to him far less from its innovators than from his nature which was so profoundly German. His predilections, the emotions of his soul enamored of the Divine, his affectionate and almost fraternal worship of Christ were manifestations of that great current of pious familiarity which has so often flowed through Teutonic Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

## II. An Evangelical Musical Genius

### A Great Family Man

Hollywood would be hard pressed to write an even mildly accurate script of Bach's life that would please today's "trash-TV"-oriented audiences. There were no moral or financial scandals, murders, or alcoholic excess in Bach's immediate family. (Even his large extended family was respectable.)

<sup>2</sup> Hannsdieter Wohlfarth, *Johann Sebastian Bach* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 89-90.

<sup>3</sup> Educated Protestants still used a fair amount of Latin long after the Reformation.

<sup>4</sup> André Pirro, *J. S. Bach*. Translated from the French by Mervyn Savill (New York: The Orion Press, 1957), 36.

Bach was a happily married, faithful husband and father. By his first wife, Barbara, he fathered three children. A year and a half after her death he married the 16-year younger Anna Magdalena, who bore him seventeen more! Both wives were not only sweet, “1 Peter 3”-type women, but also talented singers and musicians.

Like Luther and his wife and children, Bach and all his family had musical evenings of great vivacity, talent, and enjoyment. They were not a rich family (20 young mouths to feed!), but they were richly endowed by their parents’ Christian faith, love, hard work, and tremendous musical talents.

### A Great Teacher

J. S. B. should please both the traditional schoolers and the home schoolers. Bach practiced both. At the St. Thomas Church School he taught many subjects, excelling in Latin and, of course, music. He taught the boy students to sing as he also had sung in choirs as a boy. At home he taught music to all his own children, boys and girls.

Bach was the first to teach the use of all five fingers on the keyboard, which we now take for granted. He had respect for his pupils’ desires and made his musical lessons and drills interesting. He made compositions of an easier nature for those with competent but less-than-genius abilities, including his second wife. She has the honor of having the famous, still widely-used Anna Magdalena’s Notebook named after her.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding his family, Bach said:

They [Bach’s children] are all born musicians, and I can assure you that I can already form a concert, both vocal and instrumental, of my own family, particularly as my present wife sings a very clear soprano, and my eldest daughter joins in bravely.<sup>6</sup>

It is not surprising that four of the Bach boys went on to become successful professional composers and performers—even rivaling their father at times.

### A Great Organist

In his own time Bach was better known as a great organist than as a

<sup>5</sup> An admonition to Christian husbands: *Make a will*. Bach died intestate and Anna Magdalena outlived him ten years, dying in abject poverty, even though her husband had made good money, and could have left resources to her.

<sup>6</sup> Phillip Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, translated by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland, 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1951), 2:254.

composer. He still is renowned for his marvelous organ works, which unfortunately we can't hear him play himself.

Go to any organ recital (except those that are avant garde only) and the chances are excellent there will be a work by Bach on the program. Recitals of Bach's works *only* are not a thing of the past either.

### A Great Composer

Sad to say, soon after his death, Bach's compositions fell into disuse. They were thought to be old-fashioned and too complex by many.

Fortunately, in 1829 the German composer Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy revived the *St. Matthew Passion*. From then on Bach increasingly began to be rightly appreciated for his genius. His *St. Matthew Passion* and *St. John Passion* use the text of Luther's Bible with soloists singing the parts of Jesus, the Evangelist, Judas, and others. These are interspersed with beautiful choral works which the congregation joins in. For example, the tune of “O Sacred Head Once Wounded”—*arranged*, not written by Bach—was so appealing to the composer that he used it several times with different words.

Bach's setting of Mary's *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55) is in Latin, yet it is exciting and truly magnificent.

For the last 27 years of his life Bach wrote cantatas for the regular Sunday and holiday services at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig. All are worthy, some are wonderful.

In the “secular” realm (though J.S.B. didn't believe in such a division—everything was “S.D.G.”!) *The Brandenburg Concertos* and *The Goldberg Variations* are noteworthy.

Strong Protestants may wonder when they see *Ave Maria* and the *Mass in B Minor* in the repertoire. Actually, Bach wrote the melody now labeled *Ave Maria* in honor of *the Heavenly Father* and a French Roman Catholic composer arranged it for *Mary*. (Is there a theological lesson here?)

The word *mass* as a term for musical composition was retained to some extent in Lutheran circles,<sup>7</sup> and Bach wrote this work as a courtesy to a ruler of a Catholic subdivision of Germany.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> I have my paternal Norwegian grandmother's copy of *Landstad's Salmebog*, an Evangelical Lutheran service book that includes the term *høi-messe* (“high,” that is choral service, of communion).

<sup>8</sup> Germany did not become one united country until the late 1800s under Otto von Bismarck.

### III. Finale

In some liturgies, there is a prayer for the blessing of a happy death. Whether J.S.B. ever prayed such a prayer we don't know, but the Lord definitely granted His servant the sort of homegoing that fit his life of glorifying the one true God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1749 Bach became seriously ill and finally blind. The Leipzig city council *immediately* gave another musician an audition “for the future appointment as cantor of St. Thomas, in case capellmeister and cantor Mr. Sebastian Bach should die.”<sup>9</sup>

J.S.B. was not yet quite ready to depart! In his darkened room he dictated to Johann Christoph Altnikol his last thoughts:

The night shines deeper, to penetrate more deeply,  
But yet within there glows bright light.  
For completing of the greatest work,  
One soul for a thousand suffices.<sup>10</sup>

As the musical genius felt the imminence of his passing, he dictated line by line—note by note—a last organ chorale. Most appropriately it is called *Before Thy Throne Herewith I Come*.

On July 10, 1750, Bach had a stroke. He died ten days later, “a little after a quarter to nine in the evening, in the sixty-sixth year of his life, he quietly and peacefully, by the merit of his Redeemer, departed this life,” as the wording of his obituary so nicely put it.<sup>11</sup>

### IV. Postlude

J.S.B. has been long in glory. His music, ever glorious, which Mendelssohn revived from 1829 onward, is still being widely played and sung. As I write these words I have my Bach CDs set to play—each with a mixture of “sacred” and “secular.”

#### An Enemy Testimonial

We can find many glowing tributes to J.S.B. from those who love classical music, especially conservative Christians who actually believe that the words being sung are not only *beautiful*, but *true*! When, however, we can find a tribute from someone who has known and rejected Christian truth, the testimonial is all the more powerful.

<sup>9</sup> Wohlfarth, *Bach*, 112.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-13.

And so we include a word from the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>12</sup> In 1870 Nietzsche heard Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*. This was Bach's great (Wohlfarth calls it "miraculous") confessional masterpiece and was performed only once during the composer's lifetime. He had planned a second performance but the city council refused to support it financially. Nearly a century later, Mendelssohn directed the second performance. The rest is history. When Nietzsche heard it, he paid it this tribute: "One who has completely forgotten Christianity truly hears it here as Gospel."<sup>13</sup>

### Two Friendly Questions

Ray Keck, in his fine article on Bach's legacy, asks the following two questions, which *he* feels, "alas, have no answer":

Did he know, as some critics have suggested, that he was a genius trapped in the service of parochial, foolish men? Did he suspect that he was one of music's greatest and most lasting lights, that his compositions would forever stand as one of the most noble creative efforts of our kind? Or was he, as some have insisted, a Lutheran of extraordinary spiritual resources, humble before God and sustained by a great faith? He did study theology throughout his life, read theological works for pleasure, and finished his compositions on music paper that contained the watermark "Jesu, juva!" Jesus, help!<sup>14</sup>

Regarding the first question, one suspects the answer is "yes," though Bach credited his work at least partly (in good Germanic style) to hard work. And yes, he did indeed suffer at the hands of many unappreciative officials and petty critics.

Regarding the second question, an Evangelical can well answer with a confident "Yes!" After all, what mere religionist would put S.D.G. on all his works? Or have "Jesus, help!" *watermarked* (not readily visible) into his composition paper?

### SOLI DEO GLORIA

<sup>12</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) glorified the "superman" (*Übermensch*) and ruthless will to power. His writings deeply influenced Nazi philosophy and propaganda. The philosopher suffered mental collapse and was nursed by his evangelical sister in his last illness (syphilis).

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Wohlfarth, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 96.

<sup>14</sup> "Bach's Legacy: A Musical Offering," *American Music Teacher*, December 1995, 74.



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## BOOK REVIEWS

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“The Shepherd of Hermas,” in *The Apostolic Fathers*, 2:2-305. Translated by Kirsopp Lake. Cambridge, MA: The Loeb Classical Library, 1977. Cloth.

If you hate free grace, forgiveness, and divine compassion, you’ll love “The Shepherd of Hermas,” here printed in Greek and English on facing pages. A more legalistic, works-oriented allegory would be hard to come by. The author, however, thought that his theology was *gracious*, since he allowed repentance for one (major) sin after water baptism, and some legalists allowed for *none!* The first “Christian” emperor, Constantine, believing the dogma that baptism washes away all pre-baptismal sins, held off that “sacrament” till just before his death.

The “Shepherd” is replete with allegorical maidens, stones for a tower, variegated mountains, and angels. The writing does not hold up well from a biblical, literary, or grace viewpoint. On a scale of 1-10 promoting works salvationism, this one merits a 10+.

Just a few quotations to illustrate (*italics added*):

“*And for your former transgression there shall be remission if you keep my commandments*, and all men shall obtain a remission, if they keep these commandments of mine and walk in this purity” (p. 87).

“‘And explain to me, sir,’ said I, ‘the power of the things which are good, that I may walk in them and serve them, *that by doing them I may be saved.*’ ‘Listen, then,’ said he, ‘to the deeds of goodness, which you must do and not refrain from them’” (p. 105).

“But now I say to you, *if you do not keep them*, but neglect them *you shall not have salvation*, nor your children, nor your house, because you have already judged for yourself that these commandments cannot be kept by man” (p. 131).

“*... but do your own work and you shall be saved*” (p. 143).

“‘*Every act which a man does with pleasure,*’ said he, ‘*is luxury*, for even the ill-tempered man, by giving satisfaction to his own temper, lives luxuriously’” (p. 183).

“For this reason, those who have no knowledge of God and do wickedly, are condemned to death, but those who have knowledge of God and have seen his great deeds, and do wickedly, *shall be punished dou-*

bly, and shall die for ever. Thus therefore the Church of God shall be cleansed" (p. 267).

Why would this (or any non-legalistic) reviewer spend time on such a book? Chiefly for linguistic purposes because it's written in the kind of Greek that the NT writers used, and so helps illustrate *koinē* usage and vocabulary. Since I read in this only twice a month (in Greek, and with some understandable lapses), it took a long time. Is it worth it? Only if you're a student of *koinē* Greek or are looking for illustrations of the depths of legalism to which Christendom can sink when it abandons the true apostles, Peter, Paul, and John for "the apostolic fathers."

By the way, the last chapters survive only in Latin, so you will have to read Lake's somewhat archaic translation or drag out your old Latin books (if any).

Arthur L. Farstad

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Dallas, TX

*Rembrandt: Life of Christ.* Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1995. 136 pp. Cloth, \$22.99.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606-1669) executed the pen and ink sketches, black ink etchings, and full-color paintings in this book. Except for a well-written two-page introduction, the text of this life of our Lord is selections from the New King James Gospels, which the editors say suits the carefully executed artwork.

Rembrandt was a biblically-oriented "old master" whose compassion for humanity shines through his work. He himself lost two young children and his beloved wife Saskia, and was no stranger to sorrow and financial hardships. His fondness for such parables as "The Prodigal Son," which he illustrated frequently, demonstrates the artist's love of forgiveness and compassion.

Unlike pre-Reformation artists, who tended to portray chiefly the birth narratives and passion week, Rembrandt painted Christ's lesser-known parables *and* miracles. He also rendered many "obscure" stories from the OT, which of course are not in this book. For these biblical events he liked to use Jewish models from the Amsterdam ghetto. See *JOTGES* 6, No. 10, pp. 59-68 for a complete article on this great Protestant artist.



Reading the texts and meditating on them in the light of the facing artwork by this spiritually discerning old master can be a devotional experience.

Especially captivating to this reviewer is the artist's most popular etching, "The Hundred Guilder Print" (p. 70). It shows a compassionate Savior healing a host of people. "It is also an unusual etching inasmuch as it condenses the whole of Matthew 19 into a single image" (p. x). (However, the text chosen by the publishers to be printed with it is Matt 15:29-31!)

Especially powerful oil paintings in my opinion include "The Storm on the Lake of Galilee" (p. 46), "The Rich Fool" (p. 62), "The Woman Taken in Adultery" (p. 85), "The Meal at Emmaus" (p. 131), and "Doubting Thomas" (p. 134).

This would be a good gift book for an art-lover who is not yet a lover of our Lord, or for a good Christian who could use a dash of culture. Or, the best of both worlds: A lover of both Jesus and the great art He inspires.

**Arthur L. Farstad**

Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*  
Dallas, TX

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*The Evangelical Essential: What Must I Do to be Saved?* By Philip Janowsky. Graham, OR: Vision House Publishing, 1994. 132 pp. Cloth, \$13.99.

Here is a really refreshing and valuable little book by a minister in the United Methodist Church. Janowsky holds degrees from Houghton College (NY), the University of Kansas, and Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He pastors the Community United Methodist Church in Pagosa Springs, Colorado.

Janowsky begins his book by observing that the term *evangelical* is rapidly becoming meaningless. He pointedly cites a woman who was a mainline church leader and who stated that she regarded anyone who believed in God and preached from the Bible as an evangelical (p. 9). Janowsky maintains that Evangelicals were once united on the deity of Christ, justification by faith alone in the finished work of Christ, and the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and practice (p. 12). This unity dissipated, he holds, due to the impact of "politically cor-

rect” agendas, such as feminism (including a pro-choice stance on abortion) and the gay rights movement. Accommodating to these trends, some evangelical scholars began to subject the Scriptures to these agendas.

Equally harmful, Janowsky maintains, has been the tendency to elevate the teachings of Jesus to the level of soteriological pronouncements, at the expense of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith alone. Any observer of the contemporary evangelical climate must agree that this observation is a keen one that strikes its target. Janowsky points out

that the doctrine of justification by faith was seen by the Reformers and John Wesley to be the hermeneutical paradigm by which the Scriptures are to be interpreted [p. 99].

Of course, this is no longer the case, and evangelical studies in Paul abound which do the exact opposite and seek to accommodate Paul to an ethical conception of salvation. Therefore Janowsky’s point is well taken. So also is his observation that

The point of this is that when any group—Catholic or otherwise, regardless of what banner they choose to march under—switches the primary emphasis of Scripture from the Pauline doctrine of justification as a gracious gift from Christ conditioned only by faith, to justification as a reward for following the earthly teachings of our Lord (no matter how faithfully), *the honest person is compelled to despair* [italics original; pp. 101-102].

What then is the role, for example, of the Sermon on the Mount? Janowsky writes:

The stern precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are to be preached, not as a tortuous pathway to salvation, as in Monasticism, nor as a teaching around which to form a semi-ascetic community, as in Anabaptism. *The Sermon is to be preached in all of its rigors to destroy any hopes of self-righteousness* [italics original; p. 103].

Janowsky is highly skeptical of what he calls the “New Evangelical Left.” He has the “distinct impression” that “perhaps they are doing their work more to impress the academicians of the liberal wing of the church and the secular humanists, than to defend ‘the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints’” (p. 129). The charge is a serious one, but trends in the evangelical community suggest that it is a charge not without validity.

There is much more of interest in this little book than this brief review can cover. Suffice it to say, GES members and friends who obtain a copy will certainly not regret doing so.

Zane C. Hodges

Associate Editor

*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

Mesquite, TX

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*Christianity's Crisis in Evangelism: Going Where the People Are.* By Linda Raney Wright. Graham, OR: Vision House Publishing, 1995. 185 pp. Cloth, \$14.99.

This is an intensely practical discussion of reaching the lost in our day, written by a woman who is obviously an active soul-winner herself. This author is concerned—rightly it appears—with what she sees as a crisis in evangelism among American Christians.

One source of this crisis, she believes, is that Christians have often developed an uncompassionate “us-versus-them” mentality toward the unsaved. She connects this with the political and social activism that increasingly characterizes the evangelical community. She points, for example, to a survey she did with a number of committed Christians which revealed that “*much more time was spent saving morals, saving the country, and saving the family than in saving the lost*” (p. 15, italics original). The result is a tendency to view the unsaved person as “the enemy” rather than as the object of Christ’s saving love.

Another feature of the crisis in evangelism, the writer contends, is confusion about the message. In this regard, she takes Lordship Salvation directly to task. Appropriately she tells about a woman she calls Ella who trusted Christ but had a heroin addiction. She was told at one point that if she left the drug re-hab center and went back to the streets it would prove she was never saved at all. This, of course, is typical lordship fare. Actually it took *ten years* for her to break her addiction (pp. 63-64, 91). The writer is properly concerned with the practical disadvantages to this kind of teaching.

But she is concerned with more than that. She properly regards Lordship Salvation as unbiblical. Her arguments against it from Scripture are well taken, and she correctly recognizes that passages on discipleship are not part of the Gospel message (p. 83). But her combination of scriptural arguments with practical arguments makes her presentation

strikingly effective. For example, in a response to the lordship idea, “How can you call yourself a Christian and still divorce your spouse, sleep with another, or drink too much?” she writes:

But the questions conspicuously not being asked are: How can you call yourself a Christian when you have a critical attitude, when you are not witnessing, when you feel superior to another human being, when you have unforgiveness or unbelief, when you do not control your tongue, when you are performing out of the flesh, not out of the Spirit? [p. 77].

Touché!

A particularly engaging section of the book is chapter nine, “A Touchy Encounter.” This chapter contains computer conversations, which actually occurred, between a non-Christian and two Christians, one rather offensive and insensitive and one sensitive to the feelings of the unbeliever. The exchange involving the insensitive Christian is hard to read because it is so painfully true to life. The chapter as a whole is highly effective and makes its point unmistakably.

Not everyone, of course, will agree with every syllable of this book. Perhaps the writer lays too much stress on the role of praying a prayer to receive Christ, which is apparently her preferred method for leading a person to faith. Yet there is no reason to think that she believes the prayer to be *essential* to the conversion experience. There is also a use of Rev 3:20 (p. 115) with which many GES people might disagree. But on balance, there is relatively little in this volume to concern those who believe in grace, and a great deal that will have them saying a hearty “amen”!

In addition to its other fine aspects, the book is a refreshing and challenging call to contemporary Christians to share the Gospel of grace out of a heart of genuine love for the lost. We commend the author and publishers for this worthwhile contribution to evangelism.

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Associate Editor  
*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*  
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*Help for the Small-Church Pastor.* By Steve R. Bierly. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995. 110 pp. Paper, \$10.99.

I really liked this book! As someone who has pastored two "small" churches now for almost 15 years, I read it thinking, "At last, someone in print who has walked in my moccasins!" At one level it is a practical primer on the proper perspective needed to shepherd a small church. At another level it is a refreshing and needed reaction to much of the recent "Church Growth" movement as it relates to the ministry of the small church and its pastor.

As a practical primer on pastoral perspective, the book both encourages and exhorts the small church pastor. Bierly expresses several simple but profound truths that pastors may already know but tend to forget; thus becoming unnecessarily discouraged in the ministry. For example, there is an extended section that emphasizes the differences between "success" in seminary (i.e., good grades and the approval of one's professors) and "success" in the pastorate (i.e., numerical growth and expansion of buildings/programs). The author states, "In seminary . . . hard work and clear thinking are (consistently) rewarded" (p. 25). He then goes on to say, "Having been indoctrinated in the 'Hard Work Guarantees Results' school of thinking, the seminary graduate accepts his first call confident that a well-stocked personal library, subscriptions to quality pastoral journals, a phone network of friends who can dispense good advice, and time set aside to use all of the above will lead to church growth, a spiritually mature congregation, and offers from larger churches (p. 26). However the common reality in small church ministry is simply that "effort, logic, appeals to authority (even the Scriptures) . . . often lead, ultimately, nowhere" (p. 30).

Bierly concludes that rather than giving up on the church, small church pastors "need to give up on the idea that effort in the same areas that brought success in school will (automatically) earn them an A grade when it comes to ministering in small churches. There *is* a way to get an A, but it is more relational than rational, and on the surface, more intuitive than intentional. It is a way that demands the leader be more lover than boss and more participant than manager" (p. 35).

Another representative nugget that the author unearths is the concept that "the small church" is in fact a specialized and especially challenging "mission field" with its own established culture and priorities that must be understood and appreciated by its pastor. "Pastors who want to thrive in small churches should adopt a missionary model for their ministries. Like missionaries in foreign fields, small-church leaders are

often entering a culture that is not their own . . . As much as possible they need to work within existing structures and with prevailing mindsets in order to make inroads for the Gospel" (p. 48).

Equally edifying as its discussion on proper perspective for pastors is the book's interaction throughout with some of the key tenets of the modern "Church-Growth" movement. (See especially the chapter entitled "But I Followed the Instructions!" and the one entitled "From No Growth to Pro-Growth.") Bierly notes that too often "Church-Growth" gurus belittle the small church and discourage small church pastors with the implied message, "If your church isn't experiencing constant numerical growth there must be something seriously wrong with you and/or your church!" He suggests that too many Evangelicals today see God's relationship with the small church as similar to the relationship of a young man with a comatose great-grandfather. While the young man loves and respects the older man, and while he is saddened by his condition and the obvious fact that he is dying, at the same time he feels simply that the older man's day is past and that his impending death will be a blessing to all concerned. Bierly counters such patronizing thinking by both affirming the inherent value of the small church, and by attesting to the validity of its ministry into the 21st century. This is an important theme that all Evangelicals would do well to appreciate, since in fact *over 90% of all of the churches in America have a Sunday morning attendance of fewer than 75 people.*

Because this book is practical and not theological in its approach, the reader is left to "plug in" his own theological grid for himself. One red flag for most members of GES is an occasional reference to the small church pastor as "she." Although I realize I am "politically incorrect," I remain convinced that "female pastors" are in violation of direct biblical guidelines as articulated in such passages as 1 Tim 2:11-12 and 1 Cor 14:34-35. However this one problem in no way lessens the book's overall value. I believe that every small church pastor would be helped by reading it, and I challenge shepherds of larger churches to read it as well to gain a better understanding and appreciation of their brethren who minister in the uniquely challenging vineyard of the small church.

**Brad McCoy**  
Pastor

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*Biblical Answers to Contemporary Issues.* By Charles C. Ryrie. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. 134 pp. Paper, \$7.99.

Dr. Charles Ryrie, former professor of Systematic Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, has written scores of books over the years, and this small but extremely practical volume surely ranks among the most profitable. The book contains thirteen concise chapters, each evaluating a current moral, ethical, or theological issue from a biblical point of view. These issues include capital punishment, women's rights, divorce, racism, suicide, abortion, evolution, and homosexuality.

The reader will find this book to be extremely helpful. Ryrie's concise but warm style encourages the reader by demonstrating that God's ancient Word is truly timeless, giving us direct guidance to help us to wisely face each of the difficult modern issues examined. Ryrie's talent for organizing and outlining complex material in an easy-to-understand and concise form is at a premium in this work.

The first ten issues/chapters originally were published in 1974 under the title *You Mean the Bible Teaches That?* This newer work (1991) reprints this valuable information and adds three new chapters dealing with homosexuality, financial debt, and the issue of alcohol and other drugs. This new material is both topical and extremely worthwhile. On homosexuality, Ryrie refuses to water down the clear biblical denunciation of all homosexual activity as sin. On the subject of financial debt, he takes a sensible position, generally warning against a believer going into debt, but recognizing (with some qualifiers) the possible legitimacy of using credit as a tool in certain situations. On alcohol and drugs, Ryrie sounds a clear biblical warning against the sin of intoxication without teaching that all of the believers in the Bible were total abstainers.

Ryrie's organization of each issue in every chapter could easily lend itself to excellent outlines for a sermon series, a Sunday School class, or a discipleship group/home Bible study. This book will brief new believers biblically on these vital current issues and would be an ideal refresher course for more mature Christians. I recommend it highly.

**Brad McCoy**

Pastor

Tanglewood Bible Fellowship

Duncan, OK

*Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus.* By Murray J. Harris. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. 379 pp. Cloth, \$24.99.

Murray Harris has made a valuable contribution to the study of the deity of our Lord, focusing on passages that use the word *Theos* in relation to Christ. He does detailed exegesis of all the pertinent texts, including an outstanding chapter on the use of *Theos* in the Septuagint, extrabiblical literature, and the NT.

Harris is especially helpful on the anarthrous use (i.e., without a definite article) of *Theos* in John 1:1. He examines all the options and lists the pros and cons of each. He points out that the primary reason that *Theos* in John 1:1c is anarthrous is that *Theos* is qualitative, emphasizing *nature* rather than personal identity. Had John written *Theos* with a definite article it would have contradicted what he wrote in John 1:1b which makes a distinction between the persons of Christ and the Father. An article would have suggested that Christ and the Father were the same Person, which is the heresy called modalism. To avoid the modalistic heresy and in order to state that Christ is a partaker of the divine essence, as much God as is the Father, and yet a distinct Person, John did not use an article before *Theos* there.

The word *Theos* occurs 1,315 times in the Greek NT, primarily as a title for God *the Father*. Harris believes that of the 15 possible uses of *Theos* as a title for Christ only 7 are actually so used. He concludes that *Theos* is *definitely* used of Christ in John 1:1, and 20:28, *very probably* in Rom 9:5, Titus 2:13, Heb 1:8, and 2 Pet 1:1, *probably* in John 1:18, and *possibly, but not likely*, in Acts 20:28, Heb 1:9, and 1 John 5:20.

Although this is an outstanding defense of the deity of Christ, Harris's conclusions on Acts 20:28, 1 John 5:20, and Heb 1:9 are a little disappointing. In Acts 20:28 the relevant portion reads, ". . . to shepherd the church of the Lord and God which he purchased with His own blood." He translates the last portion "through the blood of His own (Son)," assuming that *Son* is implied in the text. The eclectic text makes this translation possible, as it reads, "*dia tou haimatos tou idiou.*" The article with *blood* makes it a possible translation. It is more difficult to translate the Majority Text this way, as it reads, "*dia tou idiou haimatos,*" literally, "through His own blood." The primary objection to the rendering that makes it a reference to Christ is that God is not spoken of that way in the NT. However, in John 19:37 John does quote a verse that refers to YHWH (Yahweh, or "Jehovah") in Zech 12:10 as being pierced. YHWH was pierced in the person of Christ in John 19:37, just as God bled in



the person of Christ in Acts 20:28. It would also seem strange to this reviewer that, if Luke intended the word *Son* to be understood, he didn't use the word.

First John 5:20 is more difficult, but the fact that *Jesus Christ* is the nearest antecedent to "this" and that the titles are consistent with Christ, both argue in favor of "true God" and "eternal life" referring to Christ.

This is one of the most thorough studies on the deity of Christ in print, an indispensable tool in the study of this doctrine. I fully recommend it to anyone studying this subject. Some knowledge of Greek, however, is crucial at certain points.

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*Jesus Divine Messiah: The New Testament Witness.* By Robert L. Reymond. P & R Publishing Company, 1990. 357 pp. Paper, \$17.99.

Christ asked His disciples this question: "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" And again, "But who do you say that I am?" (Matt 16:13, 15). This is the most important question that a person has to answer. In fact, Jesus said that a man's eternal destiny depends on what he thinks about Him (John 8:24). Robert Reymond carefully details the NT answer to this very question.

He begins the book with a refutation of the various avenues of liberal assaults on the authenticity of the Gospels and of the NT in general. He responds primarily to arguments against the NT presentation of Christ as deity. This includes, among others, attacks from Source Criticism, Historical Criticism, Form Criticism, and Redaction Criticism. The author points out the subjectivity used in arriving at these positions as well as the blatant disregard of the evidence that argues for apostolic authorship. He then covers the "self-witness" of Jesus, the preresurrection and postresurrection witness to Jesus, Paul's testimony concerning Jesus, and lastly, the remaining passages in the General Epistles that make reference to Christ's deity.

What is especially enjoyable about Reymond's book is that he interacts exegetically with liberal and Arian arguments against the deity of Christ. Many books written on this subject do little more than quote verses with no exposition of them. Reymond responds to the

opposition's arguments and has an especially helpful manner of summarizing the issues and the exegetical reasons for understanding the passages as references to the deity of Christ. He also has an excellent section covering the evidence for the resurrection of Christ and its ramifications on the authenticity of the Gospels and the NT.

The only possible negative that I saw was that he accepts the critical text readings against the Majority text readings in *every variation* where they conflict. This affects 1 Tim 3:16, John 1:18, and Acts 20:28.

If you could have only one book on the subject, *Jesus Divine Messiah* is it. Raymond argues strongly and cogently that the NT definitely applies the term *God* to Jesus and teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Divine Messiah.

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*Christ Before the Manger: The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ.* By Ron Rhodes. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. 299 pp. Paper, \$13.99.

*Christ Before the Manger* is a study about our Lord Jesus Christ in His preincarnate state. Using NT passages referring to Christ's preexistence, Ron Rhodes paints a picture of Him in the OT and before. He has a helpful introductory chapter on the Trinity and then covers Christ's roles in history as Preserver, Angel of the Lord, Shepherd, Savior, and the Eternal Logos. He gives special attention to how these titles and names relate to and reveal Christ's deity.

In his chapter on Christ as the Angel of the Lord, Rhodes provides some compelling evidence as to why Christ should be identified as that Angel. He also understands all references to Yahweh manifesting Himself to men as references to Christ, since the Scriptures repeatedly stress that God cannot be seen. One of the primary goals of the author is to establish the eternal preexistence of Christ. This in turn establishes by logical necessity the deity of Christ. Rhodes proves this most convincingly from the relevant passages in both Testaments.

The book also has a number of helpful appendices. It includes a chart of the evidences for Christ's deity, Messianic prophecies fulfilled by Christ, types of Christ in the OT, His relationship to Melchizedek, an

explanation of difficult passages used by non-Trinitarians to deny our Lord's deity, important creeds about Christ, and a catalog of historical errors that have been taught about Him.

The book is easy to read and devotional as well as informative. Its emphasis on Christ before the manger makes it unique and most helpful regarding the deity of Christ. I recommend it for anyone studying this subject.

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*Jesus: His Life and Ministry.* By Derek Prime. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995. 280 pp. Paper, \$10.99.

Written with the lay person in mind, this book gives an overview of our Lord's life and ministry. Its best features are the many helpful tools the author has included which equip the reader to "dig deeper" on his own and thus assist him to research many of the key events in the life of Christ further. The most important of these tools is a dictionary of Bible words, names, and places (= the last 107 pages of this 280 page work). The meditation verses and review questions that Prime has compiled and included at the end of each chapter are another nice feature.

This reviewer's observations of the body of the book will be limited to three main points. First, this work is a surprisingly brief and quite cursory survey of the life of Christ (with only about half of the book devoted to this).

Second, it seems strange—in light of the declaration on the back cover that the book takes one "step-by-step through Christ's walk on earth"—that the material is presented *topically* rather than chronologically. This arrangement could easily mislead those readers who are not *already* familiar with the basic chronological framework of the life of Christ, because the author has placed many key events out of chronological step. For a self-titled "survey," the arrangement seems jerky at best and misleading at worst. For example, one reads about Christ's miracles in chapters three and five, His parables in chapter six, His calling of the first disciples in chapter seven, and finally His cleansing of the temple in chapter eight.

Third, beyond any weaknesses in organization, GES members will find even more problematic Prime's theological content as he expounds the life of Christ. The author directly espouses a Lordship Salvation position throughout, and this is especially apparent as he explains such key terms as *repentance*, *faith*, *Lordship*, and *discipleship*.

In discussing repentance Prime states that when offering salvation, our Lord Jesus "called for a change of mind about sin and a radical change of direction of life—that is what repentance is" (p. 93). Prime goes on to affirm that only those "who believed the message, and who gave proper evidence of repentance" could know that God had truly forgiven them (p. 96). This reviewer acknowledges that while repentance does involve a change of mind about sin, seeing it as God sees it and recognizing the penalty that it carries, it does not necessarily include a commitment to a radical change of lifestyle.

The author's Reformed theological bias is equally revealed in his unwarranted assumption that the terms *believer* and *disciple* are essentially synonymous. He describes our Lord's basic *evangelistic* invitation thus: "Jesus' call to come to Him is a call to discipleship" (p. 119). Along these same lines, Prime's understanding of Christ's interaction with the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; and Luke 18:18-30) as a normative *evangelistic* call seems to be influenced by John MacArthur's similar treatment of these pericopes in *The Gospel According to Jesus* (pp. 77-88). GES members will recognize that while the call to follow our Lord as a disciple (as defined in the Synoptic Gospels) does demand a costly commitment of self-denying obedience, that is not an inherent part of the simple "faith alone" terms of the Gospel (see John 3:16-18 and Rom 4:5) and can in fact be heeded by a regenerate believer at points subsequent to regeneration.

Being targeted for laymen, this work succeeds in being written in the kind of non-technical language that will be readily understood by the average Christian. While it does contain many helpful aids, in this reviewer's opinion it is dangerously replete with theological error. It is not to be recommended to new believers or to doctrinally uninformed Christians. Other books on the life and ministry of Christ without the erroneous theological baggage, such as *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ* by J. Dwight Pentecost or *A Shorter Life of Christ* by Donald Guthrie, are much superior.

**Thomas F. Harves**

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## PERIODICAL REVIEWS

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**“Justification: A Doctrine in Crisis,”** Carl F. H. Henry, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, March 1995, pp. 57-65.

With this article, theological heavyweight Carl Henry weighs in on the ecumenical effort to bridge the differences between Protestant and Catholic doctrine. Though the differences are numerous, Dr. Henry focuses on the most crucial, the doctrine of justification.

Henry’s presentation of justification allows for no human merit. It is by faith alone, a concept antithetical to works. He also distinguishes justification from the doctrine of sanctification, which he shows was “conflated” with justification early on in church history. It took the Reformers to contend that justification was an imputed righteousness. While Roman Catholicism did not deny that salvation was by faith, they did not believe it was by faith *alone*. The Council of Trent declared that justification included “sanctification and renewal of the inner man” (p. 59).

Henry eventually gets to the recent ecumenical document *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, but offers no hope that its goal of unity will be found at the expense of the doctrine of justification. Comfortingly, his final appeal is to Scripture where he finds no wiggle room on justification as imputed righteousness and faith as non-meritorious.

While appreciating his contribution overall, this reviewer feels that more clarity is needed in his mention of the role of works and the basis of Christian assurance. Henry recognizes that “the eclipse of the doctrine of justification issues in a loss of Christian assurance” (p. 63), but also says that “Good works are evidence of having received justification by faith. They attest the presence of true faith” (p. 62). Does he mean “an evidence” or does he believe they are the *necessary* basis of assurance? This is not clear. Much to be preferred is what he says near the end of the article: “Personal faith in God’s revealed mercy is the instrument through which God gifts us with internal assurance. Without confidence in God’s sovereign Word humanity has no prospect whatever of pardon for transgressions” (p. 64).

The other inconsistency I noted was Dr. Henry’s effort to distance faith from human merit by calling faith “God’s gift” (p. 65). I do not know why such theological overkill is necessary when Henry has al-

readily established from the Scripture that faith by nature is totally non-meritorious and antithetical to works to begin with. This is a troublesome aspect of Reformed theology in general.

In a day when Protestant Lordship Salvation threatens to lead us back to Rome by confusing the doctrines of justification and sanctification, Henry's input is welcome. Relevant and concise, this article is a helpful tool in the debate over the condition and grounds of salvation. In this doctrinal bout, the unanimous decision goes to Henry.

**Charles C. Bing**  
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**"Paul's Approach to the Great Commission in Acts 14:21-23,"** David F. Detwiler, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January-March 1995, pp. 33-41.

On the surface, the basic thrust of this article is worthy. Christians should think and minister with the end-goal of making disciples according to Christ's commission in Matt 28:19-20. As Detwiler points out, the model of Paul's ministry in Acts 14:21-23 started with preaching, but proceeded through stages of strengthening, encouraging, and incorporating into the church community. This, in the fullest sense, is what is involved in "making disciples." The reader should be aware, however, that this article is marred by Detwiler's confusion of *salvation* with *discipleship*.

Surely many Christians and churches need to hear that discipleship is God's expectation for every believer. Evangelism that neglects to follow through with discipleship, *when it is possible*, is short sighted. The divine strategy is exponential multiplication, not simple addition.

While some may appreciate Detwiler's comprehensive approach to ministry, we must warn of the errant theology behind his approach. He has hemmed himself in to a strict definition of *discipleship* that equates it with *salvation*: "... people become disciples the moment they believe" (p. 40). In doing this he confuses justification and sanctification, as is characteristic of Reformed and Lordship thought. In the thinking of that system, evangelism (salvation) has not taken place until disciples are made, so should it not follow logically that justification is incomplete without sanctification?

While it is true that in Acts Luke interchanges references to *Christians* with the term *disciples*, it is just as true that the Gospels use the

term *disciple* with such fluidity that even unsaved people qualify in the most general sense (John 6:64-65), while stringent conditions distinguish one who simply believes from the true disciple (e.g., Luke 9:23-26; 14:26-33). We have argued previously that context is the key to understanding the term *disciple* (see my article "Coming to Terms with Discipleship," *JOTGES* [Spring 1992], pp. 35-49).

Detwiler has not dealt adequately with the context of Acts. As he says, Luke has in mind Matthew's commission to make disciples. Since Acts records the historical fulfillment of Matt 28:19-20, it is natural that Christians be called disciples in Acts. Luke's purpose is to describe the growth of the Christian church, in general building on Matthew's optimal anticipation of discipleship. We do not find the hard conditions attached to discipleship as in the Gospels because Luke is content to show that generally the believing community was following Christ and growing in Him. And indeed they were.

While in a general sense every Christian can be called a disciple if he is under spiritual instruction, the term is given its fullest significance, even in Acts, when used of committed and submitted followers of the Lord Jesus. Yes, we should make disciples in our ministries, as Detwiler encourages, but let us be aware that his understanding is quite different from ours.

Charles C. Bing

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**"Whatever happened to the clear invitation? How to make the call to Christ compelling."** Greg Laurie, *Leadership*, Spring 1995, pp. 53-56.

The Spring 1995 issue of *Leadership* deals with the subject of evangelism. This article by Greg Laurie, pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, California, is intended to provide practical advice for preachers (including evangelists) who regularly give invitations in the form of an altar call at the conclusion of their sermons.

His main premise is that evangelistic invitations must be "simple and clear" (p. 53). He states, "... the worst sin in giving an evangelistic invitation is making it confusing ..." (p. 54). According to the author, a simple and clear invitation involves "*clear content, clear language, and clear directions*" (p. 54). Certainly, presenting a clear and simple Gos-

pel is crucial in evangelism. However, the author's advice on how to accomplish this goal is disappointing and doctrinally inaccurate.

With regard to *clear content*, pastors are encouraged to tell the lost to "repent of (their) sin" which Laurie defines as doing a "U-turn" and "walking away from sin" (p. 54). This step is followed by "lay[ing] the choice before them"—a choice to either receive or reject Christ. Nowhere in his explanation of the *clear content* of the Gospel does the author mention the words *faith* or *believe*. With regard to *clear language* Laurie suggests saying, "To have your sins forgiven you must repent, which means to change your direction. . . ." (p. 54). And with regard to *clear directions* the author gives some practical advice on how to get the sinner to "walk the aisle." In explaining why a public commitment is important, he recommends telling the audience, "Jesus said, 'If you'll confess me before men, I'll confess you before my Father who is in heaven. But if you deny me, I'll deny you.'" So you need to make a public stand for Christ."

By making a changed lifestyle and public profession indispensable elements of the Gospel the author adds to the one condition of salvation: faith alone in Christ alone. In trying to present a *clear* Gospel what the author has actually done is present a *different* gospel.

Whatever happened to the clear invitation? The author asks, but does not appropriately answer, that question. For a better discussion of this subject see Charles Bing's article in *The GES News* (Jan-Feb 1995) entitled "Keep It Clear and Simple" or his expanded article on this same topic in the *JOTGES* (Spring 1994, pp. 51-65) entitled "How to Share the Gospel Clearly."

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**"Is There Opportunity for Salvation After Death?"** Millard J. Erickson, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April-June 1995, pp. 131-44.

Some Evangelicals, such as Donald Bloesch and Clark Pinnock, are suggesting today that those who have never heard the Gospel clearly presented in this life will have a chance to hear it and be saved after they die. Erickson states and critiques the evidence which supposedly supports this view, which he dubs "postmortem evangelism."



Unfortunately, Erickson doesn't lay out the evidence for this view as clearly as he could. However, it appears to this reviewer that at least four lines of evidence for postmortem evangelism are adduced by its proponents: 1) the love of God, 2) the destiny of those who die in infancy, 3) the free will of men, and 4) 1 Pet 3:18-20.

Erickson doesn't respond directly to points 1 and 2. Concerning point 3, he reminds us that God is omniscient and knows in advance how all people will respond to Him. He does not need to wait until the Great White Throne Judgment to find out how each will respond. While Erickson is correct, he could have bolstered his argument by citing at this point, "He who does not believe is condemned already" (John 3:18) and, "Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15).

The strength of this article lies in its treatment of the fourth point (1 Pet 3:18-20). Erickson lays out six different interpretations of what has been called "perhaps the most difficult [passage] to understand in all of the New Testament." He shows that the best interpretation is that through Noah the Lord Jesus preached a message of impending judgment to the generation which was about to experience, and die in, the Flood.

In a section entitled "Related Doctrinal Issues," the author suggests several passages showing that "the Bible teaches that death ends all opportunity for decision for Christ." He points to Luke 16:19-31, Rev 20:11-15, Heb 9:27, and Psalm 49. Unfortunately, Erickson's argument is weakened by the fact that he fails to give detailed explanations of these passages.

Overall, I would rate this article as helpful, but not outstanding. Erickson's major weakness is his failure to censure the position as clearly unbiblical. For some reason—perhaps a desire to avoid offending anyone—he concludes that the postmortem evangelism position is *probably* not true (p. 144). This inconclusive conclusion undercuts the whole point of the critique. "Postmortem evangelism" is *definitely* not true, since Scripture unequivocally refutes it.

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# A HYMN OF GRACE

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## TO GOD BE THE GLORY

To God be the glory, great things He hath done;  
So loved He the world that He gave us His Son,  
Who yielded His life, an atonement for sin,  
And opened the lifegate, that all may go in.

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,  
To every believer, the promise of God;  
The vilest offender who truly believes,  
That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Great things He hath taught us, great things He hath done,  
And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;  
But purer, and higher, and greater will be  
Our wonder, our transport<sup>1</sup>, when Jesus we see!

*Refrain:*

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the earth hear His voice!  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,  
Let the people rejoice!  
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,  
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done!

—Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915)

Frances (Fanny) Jane Crosby ranks among the Church's greatest writers of hymns and spiritual songs. Over the course of her more than 90 years of life, she composed more than 8,000 texts, many of which have been set to music and are today our favorite hymns of the faith. These

<sup>1</sup> Some editions prefer *victory*.

include "Praise Him! Praise Him!," "Tell Me the Story of Jesus," "I Am Thine, O Lord," "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross," "Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine," "All the Way My Savior Leads Me," and "Jesus is Tenderly Calling." This prodigious output is made more remarkable still with the realization that Crosby<sup>2</sup> was totally blind from six years of age; she praised the Creator and Light of the World for more than 80 years without actually seeing the work of His hands.

"To God Be the Glory" is well-recognized as a wonderful hymn of praise and adoration of God. Written and first published in 1875, it was used by Ira Sankey in the British editions of his famous song books. However, it was not included in the U.S. editions, and so was practically unknown in North America until it was first used by Cliff Barrows in a Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville in 1954.<sup>3</sup> Since that time, it has become one of the most well-known and loved of songs.

Several aspects of this beloved composition set it forth not only as a hymn of praise, but also as a hymn of grace. From the outset, it is clear that Fanny Crosby ascribes all credit to God for His work ("great things He hath done"), with no role for man's efforts in God's great plan. In the first stanza, it is Jesus alone who opens the lifegate of salvation, so that all have the opportunity to be saved. This is a clear message of grace, in contrast to the idea that man must prove his worth before eternal life is granted.

However, it is in the second stanza that Crosby most clearly sets forth the conditions for entrance through this gate—faith, and faith alone. Note that redemption is promised to "every believer" (cf. John 3:16), and that regardless of the magnitude of one's sins, even "the vilest offender" who puts his or her faith in Christ, such as the criminal crucified with Christ (Luke 23:43) or Saul of Tarsus (1 Tim 1:15), will immediately receive pardon from Jesus. The third stanza and chorus continue to bring this point of grace home, proclaiming that it is God who has done great things, and the One to whom praise and adoration belong.

<sup>2</sup> In 1858 Fanny married Mr. Alexander Van Alstyne, a pupil and then a teacher at the New York Institution for the blind where she also taught. He was an accomplished musician and theologian, and apparently humble, since he insisted Fanny retain her literary name, which was already well known. See *Fanny J. Crosby: An Autobiography* (Reprint Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 129-30. This author also published many poems under pen names since she seemed to be flooding the market with her compositions.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh T. McElrath, "To God Be the Glory" in *Handbook to The Baptist Hymnal* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1992), 259.

As is evident here, as well as in her other hymns, Fanny Crosby was a great woman of God who clearly understood the importance of God's marvelous grace in salvation.

The tune to which this hymn is set was composed by William H. Doane (1832-1915), a frequent collaborator with Ms. Crosby in the production of spiritual songs. In his lifetime Doane composed more than 2,000 tunes, many of which are still in common use today, including the tunes to such hymns as "Rescue the Perishing," "Near the Cross," "I Am Thine, O Lord," and "More Love to Thee."<sup>4</sup>

As with other classic hymns and gospel songs from the pen of Fanny Crosby, "To God Be the Glory" is a marvelous expression of praise to God for His wondrous works. However, this song also gives special place to the Free Grace position—that salvation is provided as a gift from God to everyone who will place his or her faith in Christ, regardless of one's sins before or after conversion. The act of love on the cross which made this possible is truly reason to "Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!" Let us indeed rejoice in our salvation provided so freely by Christ Jesus!

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 328.



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