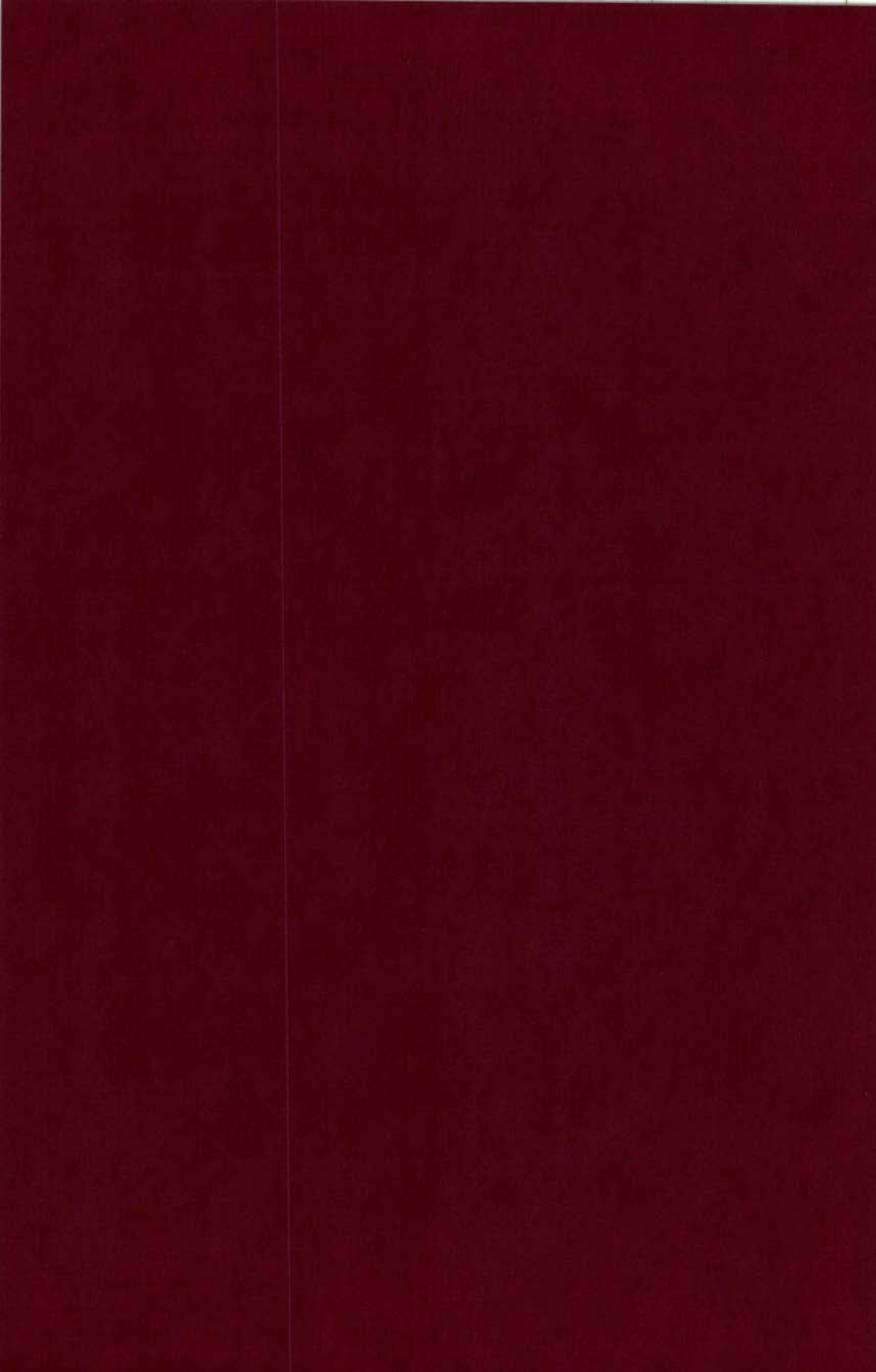


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"Faith Alone In Christ Alone"



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Manuscripts, periodical and book reviews, and other communications should be addressed to Robert N. Wilkin, Associate Editor, P.O. Box 1800, Roanoke, TX 76262-1800.

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We Believe In: SANCTIFICATION

Part 2: Past Sanctification

ROBERT N. WILKIN

Associate Editor

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
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I. Introduction

When most authors or speakers write or speak about *sanctification*, they almost always mean *progressive* (or *present*) *sanctification*.¹ In fact, many of the books and articles on sanctification never even *mention* past sanctification.

One wonders why there is such a neglect of the subject of past sanctification.

It is not because the Scriptures are silent on the subject.

One might well think that the reason for this lack of attention is because many *more* passages speak of present sanctification than speak of past (or future) sanctification. Before embarking on this study, I thought that way. However, after doing a study of all NT passages dealing with sanctification, I found that over three quarters deal with past sanctification! By comparison only 20% deal with present sanctification. See Appendices 1-4 for a listing of the actual percentages and passages.

One reason for the lack of attention to past sanctification may be a desire to oversimplify biblical concepts. That is, there is a tendency to

¹ The following are some representative works: J. Sidlow Baxter, *A New Call to Holiness: A Restudy and Restatement of New Testament Teaching Concerning Christian Sanctification* (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1967) and *Our High Calling* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1967); G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952); Peter Toon, *Justification and Sanctification* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983); Jonathan H. Rainbow, "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification" *Ex Auditu* 5 (1989): 99-105; H. A. Ironside, *Holiness: The False and the True* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.); Philip Mauro, *Sanctification: Notes of an Address* (New York: Gospel Publishing House, n.d.). See also footnotes 2, 4, 6, 7, and 9.

want to reduce concepts like salvation and sanctification to one basic meaning. This tendency is misguided since both salvation and sanctification are complex concepts which have a wide range of meaning in Scripture. Another possible reason for this neglect of past sanctification is the understandable desire to focus on external transformation. Pastors, and often theologians as well, tend to be more interested in behavioral changes than in constitutional, legal, or positional changes.

A third reason is the failure to see a clear separation between justification and progressive sanctification. Lordship Salvation teachers believe that perseverance in the faith—and hence in personal holiness—is a condition of eternal salvation. Anyone who fails to persevere is said to have never been saved in the first place.

According to Lordship thinking, if progressive sanctification is not in clear evidence in a person's life, then past sanctification probably never really occurred. This naturally leads Lordship teachers to view progressive sanctification as the *sine qua non* of past sanctification (rather than the other way around)!

A.W. Pink, himself a strong Calvinist, decried the tendency in Reformed circles to ignore past sanctification and to link assurance to progressive sanctification. Referring to the Westminster Confession's statement on sanctification he writes:

Instead of placing before the believer that complete and perfect sanctification which God has made Christ to be unto him, it occupies him with the incomplete and progressive work of the Spirit. Instead of moving the Christian to look away from himself with all his sinful failures, unto Christ in whom he is "complete" (Col 2:10), it encouraged him to look within, where he will often search in vain for the fine gold of the new creation amid all the dross and mire of the old creation. This is to leave him without the joyous assurance of knowing that he has been "perfected forever" by the one offering of Christ (Heb 10:14); and if he be destitute of *that*, then doubts and fears must constantly assail him, and the full assurance of faith elude every striving after it . . . Let the young believer be credibly assured that he will "more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life," and what will be the inevitable outcome? . . . Why this: if the Catechism-definition be correct then I was sadly mistaken, *I have never been sanctified at all* (italics his).²

² Arthur W. Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification* (Swengel, PA: Reiner Publications, 1966), 114-15.

Similarly he challenged the statement on sanctification in the 1742 Baptist Association Confession of Faith:

This description of sanctification by the Baptists leaves something to be desired, for it makes no clear and direct statement upon the all-important and flawless holiness which every believer has *in Christ*, and that spotless and impeccable purity which is *upon* him by God's imputation of the cleansing efficacy of His Son's sacrifice. Such a serious omission is too vital for us to ignore. In the second place, the words which we have placed in italics not only perpetuate the faulty wording of the Westminster Catechism but also convey a misleading conception of the present condition of the Christian. To speak of "some remnants of corruption" still remaining in the believer, necessarily implies that by far the greater part of his original corruption has been removed, and that only a trifling portion of the same now remains. But something vastly different from *that* is what every true Christian discovers to his daily grief and humiliation (*italics his*).³

It is difficult to decide how to approach this subject. It would be helpful to be able to discuss the various views of past sanctification as was done concerning progressive sanctification in the symposium book *Five Views on Sanctification*.⁴ However, there really aren't a number of clearly defined views on past sanctification. In fact, I could not find even one article—let alone a book—devoted to the subject. The most I found was a few pages in a few books and articles.

The approach which seems best to me is to consider (1) the various types of past sanctification, and (2) questions dealing with past sanctification.

II. The Various Types of Past Sanctification

A concordance study reveals that it is impossible to compress all references to past sanctification into one mold. There are, in other words, a number of clearly distinct types of past sanctification.

I have come up with four types of past sanctification: pre-conversion, forensic, intrinsic, and positional.⁵ Let us briefly consider each now.

³ Ibid., 116. For similar statements about the importance of recognizing the primacy of past, objective sanctification over present, subjective sanctification, see also Mauro, *Sanctification*, 11, 15; and Baxter, *Our High Calling*, 16-19, 205-206.

⁴ Melvin E. Dieter, et al., *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987).

⁵ I am indebted to a conversation I had with Zane Hodges and Art Farstad for this synthesis.

A. Pre-Conversion Sanctification⁶

Even before a person is born again, God is at work in his life. He works in the lives of unbelievers to draw them to Christ. He does this in a number of ways.

One way an unbeliever is sanctified—yes, unbelievers can be sanctified!—is by their home environment. An unbelieving spouse or child is sanctified if one of the spouses is a Christian:

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy (1 Cor 7:14).

The root idea of sanctification is *being set apart*. Unbelievers are set apart if they live in a house with a believer. They have an ongoing witness to the truth of the Gospel living before their eyes.

By extension it would seem that any time an unbeliever receives a clear witness of the Gospel, he is sanctified in a pre-conversion sense. Of course, this sort of sanctification is iterative. That is, it only lasts as long as the witness continues. That is Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 7. If the believing spouse leaves, then the other spouse and the children lose that sanctifying influence.

A person who works closely with a Christian likewise experiences ongoing pre-conversion sanctification.

Similarly, an unbelieving college student is sanctified by his Christian roommate.

In the broad sense anything God does to set an unbeliever apart for special influence from His truth is a form of pre-conversion sanctification.

Space does not permit a detailed consideration of 1 Pet 1:2, another passage which appears to deal with pre-conversion sanctification. However, a strong case can be made that Peter is discussing that very thing:

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion . . . elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:1-2).

Election is something which was done in eternity past.

⁶ I borrowed this term from an excursus on sanctification in *Believer's Bible Commentary*, NT Edition, by William MacDonald (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 860.

Obedience (i.e., obedience to the faith, obedience to God's command to trust in Christ, cf. 1 Pet 2:7; Acts 6:7; 16:30-31) and sprinkling of the blood of Christ are something which occur at the moment a person is born again.

The middle element, sanctification, mediates the two. That is, the elect are set apart by the Holy Spirit *before* they believe—by giving them a Spirit-wrought witness of the Gospel—with the result that they might ultimately believe and thus be cleansed by the blood of Christ.

A third passage which deals with pre-conversion sanctification is 2 Thess 2:13. It reads:

But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

Eternal salvation is said here to be through (1) sanctification by the Spirit and through (2) belief in the truth. Only pre-conversion sanctification is a precursor to eternal salvation. The Holy Spirit draws unbelievers that they might believe and be saved.

B. Forensic Sanctification⁷

This type of past sanctification is identical to justification, hence the name *forensic* sanctification.

Forensic sanctification is a legal declaration by God that a person has right standing before Him.

In the Book of Hebrews the terms *sanctification* (*hagiasmos*), and *sanctify* (*hagiazō*) occur four and two times respectively. Most, if not all, of these uses concern forensic sanctification.

For both He who sanctifies and *those who are being sanctified* [better = *those who are sanctified*, compare Heb 10:10, 29] are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren . . . (Heb 2:11).

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:13-14).

By that will *we have been sanctified* through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb 10:10).

⁷ While he does not use the exact expression "forensic sanctification," James Denney clearly speaks of that *concept* in his book, *The Death of Christ*, edited by R.V.G. Tasker (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1951), 126.

For by one offering He has perfected forever those *who are being sanctified* [or, better, those *who are sanctified*—compare Heb 10:10, 29] (Heb 10:14).⁸

... the blood of the covenant *by which he was sanctified* ... (Heb 10:29).

Therefore Jesus also, *that He might sanctify* the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate (Heb 13:12).

All but one of these references clearly links the sanctification under consideration with the Cross. Three of the references indicate that this sanctification is accomplished by or with the blood of Christ (Heb 9:13-14; 10:29; 13:12); one refers to the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (Heb 10:10); and another (Heb 10:14) is in that immediate context. The Cross is the basis of forensic sanctification.

Commenting on the meaning of *sanctification* in the Book of Hebrews, Denney writes:

There has been much discussion as to what sanctification in such passages [Heb 2:11; 10:10, 14; 13:12] means, and especially as to whether the word is to be taken in a religious [positional] or an ethical [experiential] sense ... In short, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the word *hagiazēin* [to sanctify], corresponds as nearly as possible to the Pauline *dikaion* [to justify]. The sanctification of the one writer is the justification of the other ... In technical language, it alters their relation to God, or is conceived of as doing so, rather than their character.⁹

C. Intrinsic Sanctification

This type of past sanctification is a product of the new birth. When a person is regenerated, he or she experiences an internal transformation.

This inner change is something which cannot be felt or directly observed. Only its effects are capable of scrutiny—and even then human observations are by no means infallible.¹⁰

⁸ Interestingly, the leading lexicon of NT Greek, Bauer, Gingrich, Danker (BGD, p. 8), after saying “Christians are *hēgiasmenoi*” cites Heb 10:14 (and Acts 20:32 and 26:18) as proof. While this may be an error (Heb 10:10 has *hēgiasmenoi*; 10:14 has *hagiazomenous*), it seems that BGD may understand Heb 10:14 as having the same meaning as Heb 10:10, that is, “those who are sanctified.”

⁹ Denny, *The Death of Christ*, 126; see also Thomas Hewitt, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), 71; and Pink, *The Doctrine of Sanctification*, 114-16.

¹⁰ A believer may not outwardly manifest his inner self (see 1 Cor 3:1-3; Eph 4:1 ff). And an unbeliever's works may outwardly appear to be those of a believer (see Matt 7:21-23).

All born-again people have within them a sinless, perfectly holy self. This is the eternal self or the essential self. In the NT this is called “the new man.” In Eph 4:24 Paul wrote, “put on *the new man* which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (see also Col 3:10). It is also called the one “born of God.” In 1 John 3:9 John wrote, “whoever has been *born of God* (= the born-again new man) does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been *born of God*.”

Passages which speak of intrinsic sanctification include the following:

Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin (Rom 6:6).¹¹

But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit *to holiness*, and the end, everlasting life (Rom 6:22).

. . . that He might *sanctify* and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word (Eph 5:26).

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, *sanctifies* for the purifying of the flesh, *how much more shall the blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Heb 9:13-14).

He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; *he who is holy*, let him be holy still (Rev 22:11).

Note that the last two passages cited (Heb 9:13-14 and Rev 22:11) link intrinsic and progressive sanctification. He who is holy intrinsically is expected and commanded to be holy extrinsically.

D. Positional Sanctification

New Testament positional sanctification is accomplished by the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). The Holy Spirit places people into the Body of Christ. Anyone who is in the Body of Christ is no

¹¹ See Baxter, *A New Call to Holiness*. He argues (see 77 ff.) that Romans 6 concerns not experiential (i.e., progressive) sanctification, but positional sanctification, which he calls judicial (though I think intrinsic is a more accurate designation). Commenting on a common misinterpretation of Rom 6:6 he writes, “Misapplying the *judicial* to the experiential is as evidently wrong as saying that two and two makes five, or that a triangle has four sides” (104, italics his).

longer in the world in a positional sense. That is, such a person has been *set apart* in Christ (*en Christō*).¹²

On the one hand, there are three NT passages which deal with positional sanctification which use the verb *sanctify* (*hagiazō*):¹³

And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance *among all those who are sanctified* (Acts 20:32).

... to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance *among those who are sanctified* by faith in Me (Acts 26:18).

Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, *sanctified*¹⁴ by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ (Jude 1).

On the other hand, there are sixty-four NT passages dealing with positional sanctification which use the noun *saints* (*hagioi*). All of these passages are listed in Appendix 3. A few representative passages are as follows:

But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister *to the saints* (Rom 15:25).

Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and *all the saints* who are with them (Rom 16:15).

To the church of God which is at Corinth, *to those who are sanctified* in Christ Jesus, *called to be saints*, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours (1 Cor 1:2).

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches *of the saints* (1 Cor 14:33).

¹² While the word *saints* is used to refer to OT believers (cf. Deut 33:2-3; 1 Sam 2:9; Job 15:15; Ps 16:3; 30:4; 89:5, 7) and also to believers during the Tribulation (cf. Dan 7:18-27; Rev 5:8), neither of those designations looks to the positional sanctification which believers during the church age experience. Neither OT saints nor Tribulation saints are in the Church, the Body of Christ.

¹³ BGD (see note 8 above) suggests that Heb 10:14; Acts 20:32; and Acts 26:18 are examples of the fact that "Christians are *hēgiasmenoi*" (p 8). I have not included Heb 2:11; 10:10; or 10:14 in this group because I believe the author of the Book of Hebrews uses *hagiazō* to refer to forensic sanctification. See section II B above (pp. 7-8).

¹⁴ The Majority Text reads *hēgiasmenois* ("to those who are sanctified"). Some early manuscripts (such as Aleph, A, and B), however, read *ēgapēmenois* ("to those who are beloved").

To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all *the saints* who are in all Achaia (2 Cor 1:1b).

To all *the saints* in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons (Phil 1:1b).

Greet all those who rule over you, and all *the saints*. Those from Italy greet you (Heb 13:24).

As can be easily seen in the passages just cited, the term *saints* is a synonym for *Christians*. Christians are saints. Thus, positional sanctification (being put into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit) is very common in the NT, although the words *sanctify* or *sanctification* are not found in most of those references.

The English reader must remember whenever he reads the word *saint* that it is merely a noun form of the Greek word for *sanctify*.

It would have been helpful, albeit cumbersome, if each place the Greek noun *hagios* occurred it had been translated “*the sanctified one*” (or “*the sanctified ones*”). So, for example, Rom 15:25 could be translated, “But now I am going to Macedonia and Achaia to make contributions for the poor *among the sanctified ones* who are in Jerusalem.”

Saints are sanctified people. They are not a special category of “super-Christians.” If you are a Christian, you are one who has been set apart, placed into the Body of Christ.

III. Key Questions About Past Sanctification

The following are some of the specific questions that can be asked about the subject of past sanctification.

A. Question #1: What Is Past Sanctification?

As noted in the introductory article to this series on sanctification, the word *sanctification* basically means *set apart*.¹⁵ In this article we are considering those aspects of sanctification that have already fully occurred for every believer—hence the name *past sanctification*.

Every believer has already been sanctified or set apart in four ways. First, before being saved, all believers were drawn by the Holy Spirit

¹⁵ See, for example, BGD, 8; and NIDNTT, Vol 2, S.v. “*Hagios*,” by H. Seebass, 229–30. Seebass writes concerning the expression *the saints* (*hoi hagioi*) in the Pauline epistles, “This was primarily not an ethical expression but a parallel to concepts like ‘called’ . . . ‘elect’ . . . and ‘faithful.’ It implies association with the Holy Spirit” (229).

via *pre-conversion sanctification*. Second, at the moment of faith all believers are *forensically sanctified*. This is a synonym for justification. Third, when a person believes, he is *intrinsically sanctified*—that is, he gains the life of God so that the inner (i.e., born-again) man is totally holy and pure. Fourth, all NT believers at the moment of belief are *positionally sanctified* by being placed into the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit.

B. Question #2: How Is Perfection Related to Past Sanctification?

Experiential perfection (i.e., sinless perfection) will occur for every recipient of forensic, intrinsic, and positional sanctification; however, it will not happen until he or she dies or is raptured (cf. 1 John 1:8, 10; 3:2). That is called *future* (or *ultimate*) *sanctification*. See also question 4 below.

C. Question #3: How Does Past Sanctification Relate to Progressive Sanctification?

Past sanctification is the ground upon which progressive sanctification is built.¹⁶ Without past sanctification, progressive sanctification would be impossible.

No level of progressive sanctification is guaranteed in this life to the person who has experienced past sanctification. Great growth in holiness is possible. So, too, little growth—or even a decrease in holiness!—is a sad possibility. Believers must be diligent in order for progressive sanctification to be experienced to the fullest degree.

D. Question #4: How Does Past Sanctification Relate to Ultimate Sanctification?

At the point of faith, God sets every believer apart forensically, intrinsically, and positionally. No longer is a believer a member of the world—at least not in a positional sense. Henceforth he is a citizen of heaven.

¹⁶ For a different view see Jonathan Rainbow's article, "Double Grace: John Calvin's View of the Relationship of Justification and Sanctification," 99-105. He argues that Calvin strongly rejected the idea that justification included an impartation of righteousness. Only imputation is in view. However, he also argues that Calvin believed in the inevitability of progressive sanctification because both justification and progressive sanctification proceed directly from the Cross. Both are seen as benefits of the crucifixion applied to all who believe.

Past sanctification guarantees that ultimate sanctification will occur when one dies or is raptured. Another way to say that is this: What is now true of believers in their position (i.e., forensically) will eternally be true of them in their experience. Or, what is now true of believers intrinsically (in the innermost self) will be true of them totally at the Lord's coming (1 John 3:2).

E. Question #5: How Does Past Sanctification Compare with Justification?

Justification is a legal term in all of its biblical uses relating to justification by or before God. When God justifies people He declares them righteous. That is, He legally grants them right standing before Him.

Forensic sanctification is that type of past sanctification which is synonymous with justification. The author of the Book of Hebrews largely referred to this type of past sanctification.

Intrinsic and positional sanctification can only take place because justification (= forensic sanctification) has occurred as well. Thus justification is the ground of intrinsic and positional sanctification.

F. Question #6: Does Intrinsic Sanctification Necessarily Result in a Constitutional Change?

All whom God has set apart have undergone a change in their inner self. God grants them "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Pet 1:3). He destroys sin's lordship over their lives (Rom 6:1-14). He gives them a new view of the world (2 Corinthians 5). Other believers are seen as brothers and sisters, and unbelievers are viewed as outside of God's family and needing reconciliation (2 Cor 5:16-21).

Yes, intrinsic sanctification does necessarily result in a constitutional change.

G. Question #7: Does Intrinsic Sanctification Necessarily Result in Behavioral Change?

A change in one's inner self need not necessarily result in a change of behavior. Hypothetically, at least, a person could undergo intrinsic sanctification and manifest absolutely no behavior changes prior to death. In reality, however, unless a person dies immediately upon believing in Christ, there surely will be some behavioral changes—though they may not be observable to others.

Each day we are faced with a myriad of moral choices. When God changes a person constitutionally, it is fairly certain that some, if not many or most, of those choices will be handled differently by the one who has been intrinsically sanctified.

In addition, it is important to remember that all who have been intrinsically sanctified will one day be ultimately sanctified. While believers may experience major behavioral changes in this life, they will experience more radical changes once they die or are raptured. Calvin said that all believers sin daily.¹⁷ That is true only in this life. Once believers are ultimately sanctified, they will never sin again. Their behavior will then be sinless (1 John 3:2).

Intrinsic sanctification lays the groundwork for ultimate sanctification and experiential perfection.

H. Question #8: What Must One Do to Obtain Past Sanctification?

As indicated above, forensic, intrinsic, and positional sanctification occur at the moment of faith. Thus the sole condition for those three types of past sanctification is faith in Christ and Him alone.

Pre-conversion sanctification is something God sovereignly does without any stated condition imposed upon the unbeliever.

I. Question #9: What Is the Role of the Trinity in Past Sanctification?

All three members of the Trinity are involved in past sanctification.

Pre-conversion sanctification is evidently the work of the Holy Spirit primarily. He does the drawing (cf. John 16:9-11). However, God the Father and the Lord Jesus both send the Holy Spirit to do this and hence They are directly involved as well.

Forensic sanctification is grounded in the work of Christ and is a legal declaration made before God the Father.

Intrinsic sanctification is seen to be the work of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the Father and the Son.

Positional sanctification, likewise, is the work of the Holy Spirit, who is sent by the Father and the Son.

¹⁷ In his commentary on First John, Calvin wrote, "It hence appears that it cannot be but that the children of God are not free from sins, *and that they sin daily*, that is, as far as they still have some remnants of their old nature" (italics added). John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles*, translated and edited by John Owen, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), 213. See also *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 3. 3. 10, 20.

J. Question #10: Does Gal 3:3 Refer to Justification or to Some Type of Sanctification?

Galatians 3:3 reads as follows: “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

While there are many who suggest that the issue here is progressive sanctification, there are compelling reasons to reject that conclusion.

The Judaizers were proclaiming a false gospel, a false way of *justification*. See Gal 1:6-9 and 5:1-6. Note particularly that in 5:4 Paul speaks of those who “attempt to be *justified* by law” (emphasis added).

The Judaizers were evidently saying that salvation could be lost if one failed to keep the law. Thus one began his salvation by the Spirit—that is, by faith in Christ—but finished his salvation by being made perfect in the flesh—that is, by obedience to the law. According to the Judaizers, perfection was not obtained merely by believing in Christ.

Justification, not progressive sanctification, is in view in Gal 3:3.

IV. Conclusion

Past sanctification is much more prominent in the NT than present or future sanctification. For this reason, it is a mistake to use the word *sanctification* to refer only to progressive sanctification.

There are four types of past sanctification. One of these, pre-conversion sanctification, occurs before salvation. God draws unbelievers to Himself via pre-conversion sanctification.

Three types of past sanctification occur at the moment of faith in Christ. Forensic sanctification is the same as justification. It is a legal declaration that one has right standing before God.

Intrinsic sanctification refers to the internal constitutional changes which occur at regeneration. Believers are internally set apart.

Positional sanctification looks to the believer's being set apart in the Body of Christ, the Church. *All* believers are saints—not only the heroes of the faith!

Past sanctification is the ground upon which progressive sanctification is built. A proper understanding of past sanctification is a vital aid to progressive sanctification.

All who are the recipients of past sanctification are guaranteed ultimate sanctification, and it is for that sanctification that we long. Come quickly, Lord Jesus! Maranatha.

Appendix 1

NT Passages Dealing with Past, Present, and Future Sanctification (Total = 117)

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Number of Passages</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Past Sanctification	90*	76.9%
2. Present Sanctification	24*	20.5%
3. Future Sanctification	3*	2.6%

*N.B. See Appendices 2, 3, & 4, for a listing of these passages by type of sanctification.

Appendix 2

Passages Dealing with Present Sanctification (Total = 24)

John 17:17, 19 (both *hagiazō*)
 Rom 6:19 (*hagiasmos*)
 1 Cor 7:34 (*hagios*)
 2 Cor 7:1 (*hagiōsynē*)
 1 Thess 3:13 (*hagiōsynē*); 4:3, 7 (both *hagiasmos*); 5:23 (*hagiazō*)
 1 Tim 2:15 (*hagiasmos*); 4:12; 5:2 (both *hagneia*), 22 (*hagnos*)
 2 Tim 2:21 (*hagiazō*)
 Titus 2:5 (*hagnos*)
 Heb 12:10 (*hagiotēs*)
 James 4:8 (*hagnizō*)
 1 Pet 1:15, 16; 3:5 (all *hagios*)
 1 John 3:3 (*hagnizō*)
 Rev 22:11 (*hagios* and *hagiazō*)

Appendix 3

Passages Dealing with Past Sanctification (Total = 90)

I. Pre-Conversion Sanctification (Total = 5)

1 Cor 7:14 (*hagiazō* [twice] and *hagios*)
 2 Thess 2:13 (*hagiasmos*)
 1 Pet 1:2 (*hagiasmos*)

II. Forensic Sanctification (Total = 13)

1 Cor 1:30; 6:11(both *hagiazō*)
 Col 3:12 (*hagios*)
 Heb 2:11 (*hagiazō* [twice]); 3:1 (*hagios*); 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12 (all *hagiazō*)
 1 Pet 1:22 (*hagnizō*)
 2 Pet 1:21 (*hagios*)
 Rev 20:6 (*hagios*)

III. Intrinsic Sanctification (Total = 5)

Rom 6:6 (concept), 22 (*hagiasmos*)
 Eph 5:26 (*hagiazō*)
 Heb 9:14 (*katharizō*)
 Rev 22:11 (*hagios* and *hagiazō*)

IV. Positional Sanctification (Total = 67)

A. Passages Using *Hagiazō* (Total = 3)

Acts 20:32; 26:18
 Jude 1

B. Passages Using *Hagios* (Total = 64)

Acts 9:13, 32, 41; 26:20

Rom 1:7; 8:27; 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15

1 Cor 1:2 (twice); 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:1, 15

2 Cor 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; 13:13

Eph 1:1, 4, 15, 18; 2:19; 3:8, 18; 4:12; 5:3; 6:18

Phil 1:1; 4:21, 22

Col 1:2, 4, 12, 26

1 Thess 3:13; 5:27 (in the Majority Text)

2 Thess 1:10

1 Tim 5:10

2 Tim 1:9

Phlm 5, 7

Heb 6:10; 13:24

Jude 3, 14

Rev 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7, 10; 14:12; 15:3; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24; 19:8; 20:9

Appendix 4

Passages Dealing with Future Sanctification (Total = 3)

Col 1:22 (*hagios*)

Heb 12:14 (*hagiasmos*)

1 John 3:2 (concept)

THE NEW PURITANISM

Part 1:

CARSON ON CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE

ZANE C. HODGES

Associate Editor

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Mesquite, Texas

Introduction to the Series

Over the last year or so a growing number of books and articles has appeared targeting the Free Grace movement for critique and rebuttal. These publications mention the Grace Evangelical Society and its literature. This is a positive development. GES definitely wishes to have its views seriously discussed in the marketplace of ideas.

It might be possible to describe these writings as presenting what is known as “Lordship Salvation.” But this designation, though widely used, does not indicate the true historical antecedents of the movement in its present form. The term could be used with equal ease to describe many who are Arminian in theology. Yet the major “Lordship” writers of today are not Arminian, however much they tend toward conclusions similar to those of Arminians (e.g., on assurance). Instead, these writers describe themselves as Calvinists. But John Calvin himself, were he alive today, would probably disown them because they more closely resemble the scholastic theology that *resisted* the Reformation than Calvin’s own theology.¹

In deference, therefore, to the many Calvinists who hold a biblical theology of grace (e.g., R. T. Kendall, M. Charles Bell, Charles C. Ryrie), we refuse to describe the writers we are talking about as Calvinists. Instead, it would be better to identify them with the theology that became predominant in Puritan thought and which was, in significant respects, a rejection of certain basic concepts of Reformation theology. Hence my series title is “The New (i.e., contemporary) Puritanism.”

¹ For just one of the points on which this seems true, see Paul Holloway, “A Return to Rome: Lordship Salvation’s Doctrine of Faith,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 4 (Autumn 1991): 13-21.

In this series we will consider some of the more significant recent literature produced from this particular theological perspective. In the process we will seek to determine how fairly, and how effectively, these writers have confronted the Free Grace movement.

In a recent issue of the *Westminster Theological Journal* (54 [1992]:1-24), D. A. Carson, a professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL, has written an article entitled, "Reflections on Christian Assurance." Carson is a well-known scholar and a prolific writer. Since his presentation is reasonably well-balanced, it seems logical to begin this series with him.

I. Pejorative Language in Carson

Although a scholarly "distancing" generally prevails in Carson's article, there are a few places where emotive and pejorative language break through. I will mention three such places.

A. Virulent Emphasis

In one place (p. 3) Carson speaks of the Reformation's "virulent emphasis on *sola fide*." The term "virulent" is anything but a compliment, since it can suggest such ideas as "extremely poisonous," "pathogenic," "hateful," "obnoxious," or "harsh" (*The American Heritage Dictionary*). According to Carson this "virulent emphasis on *sola fide* led Luther to see assurance as an element of saving faith"! Moreover, he admits, "The same connection can be found in Calvin" (p. 3).

It turns out, then, that "virulence" is in the eye of the beholder—in this case, Carson. He goes on to point out that, "By contrast, the English Puritans . . . placed more of an emphasis on the role of a transformed life in lending assurance to the Christian mind and conscience" (p. 4). Precisely! And this is the fundamental issue in the debate today. Do we follow the Puritans in making a transformed life the lynch-pin of the doctrine of assurance, or do we concur with the great Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Melancthon) that assurance is "of the essence of" (an indispensable part of) saving faith? For Carson, the latter view is the product of a "virulent emphasis" on *sola fide*!

Let it be frankly admitted that the Free Grace movement today shares the Reformers' emphasis and conviction at this point. Carson's use of

the word “virulent” in connection with this issue suggests an underlying displeasure with, and rejection of, the Reformers’ doctrine of assurance. This is precisely the contemporary mentality of the New Puritanism.²

B. Wretched “Easy Believism”

Not surprisingly, Carson also writes about “the wretched ‘easy believism’ of many in the Western world who, having professed faith, feel no pull toward holiness and no shame when they take the elements” (p. 5). Of course, along with phrases like “cheap grace” and “mental assent,” “easy believism” is one of the jargon terms of the New Puritanism. Hardly ever are these expressions clearly defined and they become little more than religious “cuss words” to hurl at one’s opponents and thus they serve as a substitute for calm and reasoned debate. As the quoted words of Carson show, “easy believism” (whatever it is) is so obviously bad that it can be described as “wretched” without further ado.

But does the rest of Carson’s quote actually define this term? No, not at all. Carson speaks of people who have “professed faith” but are without a holy conscience. Are such persons saved? Not for Carson. But also not necessarily for anyone whom I know of in the Free Grace movement, either! As I have made clear in print, I emphatically do *not* believe that all professions of faith are real. I know of no Free Grace writer who would disagree with me about that.

Why is this? First, to profess faith is not the same as believing, since the profession may be a lie. After all, Paul speaks of “false brethren” down in Jerusalem who apparently only pretended to be Christians (Gal 2:4). But secondly, the content or object of a man’s faith may be false. If the true biblical Gospel is not what is believed, then of course the professed believer has believed something that will not save him. Regrettably, many people believe a “gospel” that is unbiblical. If that is all they have ever believed about the way of salvation, believing it will not save them. We are saved by believing *truth*, not error. That is to say, only the *true* Gospel saves.

²This mentality is by no means a new one. It is reflected clearly in the 19th century by Presbyterian theologian Robert L. Dabney. Dabney frankly states that Calvin and Luther were in error when they made assurance to be of the essence of saving faith. His immediate target was the Plymouth Brethren, who concurred with this view of the Reformers. See the two treatises, “Theology of the Plymouth Brethren,” in *Discussions by Robert L. Dabney*, vol. 1: *Theological and Evangelical*, ed. C. R. Vaughn (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1890), 169-213 and 214-28.

But the statement Carson makes about professed believers is equally fraught with difficulties. Such persons, says Carson, “feel no pull toward holiness and no shame when they take the elements.” Pardon me, but I thought only God could know if a person feels “no pull toward holiness” or “no shame when taking the elements”! Does Carson really mean that they *seem* to have no such ‘pull’ and that they *seem* to have no ‘shame’? But that’s different. It is often true that men hide their innermost feelings and may only *appear* to lack these things. Is Carson talking about cases where, *as far as we can tell*, these things are absent? If not, does Carson know for a fact that such cases as he describes actually exist?

The imprecision here is almost hopeless. The reader cannot tell exactly what the writer means. Does the writer himself know? If so, he’ll have to tell us.

Meanwhile, the phrase “easy believism” (whatever it is!) consists of little more than imprecise code words for who knows what?

C. Happy to Speak of . . .

According to Carson, “Zane Hodges is happy [!] to speak of Christians ceasing to name the name of Christ and denying the faith completely . . .” (p. 28). This comment by Carson is close to being an unethical canard. How could I be “happy” to speak of such things?

Carson might claim that he only meant to say that these matters did not move me to change my theology. But Carson is too sophisticated a writer not to know better than that. The choice of the word *happy* will suggest to some that I maintain a kind of moral indifference to these things. But no one who has ever read any book of mine carefully, can fairly draw such a conclusion. I *do* believe that the Bible teaches that such awful sins can be committed by a Christian. But with biblical writers like Paul (2 Tim 2:16-21) and the author of Hebrews (chaps 6 and 10), I am grieved that this is so. I am *not* happy about it!

Since the writers from the New Puritan school of thought stress the importance of holiness, perhaps they could set us all an example of chaste language which is fair rather than demeaning, relevant rather than *ad hominem*.

II. Concessions by Carson

One positive feature of Carson’s article was his apparent willingness to concede some points that heretofore had been in debate. Of course, it is possible that, from Carson’s viewpoint, none of the matters I list

represent concessions *by him*. But at least, in the items cited, he appears to go against some of the widely-held positions of others in his school of thought.

A. The Debate over Kendall's Work

In his impressive historical study entitled *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: University Press, 1979), R. T. Kendall has argued that, starting with Beza in Geneva and Perkins in England, post-Calvin Calvinism departed from Calvin's own doctrine of faith and assurance. The result was the denial of a fundamental feature of Calvin's doctrine of saving faith: namely, a denial that assurance was of the essence of saving faith.

Carson does not side with those who categorically reject Kendall's position. Indeed, in a carefully nuanced paragraph on this debate (p. 5), Carson begins by saying:

Certainly both sides of this essentially historical debate have full arsenals by which to take on the others' positions.

But he goes on to add that "both sides recognize that the debate is not merely a historical one . . . but a doctrinal one with substantial theological and pastoral implications" (p. 5). Although this sounds like a very modest concession, it is considerably more than that in reality. Considering that many in the New Puritan camp have firmly rejected Kendall's conclusions, Carson's unwillingness to come down clearly on that side of the issue speaks volumes.³

Kendall's thesis about the lack of assurance in Puritanism is relevant at another place in the article (pp. 20-21). There Carson has a lengthy quotation from I. Howard Marshall which ends with the words:

Whoever said, "The Calvinist knows that he cannot fall from salvation but does not know whether he has got it," had it summed up nicely . . . The non-Calvinist knows that he has salvation—because he trusts in the promises of God—but is aware that, left to himself, he could lose it. So he holds to Christ. It seems to me the practical effect is the same.

³ Kendall's thesis was defended against his critics by M. Charles Bell in his doctoral dissertation done for the University of Aberdeen (1982) and published as, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance* (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press, 1985), 13-18. Also helpful in this whole discussion is A.N.S. Lane, "Calvin's Doctrine of Assurance," *Vox Evangelica* 11 (1979): 32-54.

Carson's concession here is grudging: "At a merely *mechanistic* level, I think this analysis is largely correct" (*italics added*). Why "mechanistic"? Surely Marshall's analysis is right on target. Carson's discussion (following the quoted statement on p. 21), is simply an effort to salvage some superiority for the Puritan view over the Arminian one. But doubt, discouragement, and despair are the frequent fruits of a lack of assurance in *both* of these branches of professing Christendom.

B. The Problem of 1 John 3:9

While not citing this verse explicitly, Carson nevertheless has it in mind when (p. 12) he discusses the Apostle John's "insistence that believers do sin" in relation to the fact that, "At the same time, he repeatedly insists that sinning is *not* done amongst Christians." This observation refers especially to the well-known tension between 1 John 1:8 and verses like 3:9 and 5:18.

What is Carson's view of the solution? It is actually a variation of the old "ideal" view. This view antedates the more widely known "tense-solution" that appeals to the use of the present tense in the (alleged) sense of "does not keep on sinning." Instead of the tense view, Carson writes:

Various explanations have been advanced, but the *most obvious* is still the best: although both our experience and our location between the "already" and the "not yet" teach us that we do and will sin, yet every single instance of sin is shocking, inexcusable, forbidden, appalling, out of line with what we are as Christians (p. 12, *italics added*).

Thus does Carson silently reject the "tense solution" which has been by far the most popular one among those holding to the New Puritanism. The present author challenged this view as far back as 1981 and again in the new edition of *The Gospel Under Siege* (1992). I have called this widely-held view an idea whose time has come *and gone!*⁴ It has been abandoned by the most recent major commentators on 1 John: Marshall, Brown, and Smalley.⁵

⁴ *The Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1992), 63-67.

⁵ I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, New International Greek New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982); Stephen S. Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984).

I am not so sanguine as to believe that we will never hear the tense view again from the other side, but with Carson quietly turning his back on it I am tempted to declare victory here for the Free Grace position. After all, we can live with the “ideal” view as easily as Carson does!

Maybe more so.

C. The Greek Verb *Pistēuō* and Its Constructions

In two footnotes at the bottom of p. 17, Carson explodes the reliance some New Puritan writers have placed on the different constructions used with the Greek verb for *believe* (i.e., *pistēuō* used with *eis* plus an accusative and *pistēuō* used with the simple dative). Correctly Carson writes: “In reality, the small variation in form is typical of the Fourth Evangelist, who is well-known for his slight variations without clear-cut semantic distinction.”

So much for another illicit argument that has sometimes been deployed against the Free Grace movement. Sophisticated linguists are not impressed by argumentation from grammatical over-refinements. The current discussion of soteriology will be greatly enhanced if we dispense with such over-refinements altogether.

III. “In-House” Interpretations by Carson

While the “concessions” mentioned above are to be valued, Carson nevertheless exhibits many “in-house” interpretations. By “in-house” I mean that they are quite common in the New Puritanism and are sometimes put forward as if they were self-evident. Space does not permit us to do more than mention a couple of these. In any case most of them are dealt with in my books, especially, *The Gospel Under Siege* (2nd ed., 1992).

A. Second Peter 1:10 and Assurance

Carson apparently takes this verse as most others in his school do (namely, as a call to perform good works so as to have reason to be sure of one’s election), but his reference to this text is too brief to bear discussion here (p. 2). Of course, Calvin did not take 2 Pet 1:10 in this way,⁶ nor is there any real reason to regard the text as relevant to one’s

⁶ Calvin, *Comm.* 1 Peter 1:10. M. Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology*, writes: “Even with regard to 2 Peter 1:10 (which was used by later Calvinists to justify the use of the practical syllogism [= testing one’s faith by one’s works]), Calvin refuses to refer this to man’s conscience as a means of discerning the certainty of our salvation” (p. 29).

own inward assurance. Peter no doubt has demonstration to men, not to oneself, in view. In this sense, before the world, we *verify* our call and election by our lifestyle.

B. First Corinthians 3:1-4 and the Carnal Christian

As expected, Carson does not much like the distinction between "spiritual" and "carnal" Christians, though Paul plainly makes *some kind of* distinction in these verses, as Carson recognizes. What Carson appears to object to is "an absolute, qualitative distinction" between these categories (p. 9). But who in the Free Grace movement carries the distinction *that far*?

Since Paul compares carnality with babyhood (3:1), might we not ask whether to make a distinction between "babies" and "mature" people would also be making an "absolute, qualitative distinction" in the natural realm? If not (or even if so!), can we not also distinguish spiritual infants from the spiritually mature?

But Carson seems also to be worried about the term *carnal* being applied to "someone who made a profession of faith, followed the way of Christ for a few months, and then lived in a manner indistinguishable from that of any pagan for the next fifteen years, despite conscientious pastoral interest" (p. 9). Yet here again we encounter the same confusion we met in Carson's treatment of "easy believism." Since Carson does not tell us what exactly the so-called profession of faith rested on, we have no way of knowing whether such a case is one over which we might disagree.

And why fifteen years? Would the case have the same meaning for Carson if the time covered were only ten years? Five years? Two? One? New Puritanism shows an understandable reluctance to address particulars of this sort, since addressing them will show how arbitrary examples like Carson's are. Almost always the so-called examples are painted in such lurid and extreme colors that one never hears of the shades of gray that pastors on the field actually encounter.

And once more we meet the "fudge factor" of appearance versus reality. The case Carson hypothesizes is of a professed believer living "in a manner indistinguishable from any pagan." Indistinguishable to whom? To God? Or to the New Puritans? Those are *not* the same thing!

Here it is easy to detect the "eagerness" with which New Puritan theology is ready to pronounce on cases of profession which are not followed by the fruits thought appropriate by New Puritanism. The proponents of this theology are anxious to rule on cases that they

consider obvious, even though God may well know facts about real-life cases which can never be known by finite man and which would significantly alter man's assessment if they *could* be known.

Carson's comments on false professions are all to be regarded as constructing arbitrary straw men which serve only to avoid the tougher questions at issue.

Finally, in his treatment of carnality, Carson errs in what apparently is supposed to be the Free Grace position (p. 10). He states:

It [1 Corinthians 3] does not encourage us to think that it is possible to accept Jesus as Savior, and thus be promoted from the "natural" to the "carnal" level, in transit, as it were, to the "spiritual" stage, at which point one has accepted Jesus as Lord.

Carson offers us no documentation for such a view. I for one do not know where he can find any. This looks to me like a mere caricature which has been created in Carson's thinking by a flawed idea of what his opponents teach.

Carnality, in my view, is spiritual babyhood (1 Cor 3:1). It has nothing to do with the acceptance of Jesus as Lord any more than a child's infancy has anything to do with his "acceptance" of the authority of his father. The carnal Christian may well recognize (as the Corinthians obviously did) the lordship of Christ. They were simply too immature to behave in a spiritual way and the Apostle Paul is asking them to face the true character of their conduct.

In the quoted statement, I see no resemblance between Carson's statements and the Free Grace position. Without the proper documentation, Carson's comments look like another straw man.

IV. Carson and GES

Carson is well aware of the existence of the Grace Evangelical Society and introduces us to his readers under a heading referring to "*a small but vociferous segment of evangelicalism*" (p. 5, italics original). I suppose a warm welcome to the evangelical scene was more than we could have expected from this writer. Why we are regarded as any more "vociferous" than the New Puritans themselves (if indeed we are so regarded) is a point that escapes me. No doubt the liberal media and elite regard politically active conservatives as "vociferous" too. But such pejorative terms are not likely to silence either them or us.

Carson incorrectly lumps all GES adherents together when he describes "our" view on repentance (p. 6). He writes:

In the view of Hodges and his colleagues, trusting Jesus as Savior is all that is required for salvation. "Repentance," in their view, must be understood in a narrowly etymological sense: it is a mental "change of mind" that accepts Jesus as Savior, but entails no necessary sorrow over sin or turning away from it.

Actually this is not my view at all, though it *is* the view of many of my fellow GES colleagues. My own view is carefully explained in my book, *Absolutely Free!*, in the longest chapter (chap 12, pp. 143-63), entitled "Repentance."⁷ Carson has not done his homework here.

Interestingly, Carson later claims that "it would take too much space . . . to demonstrate the methodological flaws inherent in Hodges' treatment of repentance" (p. 12). Perhaps so. But in any case he should first *read* those views with enough care to get them right!

In discussing the Parable of the Soils (Mark 4:1-20), Carson (evidently) adopts the standard view within the New Puritanism that the first three soils represent the non-elect (see pp. 18-19). But he goes on to say that "several popular interpreters with the Grace Evangelical Society find this so uncomfortable that they reinterpret the parable" (p. 19). I suppose we *are* uncomfortable with the New Puritan approach to this parable, but only because it does not appear to square with the text.

In fact, Carson's treatment of the parable is so imprecise in its terminology that others from his camp may be uncomfortable, too, when they read it. He notes, for example, that in the parable "two of the three fruitless soils sprout life" (p. 19). A few lines further down he states (of the seed on rocky ground) that "this spiritual life proves transitory."

What can this possibly mean? Does "spiritual life" here equal eternal life? If so, how can it prove transitory unless, after all, the Arminians are right! (A conclusion we do not really entertain!) But if it is not *eternal* life, what is it? Is there *another* kind of spiritual life? Carson does not tell us.

But our understanding is further darkened when Carson goes on to write (further down on p. 19) that to hold the GES view of the parable would mean "introducing a category for spiritual life that is nevertheless fruitless" and that to do so "is simply alien to the concerns of the chapter, and contrary to one of the driving motifs of all three Synoptic Gospels."

⁷ *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation* (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1989).

But if *we* introduce a category of life that is fruitless (actually we do not), has not Carson himself introduced a category of spiritual life that is transitory and not eternal? Is this not a case of the pot calling the kettle black?

Actually, in the parable, the sprouts and the stunted grain of the middle two soils ought not to be called “spiritual life” at all. Instead, they are the *manifestations* of spiritual life. But *the life* is inherent in *the seed* which symbolizes the Word of God (Mark 4:14; see 1 Pet 1:22-25). As long as the seed remains in the soil (in the last three soils it *does* remain) *life is there*. Only its manifestations are lost in the rocky soil.

This is a perfectly straightforward view of the parable which should make no one uncomfortable unless (as is true in Carson’s case) it contradicts his theology!

I am happy that Carson has discovered GES. Perhaps the next time he writes about us he could aim for a higher level of scholarly precision.

V. Carson and “Compatibilism”

In an extended section (pp. 21-26), Carson has appealed to what he calls “compatibilism.” Compatibilism, he claims, deals with the vexed question of the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human responsibility (p. 22).⁸ “Modern compatibilists,” he claims, “. . . do not try to show how the two propositions hold together” (pp. 23-24), and “compatibilism touches many subjects: election, the problem of suffering, the nature of prayer, and much else. What is not often recognized is that it bears directly on the nature of Christian assurance” (p. 25).

There follows a crucial statement by Carson (pp. 25-26):

For, on the one hand, we are dealing with a plethora of texts that promise God’s sovereign commitment to preserve His own elect; on the other, believers are enjoined to persevere in faithfulness to the new covenant and the Lord of the covenant, to the calling by which they were called. This is nothing other than God’s sovereignty and human responsibility dressed up in another form.

So we will, I think, always have some mystery.

⁸The famous (alleged) tension between the doctrines of divine sovereignty and human responsibility has been called by others an irresolvable paradox, or an antinomy. “Compatibilism” is Carson’s term for this, by which he means that these doctrines “are mutually compatible” even though they cannot be totally harmonized. See his discussion on p. 22.

The fallacy of this approach, however, is that it is dictated by Carson's own view of faith and assurance as being somehow related to perseverance in holiness. Since Carson shows no serious inclination to re-examine this premise of his own theology, he is left with the very tensions he claims must be handled by compatibilism. But even after these tensions are waved aside by Carson, what is left is *not* assurance at all.

What is left, in fact, is the *idée fixe* of the New Puritanism: namely, that the passages which command "faithfulness to the new covenant and to the Lord of the covenant" must be tied in with soteriological concerns. As long as this flawed premise is held to, adherents of Puritan thought can still not have genuine assurance.

If "assurance" were indeed a mystery, then it would be a deeply disquieting mystery to those who need assurance the most. Does Dr. Carson know beyond question that he himself is regenerate? If so, let him tell us *how* he knows.

The compatibilist cannot have a mystery and a confident answer too!

VI. Conclusion

There is certainly much more that can be said about the specific matters which appear in Carson's article, but space does not permit this. To respond to everything in Carson's discussion would almost require that our book, *The Gospel Under Siege* (2nd ed.) be reprinted here. The reader who wishes more discussion of the specific passages brought forward by Carson will find most of them addressed in that book or in *Absolutely Free! A Biblical Reply to Lordship Salvation*.⁹

Let us here simply examine one of Carson's final, concluding observations. On the final page of his article he writes:

I have not argued that perseverance is the basis for assurance; rather, I have argued that failure to persevere undermines assurance. The *basis* of assurance is Christ and His work and its entailments (*italics his*).

This comes close to double-speak. *Of course*, New Puritan thought makes Christ and His work the *basis* of assurance even as they make it the *basis* of salvation. The trouble is that in New Puritanism one cannot *find* real assurance in Christ and His work (as Calvin so clearly taught

⁹ Ed. note: Both of Hodges's books mentioned above may be obtained by writing or calling Redención Viva, P. O. Box 141167, Dallas, TX 75214; phone: (214) 821-5357.

that we could!), for any such supposed assurance is invalidated by the possibility that one may fail to persevere.

Thus the “failure to persevere” does more than to “undermine assurance” *after* the failure appears. It also undermines it *up front* as well, so that someone who believes in Puritan theology cannot be truly sure of salvation even at the supposed moment of conversion. And, indeed, he can never be sure before death, because only death forecloses the possibility of his “falling away.”

I want to remind Carson that for Calvin such a person was not saved at all. In treating 2 Cor 13:5 (a favorite New Puritan text) Calvin writes:

Second, *this passage serves to prove the assurance of faith* [italics added], a doctrine which the sophists of the Sorbonne have so corrupted for us that it is now almost uprooted from the minds of men. They hold that it is rash temerity to be persuaded that we are members of Christ and have Him dwelling in us, and they bid us rest content with a moral conjecture, which is a mere opinion, so that our consciences remain perpetually undecided and perplexed. But what does Paul say here? *He declares that those who doubt their possession of Christ are reprobates* [italics added]. Let us therefore understand that the only true faith is that which allows us to rest in God’s grace, not with a dubious opinion but *with firm and steadfast assurance* [italics added]. See *Comm.* 2 Corinthians 13:5.

Even if we demur, as I do, from Calvin’s precise exposition of this Pauline text, Calvin’s firm insistence that assurance is of the essence of true saving faith is quite plain here. He makes the same point in many other places as well.

The Grace Evangelical Society agrees with Calvin’s conviction that saving faith, whenever it is exercised, carries with it a firm assurance. Apparently the New Puritans agree with “the sophists of the Sorbonne”!

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

CHARLES C. BING

Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Pastor, Burleson Bible Church

Burleson, Texas

Discipleship is costly. The Scriptures are clear that to be a disciple in the fullest sense of the term means that a person must pay a price. There is no view of discipleship which would disagree with this conclusion. However, the disagreement comes over whether the conditions for costly discipleship are also conditions for salvation. This critical difference is the subject of this third and last article in my series on discipleship.

I. The Issue

If the conditions of discipleship are also conditions of salvation, then every Christian is, by definition, a disciple, and salvation, by definition, is costly. If these conditions are not conditions for salvation, then the issue of discipleship must be distinguished from the issue of salvation so that discipleship is truly costly and salvation, truly free. We will now survey the two opposing views.

A. The "Costly Grace" View

The view that salvation is costly received its modern impetus from the German theologian and activist Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who expressed his views in the book *The Cost of Discipleship*, first published in English in 1949. He wrote of "costly grace" as opposed to "cheap grace," which he described as "Grace without price; grace without cost," or "grace without discipleship."¹ To him, costly grace is inseparable from

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1963), 45, 47. Bonhoeffer's view of grace seemed more shaped by his experience than by biblical exegesis. His book, first published in 1937 and in English in 1949, was prompted by the accommodation of the church in Germany to Hitler. He was concerned about those members of the state church who presumed they were going to heaven but gave little or no place to the lordship of Christ in their daily affairs or their political stance.

discipleship:

The only man who has the right to say that he is justified by grace alone is the man who left all to follow Christ. Such a man knows that the call to discipleship is a gift of grace, and that the call is inseparable from grace.²

Bonhoeffer's concept of "costly grace" has appealed to many who think it is the answer to the apathy and worldliness of contemporary Christians. The proponents of Lordship Salvation have naturally taken interest in costly discipleship as a solution to the growing number of people who profess to be Christians but who do not live up to their profession. Poe states, "The concern for discipleship did not emerge as a theoretical concept in an academic setting, rather it resulted from the phenomenon of people claiming to be Christians who have no interest in the things of Christ."³ Lordship proponents solve this problem by demanding that sinners pay a price for their salvation, the price of submission and obedience. J. I. Packer's statement exemplifies the Lordship position:

In our own presentation of Christ's gospel, therefore, we need to lay a similar stress on the cost of following Christ, and make sinners face it soberly before we urge them to respond to the message of free forgiveness. In common honesty, we must not conceal the fact that free forgiveness in one sense will cost everything.⁴

In their thinking, the cost of salvation includes the many conditions

² Ibid., 55.

³ Harry L. Poe, "Evangelism and Discipleship," in *Evangelism in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Thom. S. Rainer, 133-44 (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1989), 136. It is disturbing that Lordship theology appears to originate more from pragmatics than from biblical and theological inquiry. Books by Lordship Salvation teachers consistently begin with a statement of the problem of worldly Christians as a justification for a costly Gospel (e.g., James Montgomery Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship* [Chicago: Moody Press, 1986], 13; Walter J. Chantry, *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970; Reprint, 1985], 13-14; John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According to Jesus* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988], 16). If the majority of Christians were living committed lives, one wonders if there would be a "problem" with the Gospel message at all.

⁴ J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1961), 73.

laid down by Christ for becoming a disciple, since in their opinion, salvation and discipleship are one and the same.⁵

Though Lordship proponents have no reservations about calling salvation costly, they maintain adamantly that salvation is not of works, but a free gift. The “costly but free” contradiction is explained as a theological “paradox.”⁶

B. The “Free Grace” View

It is difficult for those who oppose the concept of “costly grace” to understand how its proponents do not teach works salvation, or at the least, how they are not engaging in theological double-talk. Though labeled a position of “cheap grace” by Lordship Salvation teachers, we prefer to call our position more accurately *Free Grace* because it emphasizes the freeness of salvation and the simplicity of faith.⁷

The Free Grace position holds that salvation and discipleship are separate issues. Salvation concerns the *sinner’s* acceptance of the free gift of eternal life and the forgiveness of sins through faith alone. Discipleship concerns the *believer’s* response to the grace received by offering himself to God in submission, obedience, and sacrifice. In salvation, Christ paid

⁵ E.g., MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 29-30, 196-98; Boice, *Discipleship*, 13-23; Kenneth L. Gentry, “The Great Option: A Study of the Lordship Controversy,” *Baptist Reformation Review* 5 (Spring 1976), 76.

⁶ MacArthur writes, “Eternal life is indeed a free gift (Romans 6:23). Salvation cannot be earned with good deeds or purchased with money. It has already been bought by Christ, who paid the ransom with his blood. But that does not mean there is no cost in terms of salvation’s impact on the sinner’s life. This paradox may be difficult but it is nevertheless true: salvation is both free and costly” (MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 140). It is not clear what MacArthur means by “cost in terms of salvation’s impact on the sinner’s life.” Here he seems to be saying that the effect (“impact”) of salvation *after* it is received exacts a price of obedience, surrender, etc., from the one who was saved. If this is the case, then the reception of the gift of salvation should still be spoken of as free; it is only subsequent sanctification that is costly. This would not present a paradox at all.

⁷ The term “Free Grace” may seem superfluous to those who believe that grace by definition is a free and undeserved gift. However, the debate has forced the articulation. It has clarifying value in a controversy where “costly grace” has become the cornerstone term of the opposing Lordship Salvation position. The reader is reminded that the same thing happened in the inerrancy debate so that the term “Word of God” became insufficient in the articulation of the verbal inerrantists’ position and so evolved into “inspired Word of God,” “inerrant inspired Word of God,” and “inerrant verbally inspired Word of God,” all of which are redundant or superfluous to one who believes that the Bible is without error!

the price; in discipleship, the believer pays the price. Therefore, salvation is free, but discipleship is costly. Because they are separate issues, there is no contradiction.

In the previous articles of this series, we have defended the Free Grace view that discipleship is separate from salvation.⁸ This was done by studying the terms for discipleship in the NT and by showing that the call to *salvation* is not the same as the call to *discipleship*. This article will study the conditions for becoming a disciple in the Gospels and will show that they cannot be conditions for salvation.

II. The Conditions of Discipleship

The teachings of Jesus Christ make it plain that discipleship is costly. The matter to be determined is whether the passages which specify the cost of discipleship speak of the requirements for salvation or of a post-salvation commitment to our Lord. The basic conditions of discipleship were given by Christ after Peter's well-known confession and Christ's prediction of His death and resurrection and the story of His transfiguration. The focus of this section will be largely upon the parallel passages Matt 16:24-27, Mark 8:34-38, and Luke 9:23-26. Other conditions discussed are those found in Matt 10:37//Luke 14:26; Luke 14:33; and John 8:30-31.

A. The Conditions at Peter's Confession,

Matthew 16:24-27//Mark 8:34-38//Luke 9:23-26

Before the conditions themselves are studied, a consideration of their context will be valuable. The occasion and audience will help determine the purposes of Jesus' hard sayings about discipleship.

1. The Background

The Lordship interpretation of Jesus' teaching about discipleship assumes an evangelistic occasion.⁹ The context shows that the occasion of these sayings is significantly linked to the prediction of Christ's passion and resurrection and His rebuke of Peter. Matthew and Mark's account record Peter's rebuke of Christ and Christ's response: "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of

⁸ Charles C. Bing, "Coming to Terms with Discipleship," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society* 5 (Spring 1992), 35-49, and "The Making of a Disciple," *JOTGES* 5 (Autumn 1992), 27-43.

⁹ E.g., see MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 30.

the things of God, but the things of men" (Matt 16:23//Mark 8:33).

Jesus' rebuke demonstrates to the disciples that He must suffer and be killed as part of God's will for Him (Matt 16:21//Mark 8:31//Luke 9:22). There was, for Christ, a price to be paid in following God's will to completion and His own glorification. Peter's rebuke of Christ essentially denies that God's will requires such a price. Jesus' subsequent rebuke categorizes this perspective as satanic.

The conditions of discipleship then follow contextually ("Then" [Tote], Matt 16:24) as the price which must be paid to follow the will of God to completion and share in Christ's glory.¹⁰ In view of the Lord's imminent death, departure, and glorification,¹¹ these conditions show the way by which the will of God can be fully realized in Christ's absence.

The audience is also significant. Matthew indicates that Jesus addressed His sayings to none other than the twelve disciples (Matt 16:24). Mark says that Jesus "called the people (*ochlos*) to Him, with His disciples also" (Mark 8:34). The *crowd* is not specifically identified, but in Mark's use of *ochlos*, when there is enough evidence to determine their disposition, the crowd with Jesus is presented as at least curious enough to follow Him. More often, they are characterized as enthusiastic followers, teachable, exhibiting faith in their midst, and sometimes seeming totally sympathetic to Christ as if they were believers.¹² Luke records that Jesus spoke "to them all" (Luke 9:23), the nearest antecedent of which is the Twelve (Luke 9:18),¹³ but possibly He spoke to the Twelve *and* the

¹⁰ See Herman N. Ridderbos, *Matthew*, transl. Ray Tognman, The Bible Student's Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 312.

¹¹ That the transfiguration occurs immediately after these pronouncements about discipleship in all three accounts reinforces the idea of the completion of God's will which brings glorification. Jesus' glorification looks forward to His consummate glory in the kingdom, achieved through His costly obedience.

¹² For further discussion on the significance of *ochlos*, see Charles C. Bing, *Lordship Salvation: A Biblical Evaluation and Response* (Th.D. dissertation, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1991), 247-48. William L. Lane comments on Mark 8:34: "By calling the crowd Jesus indicates that the conditions for following him are relevant for all believers, and not for the disciples alone." William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 306.

¹³ The parallel conditions of Matthew 10 are stated to the Twelve (Matt 10:5), while a different passage, Luke 14:26ff., is addressed to the "great multitudes" who "went with Him" (Luke 14:25).

multitudes.¹⁴ In Luke 12:1 Jesus is described as teaching His disciples “first” in the presence of an “innumerable multitude.” It is therefore reasonable to assume that in the Synoptics, when Jesus spoke to the multitudes (who to various degrees were followers), He was first teaching His twelve disciples, and secondarily His other followers.

If Jesus addressed primarily His twelve disciples, who (except for Judas¹⁵) were definitely saved, and the crowds who were at least sympathetic or at most contained many followers whose exact commitment to Christ is left undefined, then it is reasonable to assume these sayings should apply to the issues of a deeper relationship with Him and not to salvation. It would be pointless for the Synoptic authors (especially Matthew) to focus on the disciples if these were conditions of salvation.¹⁶ We would expect such conditions to be announced when the disciples first met Jesus. A brief examination of each of these conditions will demonstrate whether they apply more appropriately to the Christian life or to salvation.

2. The Conditions

The conditions must be interpreted in light of the preceding prediction of Jesus’ suffering and death. As it cost Jesus to follow the Father’s will, so it would cost His disciples to do the same. As we shall see, sometimes there is agreement about the substance of the condition on the part of Lordship and Free Grace expositors. But the focus of the debate is on whether these are conditions for salvation or for a deeper commitment of discipleship.

¹⁴ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke*. The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 248. The portrayal of the multitudes in general in Luke is very similar to Mark’s, although a few times Luke shows Christ’s antagonists associated with the term *ochlos* (cf. 3:7 [but see v. 10]; 5:29; 11:14–15; 12:54–56). Interestingly, Luke sometimes shows that there was a large number (*ochlos*) of “disciples” (6:17; 7:11).

¹⁵ John 2:11 confirms that the early disciples had believed in Christ. More contextually relevant, the vicarious confession of Peter, which precedes the pericope under consideration, represents the disciples’ faith in Jesus as the messianic Savior and the divine Son of God (Matt 16:16//Mark 8:29//Luke 9:20).

¹⁶ One might argue that it is equally pointless to declare the conditions of discipleship to those already called disciples. However, this ignores the progression of revelation which accompanied and characterized Jesus’ ministry. Jesus consistently challenged His followers to a greater commitment to the will of God regardless of their present status. The disciple was always becoming more fully a disciple. This was the thesis of the second article in our series.

Also, it should be noted that the requirements are for anyone who desires to "come after" Christ (Matt 16:24//Mark 8:34//Luke 9:23). As noted in previous articles, "come after" (*opisō elthein*) denotes discipleship. It clearly describes a process, not an event; a committed life of following *after* Jesus rather than coming *to* (*proselthein*) Him for salvation.¹⁷ The conditions for those who would "come after" Christ will be considered individually, then collectively.

"*Deny himself.*" This is best interpreted by what the disciples have just heard about Christ's fate. Jesus was about to submit Himself and His own desires to the desire of the Father for Him, which was suffering and death. To deny oneself refers contextually to being mindful of the things of God, not the things of man (Matt 16:23//Mark 8:33). In Stott's understanding, one "must repudiate himself and his right to organize his own life."¹⁸ Gentry argues the significance in relation to salvation: "A person who truly receives Christ as Savior is in effect denying himself and his wants as nothing and Christ as everything."¹⁹

While Stott and Gentry understand the substance of the saying, their application of this condition to salvation does not coincide with the real issue in salvation, which is the forgiveness of sin and justification of the sinner. But in harmony with the context, Jesus is not addressing these issues here. He speaks of denying oneself that which would obstruct the fulfillment of God's will in the course of following Him. In the passages that deal unquestionably with eternal salvation, there is no mention of self-denial, or one's "right to organize his own life," or one's "denying himself his wants" as a requirement for salvation.

"*Take up his cross.*" Stott argues that to take up the cross is to make oneself as a condemned man, apparently in the sense of living for Christ instead of self.²⁰ Boice sees cross-bearing as "saying yes to something for Jesus' sake." Specifically, Boice declares that cross-bearing involves prayer, Bible study, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, receiving strangers, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, and witnessing.²¹ In light of the context, it appears that Jesus

¹⁷ See Bing, "Coming to Terms," *JOTGES* 5, 39-40, and "The Making of a Disciple," 5, 39.

¹⁸ John R. W. Stott, "Must Christ Be Lord to Be Savior?—Yes," *Eternity* 10 (September 1959), 18.

¹⁹ Gentry, "The Great Option," *BRR* 5:174.

²⁰ Stott, "Yes," *Eternity* 10, 18.

²¹ Boice, *Discipleship*, 40.

is expecting the disciples to suffer hardships in order to do God's will just as He does by submitting to the Cross. For Him and for the disciples, it meant they were like men condemned to die, who carry their cross-beams to the place of execution in submission to a higher authority.²² If this is applied to unbelievers, then the Gospel message is a demand to be willing to die for Jesus.

Stott's interpretation and Gentry's practical considerations may be correct, but that they refer to a condition of salvation for unbelievers is untenable, for then salvation would be by suffering, by a willingness to die for Christ, and thus by works, as Boice's particulars demonstrate. This contradicts the Scriptures which speak of the necessity of *Jesus Christ* suffering so that sinners could be saved apart from works.²³ The sinner's willingness to suffer is not a condition of justification. Also, the unbeliever has no cross in the sense of self-mortification (contra Stott), for he is already dead in sins (Eph. 2:1-2); nor do unbelievers, by definition, have a cross in the sense of Christian duties (contra Boice).

Furthermore, Luke adds the qualifier "daily," which shows this could not refer to salvation because it refers to something that is done repeatedly. Stott is right when he declares, "Every day the Christian is to die. Every day he renounces the sovereignty of his own will. Every day he renews his unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ."²⁴ But Stott speaks here of "the Christian."²⁵ If this characterizes saving faith and is a condition for salvation, as Lordship proponents insist, one must repeatedly place his faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord through daily

²² Lane, *Mark*, 307-308.

²³ Cf. Acts 3:18; 17:3; 26:23; Rom 5:6-10; Col 1:21-22; Heb 13:12; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 3:18. A Lordship advocate might respond that these demands are not to be done in prospect of salvation, but in retrospect as the necessary proof of salvation and perseverance. We must then ask why they declare them *conditions* of salvation integral to the Gospel itself and to be preached to unbelievers. We can only assume they mean what they say when they write, for example, "Let me say again unequivocally that Jesus' summons to deny self and follow Him was an invitation to salvation" (MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 196), or, "In our own presentation of Christ's gospel, therefore, we need to lay a similar stress on the cost of following Christ, and make sinners face it soberly before we urge them to respond to the message of free forgiveness" (Packer, *Evangelism*, 73). Clearly, stated like this, works are required for salvation in Lordship theology.

²⁴ John R. W. Stott, *Basic Christianity* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1958), 114. See also, Boice, *Discipleship*, 42; and MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 202.

²⁵ This is inconsistent with his application of this passage to unbelievers and confusing in the context of his discussion about salvation. See *Basic Christianity*, 114, and "Yes," *Eternity* 10, 18.

surrender. In other words, salvation would not occur at a point in time. Such a condition is not found elsewhere in the Bible and makes both salvation and assurance impossible.

"Follow Me." As discussed in both previous articles, this phrase speaks of discipleship and denotes the pupil/master relationship. Here Jesus invests the term with the significance of following Him by obeying God's will, that is, by self-denial and taking up the cross, as Stott agrees.²⁶ Because following another person is a process, a progression, and requires time, this condition cannot speak of entrance into salvation. This would promote salvation by the imitation of Christ or by adherence to His example, which would be a salvation of works. It is best taken as a term that describes a continuously committed lifestyle.

"Loses his life." An explanatory statement ("For") follows the three conditions. Jesus says, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:24; cf. Matt 16:25//Mark 8:35; and Matt 10:39). To lose one's life explains in summary form what it means to deny oneself, take up one's cross, and follow Jesus Christ in submission to God's will. The background of Jesus losing His life physically (on the Cross) and thus metaphorically (to the will of God) has been observed in the previous context (Matt 16:21//Mark 8:31//Luke 9:22). Therefore, those who are to be disciples must also lose their lives to the will of God. This will involve the three conditions just mentioned: denial of one's own desires, suffering in obedience, and continuous following of Christ in the will of God.

The denial of one's own desires in order to obey the will of God is amplified by the following rhetorical question: "For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt 16:26; cf. Mark 8:36//Luke 9:25). If a man chose *not* to deny himself and *not* to pursue the will of God, but to pursue his own selfish and worldly desires, he would lose his soul (i.e., his life).

Here some point to the phrase "save his life" and "loses his own soul," and the consequence "destroyed" or "lost" (in Luke) to say that the passage speaks of eternal salvation.²⁷ However, the verb *save* (*sōzō*) often

²⁶ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 114. Also, I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*. The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1978), 374.

²⁷ Gentry, "The Great Option," *BRR* 5, 75; Boice, *Discipleship*, 38; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 201-202.

does not refer to eternal salvation. It is probably used here in the general sense of "rescue, preserve from danger"²⁸ or "deliver,"²⁹ i.e., save from a life of self-denial and cross-bearing,³⁰ for this thought explains ("For," *gar*) the impact of the previous conditions.

Likewise, "life" (*psychē*) does not automatically refer to the eternal soul only. The parallel in Luke 9:25 replaces Matthew and Mark's "life" with "himself" (*heauton*). The noun *psychē* is frequently used in Scripture in the sense of the essential life of man. Contrary to other Lordship proponents, Stott recognizes this meaning. Speaking of the word *psychē* he correctly observes,

The word for "life" here means neither our physical existence, nor our soul, but our self. The *psychē* is the ego, the human personality which thinks, feels, plans and chooses . . . The man who commits himself to Christ, therefore, loses himself, not by the absorption of his personality in Christ's personality but by the submission of his will to Christ's will.³¹

Furthermore, unless the context is clearly proved to be soteriological, the verbs "destroyed" (*apollymi* in Matthew) and "lost" (*zēmioō*, in Matthew and Luke) should retain their respective general meanings of "ruin, destroy, lose"³² and "suffer damage or loss, forfeit, sustain injury."³³ When Jesus says "whoever loses his life for My sake," the sense is certainly not eternal destruction, for He says this one will then "find it," which is something good. Conversely, it fits well that what one may lose when he tries to save his life (preserve himself from the hardships

²⁸ So R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 645.

²⁹ See the discussion in Zane C. Hodges, *The Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd ed. revised and enlarged (Dallas: Redención Viva, 1992), 96-101.

³⁰ So M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1899), 175; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), 350.

³¹ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 114. See also the NIV translation "self" in Luke 9:25.

³² Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), s.v. "*apollymi*," 94-95. A majority of uses in the NT are clearly not soteriological.

³³ *Ibid.*, s.v. "*zēmioō*," 339. Instances of its use in other passages never speak of eternal destruction. One eschatological use refers to a believer who "suffers loss" yet is "saved" eternally (1 Cor 3:15).

of self-denial and cross-bearing) is life in the essential qualitative sense (i.e., experiencing God's life in this life, John 17:3), not the eternal soul.

The paradox Jesus used has great meaning. What He appears to be saying is this: "Whoever desires to preserve himself from the hardships of God's will of self-denial and cross-bearing will in fact forfeit the essential quality (= true spiritual value) of the present life he is trying to preserve. On the other hand, whoever forfeits himself to God's will of self-denial and hardships will discover the greater essential quality (spiritual value) of the present life he was willing to forfeit." This interpretation would therefore not describe eternal salvation, but a higher quality of experience with God in this life, with implications for the eschatological life, as the next section will show.

"Whoever is ashamed of Me." Mark and Luke state a negative condition that if anyone is ashamed of Christ and His words, Christ will also be ashamed of that person at His coming (Mark 8:38//Luke 9:26). Matthew 16:27 does not mention shame, but can be correlated with Matt 10:32-33,³⁴ where the condition is stated in terms of confessing and denying Christ,³⁵ and is claimed to be a condition of salvation by Lordship teachers.³⁶

The idea of being ashamed of Christ or denying Christ is clarified in some contexts more than in others. In Luke this saying follows a warning about one who positions himself with the world for the sake of gain (Luke 9:25). It thus explains ("For," *gar*) the eschatological consequences which face those who desire the world. The same could be said of this saying in Mark 8:38, with the exception that Jesus adds the helpful phrase "in this adulterous and sinful generation." The shame therefore seems to imply a denial of one's identification with Christ in the face of the pressure to live for and identify with the world. In Mark the "For" appears to connect v 38 with v 35, expanding the idea of one's relation to this world and its consequences.

Perhaps the greatest clarification comes from the parallel thought of Matt 10:32-33, where the context is developed more fully. There Jesus is giving instructions to the Twelve before sending them out to preach

³⁴ As Stott (*Basic Christianity*, 117) suggests..

³⁵ Matthew's use of *arneōmai*, "deny," basically conveys little different meaning from Mark and Luke's use of *epaischynomai*, "be ashamed." See Marshall, *Luke*, 377.

³⁶ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 117; Boice, *Discipleship*, 117; MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 198-200.

the Gospel (Matt 10:5ff.). He warns of rejection and persecution (vv 16-25) and encourages them not to fear (vv 26-31). Verses 32-33 are also followed by similar warnings about rejection (vv 34-36). In vv 32-33 Jesus is both encouraging and warning in the face of the fear of persecution. He wants the disciples to know that anyone who identifies with Him will be rewarded, while anyone who shrinks from this will be denied by Christ before the Father (explained below). Matthew's context seems a close parallel to that which is signified by Mark's phrase "in this adulterous and sinful generation" (Mark 8:38).

The consequence facing someone who is ashamed of or denies Christ is more enigmatic. Does Christ's reciprocal shame and denial of that person at His coming denote a denial of salvation? In correlating Matt 10:32-33 with 16:27, it is clear that the issue is some kind of recompense for one's works. Matthew takes care to state that at His coming, Christ "will reward (*apodōsei*) each according to his works" (16:27). That Jesus makes works the basis of the recompense demands that salvation not be the issue (Eph 2:8-9). Also, the verb *apodōsei* carries the idea of "recompense" with no inherent sense of whether it is good or bad, so it could speak of positive reward or negative judgment.³⁷ In Mark and Luke a negative recompense is suggested: Those who were too ashamed to identify with Christ will experience Christ's shame. The effect of Christ's shame is not specified, but one could surmise that for a redeemed and now fully-enlightened believer, this would at least produce agonizing regret. In the parallel passage, Matt 10:32-33, the idea of recompense is good (v 32) or bad (v 33) accordingly.³⁸ Christ's confession (or lack of it) in heaven would not relate to the judgment of our salvation, but to an acknowledgment (or lack of it) before the Father of the disciples' unity

³⁷ *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "*apodidōmi*," 89-90. For clear examples of a good reward, see Matt 6:4, 6, 18.

³⁸ Recompense, and not salvation specifically, seems to be the context for Matthew's mention of confessing Christ in 10:32-33. As discussed, the context warns of persecution and rejection (Matt. 10:16-31; 34-36). In such persecution, those who shrink from confessing Christ will be denied the reward of Christ confessing them before the Father in heaven (10:32-33). Furthermore, the issue of one's worthiness (10:37-39) implies the idea of merit, which implies either reward or lack of reward. Jesus then spoke of rewards for those who were not ashamed of identifying with Him and His disciples (10:40-42; cf. 5:11-12). In vv 41 and 42 Jesus uses the word *misthos*, which in the majority of its NT usages denotes a positive "wage" or "reward" (*A Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "*misthos*," 525).

or fellowship with Christ³⁹ which is recompensed in an unspecified but appropriate way. (However, one might compare 2 Tim 2:12, where reigning with Christ is the specific reward.)

3. The Conclusions from These Conditions

Collectively, all the conditions studied thus far in this section are summarized by Lordship advocates as demands for submission to Christ as Lord for salvation. Stott summarizes them under the concept of following Christ:

Thus, in order to follow Christ, we have to deny ourselves, to crucify ourselves, to lose ourselves. The full inexorable demand of Jesus Christ is now laid bare. He does not call us to a sloppy half-heartedness, but to a vigorous, absolute commitment. He invites us to make Him our Lord.⁴⁰

Likewise, MacArthur concludes,

Faith is not an experiment, but a lifelong commitment. It means taking up the cross daily, giving all for Christ each day with no reservations, no uncertainty, no hesitation. It means nothing is knowingly held back, nothing purposely shielded from His lordship, nothing stubbornly kept from His control.⁴¹

Plainly, the conditions understood by Lordship advocates are absolute, all or nothing.⁴² In essence, there is little disagreement with the interpretations of the demands themselves, only with the application of them to salvation instead of the Christian life.

Lordship Salvation teachers will object to the charge that applying these conditions to unbelievers is works oriented. But their interpretation of the conditions cannot evade the charge of salvation by merit. It makes no sense to demand from unbelieving sinners a decision that assumes an understanding of the full significance of Christ's sacrifice, especially at this point in the Gospel narratives before His death. (Would Jesus ask an unbeliever to be willing to die for Him?) This would

³⁹ For this idea see Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), 1:83; Alexander Balmain Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1980), 1:167.

⁴⁰ Stott, *Basic Christianity*, 114.

⁴¹ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 202.

⁴² It is difficult to reconcile MacArthur's statement that these conditions are "not absolute in the sense that it disallows temporary failures like Peter" (ibid.) with his intentionally absolutist choice of language in the preceding quotation.

practically preclude anyone from being saved unless he understood the meanings of these conditions—meanings which can best be appreciated in light of salvation, not in prospect of it.

Jesus' teaching on discipleship took place well into His ministry and was addressed primarily to His disciples as a further revelation of the kind of commitment He desired of His already saved followers. He explained these conditions against the background of His own commitment that would lead to His death in order to invest them with the fullest significance for those who also desired to follow God's will.

B. Other Conditions

Some other conditions will be considered briefly. Again, the main issue is not usually the interpretation of the condition itself, but whether it applies to Christians or non-Christians.

1. Hate Your Family (Matt 10:37//Luke 14:26)

In another setting, Matthew and Luke add another condition to those already considered. In Matthew's account, Jesus says the one who "loves" family more than Him is "not worthy" of Him. In Luke, Jesus says no one can be His disciple who does not "hate" his family and his own life. This condition is troublesome for many whether it speaks of salvation or of a deeper commitment.

As Beare asserts, Jesus was probably using a Semitic figure of speech:

This is the more Semitic manner of speaking—Luke's words are the literal translation of an Aramaic original; but the verb "hate" does not carry its full sense. It means no more than "love less", and Matthew has turned this into the positive—not that they must love the immediate family less than Jesus, but they must love Him more. Loyalty to the Master must override even the closest family ties.⁴³

Jesus must be the object of one's supreme love and devotion if one is to be His disciple. But in both Matthew and Luke, the words are applied to believers only. In Matthew, the saying is in the context of a warning about family members who will be divided over Christ (10:34-35). In such a situation, a person who is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah will

⁴³ Francis Wright Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1981), 250. See also, C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990), 577; William F. Arndt, *Luke*, Concordia Classic Commentary Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), 344; D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, Vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 257.

have his ongoing loyalty tested by those in the family who disagree. This would present a great temptation to choose family ties and harmony over one's identity with Christ. In Luke, the saying is applied to anyone who "comes to" Jesus, which denotes those who believe in Him, as noted earlier.

Therefore, MacArthur rightly interprets the meaning of the idiom itself, "We must be unquestionably loyal to Him."⁴⁴ However, this interpretation does not apply to the unsaved, for one more naturally learns love and loyalty on the basis of what Jesus has done in redemption and forgiveness. The Bible teaches that God offers salvation to people as sinners, that is, apart from their love and loyalty to Christ (Rom 5:6-8; 1 John 4:10). Even thus softened (as a Semitic figure of speech), such a devoted love for God over blood relationships would be an extraordinary demand for sinners who have had no experience of Christ's redeeming love.

Furthermore, it cannot speak of salvation because Matthew records that any loyalty that preempts loyalty to Christ makes or shows one to be "not worthy" of Christ (Matt 10:37). The statement about unworthiness seems to imply the converse, that one can be worthy of Christ. However, the unsaved are unworthy of Christ and His salvation because they do not believe, not because they are loyal to family ahead of Christ. Conversely, no amount of loyalty to God or any other form of good deed makes a sinner worthy of Christ's righteousness. One can only be worthy for rewards.

Like the previous demands, this demand cannot speak of salvation. It is truth which brings believers into a deeper relationship with Jesus as Lord through their loyalty to Him.

2. Forsake All (Luke 14:33)

Another condition that Jesus gives is that "Whoever does not forsake all . . . cannot be My disciple." It shares the same context as the condition discussed above (Luke 14:27) and is therefore addressed to believers. Following the illustrations of a builder and of a king who did not make the necessary provision to finish their commitments, this condition demands that a believer commit or surrender whatever possessions are necessary in order for him to follow God's will. "All that he has" translates *pasi tois heautou hyparchousin* which speaks of one's property or possessions.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 201. Stott and Boice have similar interpretations (Stott, "Yes," *Eternity* 10, 18; Boice, *Discipleship*, 117).

⁴⁵ *Greek English Lexicon*, s.v. "*hyparchō*," 845.

The condition is in absolute terms. Perhaps realizing the difficulty of making this a demand for unbelievers who wish to be saved, Lordship Salvation teachers sometimes soften this and other conditions to a *willingness* to forsake all. MacArthur says,

Do we literally have to give away everything we own to become Christians? No, but we *do* have to be willing to forsake all (Luke 14:33), meaning we cling to nothing that takes precedence over Christ (emphasis his).⁴⁶

But Jesus did not say one must only be *willing*. Even if one only had to be willing to do these things for salvation, salvation would be just as conditional and meritorious as if they were actual works. This negates the concept of grace (Rom 4:4). Furthermore, the subjectivity of willingness makes salvation elusive, as Zuck notes:

Willingness to do something is not the same thing as actually doing it, and it does not answer the question, "How much commitment is necessary?" If lordship proponents do not mean a person must surrender *everything* to be saved, then why do they say *all* must be surrendered?⁴⁷

3. Abide in His Word (John 8:30-31)

This passage will be considered because it is usually thought to be a condition of discipleship spoken to unbelievers. Speaking of Jesus' ministry, John writes, "As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in

⁴⁶MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 84. MacArthur is commenting on the lesson learned from the example of the rich young ruler (Matt 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23), which he believes is summarized by Luke 14:33 (p. 78). This story is preeminently used by Lordship teachers to argue that salvation is costly. E.g., MacArthur, *The Gospel*, 77ff.; Gentry, "The Great Option," *BRR* 5:61, 75; Arens J. ten Pas, *The Lordship of Christ* (n.p.: Ross House Books, 1978), 5; Elmer R. Enlow, "Eternal Life: On What Conditions?," *Alliance Witness* (January 19, 1972), 4; Paul Fromer, "The Real Issue in Evangelism," *His* 18 (June 1958), 5; Homer A. Kent, "Review Article: *The Gospel According to Jesus*," *Grace Theological Journal* 10 (1989), 71; J. Wallis, "Many to Belief, But Few to Obedience" *Sojourners* (March 1976), 21-22; Poe, "Evangelism and Discipleship," *Evangelism*, 138. Chantry structures his whole Lordship presentation around the rich young ruler in his book, *Today's Gospel: Authentic or Synthetic?* I believe that the demand Jesus made of the rich young ruler was not a condition of eternal life. However, the argument deserves more space than this article can afford. Given its prolific use, the pericope would best be treated as the subject of a future article.

⁴⁷Roy B. Zuck, "Cheap Grace?," *Kindred Spirit* 13 (Summer 1989): 6-7.

My word, you are my disciples indeed.” Many commentators assign Jesus’ words to those who had a counterfeit or spurious faith. For example, Morris states,

This section of discourse is addressed to those who believe, and yet do not believe. Clearly they are inclined to think that what Jesus said was true. But they were not prepared to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies.⁴⁸

However, the passage is best understood as a condition of discipleship directed to true believers, as can be shown.

It is argued that “believed Him” in v 31 indicates inadequate faith by the use of *pisteuō* (“believe”) without the preposition *eis* (“in”). But it is obvious that those addressed in v 31 are the same as those in v 30 who “believed in Him” (*pisteuō eis auton*), which is a strong term denoting salvation.⁴⁹ Also, there is overwhelming evidence that *pisteuō* without the preposition does not prove that faith is inadequate for salvation.⁵⁰ Salvation is clearly meant in v 24 where *pisteuō* with no preposition is used when Jesus states, “If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”

It is also argued that the hostility of these believers continues (vv 33ff.), and Jesus calls them children of the devil (v 44). This continuing hostility reflects the opposition of the Jews, which is a major motif of this section.

⁴⁸ Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Erdmans, 1971), 454. Nearly all commentators who argue for a spurious faith in 2:23-24 will also argue for it here.

⁴⁹ Gentry agrees this is a strong term for salvation (Gentry, “The Great Option,” *BRR* 5:56).

⁵⁰ Note the absence of the preposition in these soteriological passages: Matt 9:28; John 5:24; 8:24; 11:42; 13:19; 14:10; 17:8, 21; 20:31; Acts 16:34; 18:8; Rom 4:3; 10:9; Gal 3:6; 1 Thess 4:14; 2 Tim 1:12; Titus 3:8; 1 John 5:1, 5, 10. That *pisteuō* alone or *pisteuō* with *hoti* (“believe that”) can denote salvation as easily as the *pisteuō eis* construction is the conclusion of a number of scholars. See Rudolph Bultmann, s.v. “*pisteuō*,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, transl. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. 6 (1969), 203; Richard Christianson, “The Soteriological Significance of *Pisteuō* in the Gospel of John” (Th.M. thesis, Grace Theological Seminary, 1987), 86-87; Gordon H. Clark, *Faith and Saving Faith* (Jefferson, MO: Trinity Foundation, 1983), 101; Elizabeth Jarvis, “The Key Term ‘Believe’ in the Gospel of John,” *Notes on Translation* 2 (1988), 46-51; Morris, *John*, 337; E. Herbert Nygren, “Faith and Experience,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 41 (August 1983), 41-42; M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1883), 221; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2 vols. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 1:561.

In light of what has been argued thus far, vv 31-32 show Jesus briefly directing His attention to those Jews who were saved as He taught in the temple. John's commentary in v 30 is inserted before Jesus' remarks to direct the reader to a change of focus by Christ before the opposition resumes in v 33 as a reaction to Christ's remarks.⁵¹ As soon as He finishes His remarks to these believers, the Jews raise another objection, just as they have been doing from the start of the dialogue (cf. 8:13, 19, 22, 25). The objection of v 33, being totally out of character with the inclination of those mentioned in vv 31 and 32, shows that the identity of those in v 33 is assumed to be the antagonistic unbelieving Jews, not the new believers.⁵²

This interpretation is most reasonable because it prevents Christ, who says in v 45 "you do not believe Me," from contradicting John, who said they "believed in Him" and "believed Him" (vv 30-31). It also has greater exegetical and theological consistency than that view which would say these are "believers who did not really believe."

The condition for becoming disciples in v 31 should not be construed as an admonition to unbelievers. In fact, the opposite is indicated by the emphatic plural pronoun "you" (*hymeis*) which distinguishes the new believers from the rest of the Jews.⁵³ Also, Jesus' admonition is not to *enter* His word, but to *abide* (*menō*) or continue in it. The assumption that they are already in His word indicates that abiding is a condition for further knowledge of the truth and freedom in Christ. Discipleship, as abiding in intimacy with Christ, is elsewhere in John made conditional on love and obedience (e.g., 13:35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:4, 7, 10, 14).

III. The Difference Between Discipleship and Salvation

Synthesizing the observations of this and the previous two articles, we find a clear distinction between committed discipleship and salvation. These differences between simple salvation and discipleship cannot be ignored: Salvation is a free gift; intimate discipleship is costly. Salvation relates primarily to Christ as Savior; discipleship relates primarily to Christ as Lord. Salvation involves the will of God in redemption and reconciliation; discipleship involves the whole will of God. Salvation's

⁵¹ This Johannine technique of editorial explanation is further discussed in Hodges, *Gospel Under Siege*, 2nd. ed., 43-44. See also R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), 627.

⁵² Lenski, *John*, 628.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 628.

sole condition is "believe"; discipleship's conditions are abide, obey, love, deny oneself, take up the cross, follow, lose one's life, "hate" one's family, etc. Salvation is a new birth; discipleship is a lifetime of growth. Salvation depends on Christ's work on the Cross for all people; discipleship depends on a believer carrying his or her cross for Christ. Salvation is a response to Christ's death and resurrection; discipleship is a response to Christ's life. Salvation determines eternal destiny; discipleship determines eternal and temporal rewards. Salvation is obtained by faith; discipleship is obtained by faith through works.

The difference is the same as that between justification and sanctification. These realities are related, but we do not encourage sanctification before justification. Justification is through faith alone; sanctification is through a life of progressive faithful obedience. Justification can take place apart from sanctification, but sanctification cannot take place apart from justification. With justification comes the Spirit and His power to accomplish sanctification.

The sequence of justification before sanctification, salvation before discipleship, or faith before commitment is clearly taught in the Bible. Many verses appeal for commitment on the basis of grace already received (e.g., Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; Col 2:6). The teaching of Titus 2:11-12 is especially relevant because it explicitly relates grace to the believer's sanctification. This passage shows that commitment and obedience come in retrospective response to grace, not in prospective anticipation of it:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

The grace received in salvation is the basis of further Christian commitment, not vice versa. It is significant that Paul uses a verb to express the idea of training that is different from the idea usually related to discipleship expressed by *mathēteuō*. The verb he chooses (*paideuō*, "teach") is rooted in the Greek idea of training a child (*paidion*).⁵⁴ Grace, when received, takes an immature person and trains him toward godliness. This and other NT admonitions to commit one's life to godly principles on the basis of grace received would seem superfluous if such

⁵⁴ Dieter Fürst, s.v. "*paideuō*," in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, eds. Lothar Coenen, Erick Beyreuther, and Hans Bietenhard, trans. and ed. Colin Brown, vol. 3 (1981), 775-79. He comments on Titus 2:11-12: "Here too education is an outworking of grace . . . what is being said here is that man is justified by grace and led by it into sanctification" (p. 779).

a commitment was understood and made before salvation. The commitment of discipleship is expected of Christians only.

The difference between discipleship and salvation cannot, therefore, be called a paradox. If salvation could somehow be free but costly, then this might be called a paradox. But this attempt by the Lordship Salvation position to maintain theological orthodoxy (justification by faith alone) while demanding a price from the sinner (costly grace) cannot be biblically justified. Romans 11:6 makes works and grace mutually exclusive, as does Rom 4:5: "Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt" (cf. Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). It may cost to *be* or continue as a Christian, but not to *become* a Christian. To cite biblical examples where the Gospel is presented without cost would be superfluous.

IV. Conclusion

Our examination of the conditions of discipleship given in the Gospels show that they are directed toward challenging believers to live lives of obedience, surrender, sacrifice, and self-denial. There is not the slightest evidence that they are intended for unbelievers. To make them so confuses the freeness of the Gospel and nullifies the grace of God in salvation.

Discipleship is indeed costly, but the cost can only be paid in response to the grace received at salvation. As a believer understands the sacrifice of God for his redemption, he will want to respond to the grace given with a reciprocal commitment. As he learns to also sacrifice, obey, and deny himself, he will become more like the Savior who exemplifies these things.

Salvation is by grace; discipleship is costly. The popularized term "costly grace" does *not* present a paradox, but an *absurdity*. It is as much a misnomer as "cheap grace."

There is only one kind of grace, and by definition it is absolutely free! The only sense in which salvation is costly is in the fact that Jesus Christ paid the supreme price, His life, for the sinner's redemption. Unfortunately, this is not the focus of Lordship teaching, which finds cost in the human conditions for salvation. To the sinner, salvation is absolutely free. If it were costly to him in any sense, then it could no longer be of grace and Christianity would take its place alongside the rest of the world's religions.

A Voice from the Past:

THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS*

FREDERICK W. GRANT¹

The question as to what is commonly called "the perseverance of the saints," includes in it another and a most serious one. That question is as to the footing upon which the believer, justified by faith, stands before God. Thus it is a point of the greatest moment to ascertain what the Scripture truth is. It is not too much to say, that the nature and character of the peace which as Christians we enjoy, and of our life and walk as such, are all materially affected by the view we entertain with regard to the truth before us.

I would at once then put the question, What is the nature of the salvation we have received, and what the footing upon which we now stand as believers before God?

I. In Christ²

Clearly, we stand as such, before God "in Christ," "accepted in the Beloved." (Eph 1:6.) Christ in glory, risen from the dead, having finished in our behalf the work of atonement, stands as our representative in the presence of God. So fully, that what He has passed through for us *we* are accredited with. Thus we are said to be "dead," "buried,"

* This selection is the first third of the 14th and last chapter of *God's Evangel: Being Gospel Papers*. Originally published by Loizeaux Brothers of Neptune, NJ, it is reprinted in *The Serious Christian*, 1st Series (Charlotte, NC: Books for Christians, n.d.), 11:141-46.

¹ Frederick W. Grant (1834-1902) was born in London and converted through reading the Bible, apart from any human instrumentality. He came to North America, living in Toronto, Canada, then Brooklyn, NY, and finally Plainfield, NJ. He is best remembered for his 7-volume *The Numerical Bible*, a commentary with his own translation. It stresses the numerical structure of Scripture and is still in print (Loizeaux Brothers). Another scholarly work is *Facts and Theories as to a Future State*. His whole life was dedicated to making Christ known through His Word. Shortly before his death, with Bible in front of him, Grant said with deep emotion, "Oh, the Book, the *Book*, the *BOOK*!"

² The only changes made in this article are the addition of the headings and the modernization of the Scripture references. Ed.

“quicken³,” and “raised up” *with Him*; and even “seated together in heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*.” (Rom 6:8; Eph 2:5-6.) His being in heaven for us is thus as if we had actually gone in there and taken possession already of our final home; and there we are, presented to the eye and heart of God as identified with Him who, “when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Our former state and condition as sinners has thus found its judgment in the cross. “Our old man was crucified with Christ:”—not *should*, or *shall* be, but “was;” not was crucified *in me*, but “*with Him*.” (Romans 6.) Thus, for God and for faith, the old standing has passed away. “We are not in the flesh” (Rom 8:9); “not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.” (John 17:14.) To sum up all in a word, the apostle’s words as to the Christian’s place are, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, *all* things are become new.” (2 Cor 5:17.)

I know that all these things are read, or sought to be read, in the light of experience, and referred to an inward work in the soul instead of to our place in Christ, and what belongs to it. Yet Scripture says distinctly in this last case, as in others, “if any man be *in Christ*,” and then uses expressions which would certainly not be true of “*any* man in Christ,” (mark) if applied to the inward work. “*All* things new,” who indeed can pretend to, that knows anything of himself? Thus these blessed texts taken from their true application are made instruments of self-torture for souls seeking honestly but blindly to find in themselves evidences that they are accepted of God. While, with the eye on Christ, and the knowledge that we are in Him, and therefore, “as He is, so are we” (1 John 4:17), they become the sweetest, fullest assurances of where divine love has placed us, and what we are to God as in His Son. Is there any “old thing” in Him? If I am thus accepted of God, are not the “old things passed away”? Are not “all things become new”? Yes, indeed, wholly. I can take it in the simplest way, and believe it to the fullest extent, and find it unutterable joy, and only that.

Well, this is how we are accepted. We have traveled through death in Christ, and come up out of it. We have taken possession, in Him, already of our place above. We are accepted of Him where no whit of the “old things” is found. Look at this, beloved reader, and then answer me, oh answer me—is this *security*? Will Christ fail to satisfy God? Will God,

³ I.e., made alive.

who has accepted Him for me, repent, and again turn to what I am? Alas for me if He does! Alas for me and for you; and that, not at our worst, but at our best!

But no; that is impossible; for with Christ—in Christ's death—we have died. "He that is dead is justified from sin." (Rom 6:7, *margin*.) Our life, our history, ended with the cross in complete and utter judgment. We live before God in Christ alone. His own words are now, "Because I live, ye shall live also." (John 14:19.)

II. Peace with God

And thus have we "peace;" and upon such ground as this is "peace" in the proper sense alone possible. I need scarcely waste words in proving that it is peace that God is preaching by Jesus Christ (Acts 10:36); and that, "being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom 5:1.) Not only "the full assurance of faith" (Heb 10:22), but "the full assurance of *hope*" also is what God designs for us. (Heb 6:11.) This is peace as to the past, the present, *and the future*; and this is alone true peace. However blessed my portion in the present, if there is danger that I lose it, who shall say I ought not to be afraid? It is no comfort to say to me, "It all depends upon yourself," when "myself" is just what I have learned most of all to be afraid of. Ought I to have "perfect peace" in looking onward to the future, if it is to consist in assurance that I shall never backslide and depart, though many have! If I read, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee," I can understand that, if I may trust Him for the future too. If I may say, in confidence that I have committed my soul into His hands, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to *keep* what I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim 1:12), then indeed all is well. If He will not keep it, except I do my part (little or much), then how can it be peace?

To trust Him fully, if He be all in it, is surely well, and what I ought to do; but, on the other hand, I *ought* to *distrust* myself. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." But if I am not to think I stand, and yet my salvation depends upon my standing, ought I to be at rest?

III. Eternal Salvation

But, blessed be God, it is not so. Perfected as a Savior through the suffering of the cross, Christ is become "the author of *eternal* salvation unto all them that obey Him." (Heb 5:9.) What is "eternal" salvation?

And when do I receive it? Well, Paul says to us, that God “HATH saved us.” (2 Tim 1:9.) Is not that, then, “eternal salvation”? If I have obeyed Him—for the gospel calls for obedience, most surely (Rom 10:16)—if I have obeyed His call of grace, and come to Him, is He not the author of eternal salvation to me just then? Or must I wait till there is no more danger before I can speak of being saved for ever?

IV. Eternal Redemption

But redemption, too, is eternal. “He hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained *eternal redemption* for us.” (Heb 9:12.) Well, are we redeemed? Yes, assuredly, “we HAVE *redemption* through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Eph 1:7.) Is that, then, “for ever”? Alas! through how many of the plainest testimonies of Scripture the legality and unbelief of the human heart will work their way. Yet there it lies, the only true and perfect rest for the conscience, as we are witness to ourselves; there it lies before us, preaching peace without presumption, because “peace through Jesus Christ.” Will He rebuke me, think you, because I cast this burden with all other burdens on Himself? May I not cast this care for the future too upon Him? Will He not justify my trust? Will He not care also for this?

V. Eternal Life

But my “life,” too, is “eternal.” I already *have* “everlasting life.” How He has compassed me about with these eternities, as if to build me up an infinite rampart against doubt! For thus saith the Lord Himself, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, HATH everlasting life, and shall *not* come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24.)

Beloved reader, these are the Lord’s own words. Solemnly uttered and affirmed as truth, they link the present and the future of the believer indissolubly together. He says, the one who *has* eternal life (in the present) *shall* not (in the future) come into condemnation. Do you believe that? There is no “guarding” of that statement, such as men suggest; no “if” nor “but” to mar the blessed peace that that assurance gives. Are you going to put it in? Are you going to bring some other Scripture to qualify or modify the simple meaning of this? It is in vain; for “Scripture cannot be broken,” and He who gave it cannot so deny Himself. The whole idea of balancing one passage with another, as if, taken simply as they stand, they were opposed to one another, is false,

and a fatal denial of the truth of God. What simple soul could lay hold of the truth in a statement which had to be balanced with an unknown number of other statements, before the precise meaning could be settled? The divine Lover of men's souls could not speak so to them. He could not use words which, taken simply and literally as they stand, would deceive. No, He could not do this. And thus, if I get what really He has said, I may be sure He has said nothing else to contradict or empty it of meaning. I may rest my soul upon it safely. I may build on it as on a rock.

I know few sadder signs of the little authority the Word of God has in the present day, than this deplorable habit of ranging Scripture against Scripture. On one side a text is produced; instead of reverent inquiry as to what it means, a text in opposition to it, as men deem, is produced. James' "justification by works" is put in the one scale; Paul's "justification by faith" in the other. Arminian texts are balanced with Calvinistic. Alas! God's Word is gone as an authority, and common sense and human reason become supreme judges as to the side on which the scale of truth inclines.

How unlike our Lord's "Verily, verily"! What a relief to come back to that out of the fog of human uncertainty! "He spake as One that had authority, and not as the scribes." Do you fear to trust Him, beloved reader, apart from all His commentators? Certainly, then, what He says of the believer is, that he *has* everlasting life, and *shall* not come into condemnation, but—here is the confirmation of it—is passed from death unto life. His future condition is settled by his present one; for already he *has* "EVERLASTING life." He is alive to God for ever.

Grace in the Arts:

REMBRANDT VAN RYN: A PROTESTANT ARTIST

ARTHUR L. FARSTAD

Editor

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Dallas, Texas

I. Introduction

On the wall of my in-house office/library hangs a reproduction of a famous Christian painting. It has dramatic lighting—an almost theatrical triangle of light surrounded by great darkness. In the picture the dead body of our Lord is being taken down from the Cross by the loving hands of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and a number of apostles. To the right a stricken Mary, looking like a middle-aged Dutch woman, perhaps the artist's mother, is being comforted by another woman. This moving canvas is from the Widener collection at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. It is entitled "The Descent from the Cross," a masterpiece by the Dutch artist Rembrandt van Ryn.¹

Who was this Rembrandt van Ryn, and why should evangelicals take an interest in his work?

In 1991 the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* had a fascinating article² about an unusual art gallery in Greenville, South Carolina, at what is advertised as "The World's Most Unusual University." Bob Jones University is what most would call a fundamentalist school. No one, however, should think that it has low academic standards or is anti-cultural. The heavy emphasis on producing Shakespeare's plays, the gallery of great religious art, as well as an exact replica of the Jerusalem Chamber of Westminster Abbey³ tell us otherwise.

¹ This painting always spoke to me when I was a boy growing up in Washington. Also, the small reproduction was a gift for my graduation from Washington Bible College by a friend who was an arranger for the Navy Band, Richard Raven, now with the Lord.

² Chris Wohlwend, "The Art of the Sacred," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 30, 1991.

³ This is one of the rooms where the Authorized, or King James, Version of the Bible was edited. It was this editor's privilege to speak there for the *New King James Bible* (earlier called *The Revised Authorised Version* in Britain) and to introduce it to the United Kingdom.

One thing nearly all of us Protestants who have visited this beautiful and well-presented gallery cannot help noticing is the heavy preponderance, not only of Roman Catholic artists, but also of specifically Catholic themes. Not merely biblical themes in which Mary appears, but exclusively Catholic doctrines lavishly illustrated in glowing blues, golds, and vermillions.⁴

When Bob Jones, Jr. was challenged with the question, "Why do you have so many Catholic pictures?," his answer was, "There is not a lot of good Protestant painting . . . I had to buy Catholic pictures, despite the falsehoods in them."⁵

There *are* many great Protestant artists when you consider all the Dutch, British, and American landscape, portrait, still life, and so-called "genre" paintings. But what Dr. Jones obviously meant is that there are not many Protestant painters of *religious* art. On this point he was right, at least compared to Roman Catholic painters. The reason is obvious: Catholic churches are nearly always heavily decorated and Protestant church buildings (other than Anglican Cathedrals and some others) are not. Also, Catholic art was often endowed by wealthy churches, monasteries, and clergy.

There *are*, however, great Protestant artists of Christian themes: Albrecht Dürer, Peter Paul Rubens, Holman Hunt, the Danish sculptor Thorvaldsen, to name a few. However, the greatest Protestant artist is surely Rembrandt van Ryn.

So great is Rembrandt's fame, in America at least, that his name has come to be synonymous with "great artist." When a young person paints a very good picture, his friends are likely to say, "You're a real Rembrandt!"

II. Rembrandt the Man

Literary remains of Rembrandt (1606–1669) consist of seven unrevealing business letters, "legal documents, church notices of baptisms and burials and records of purchases both of property and

⁴ "Occasionally, Dr. Jones has had to answer some of his constituents about the depictions. One story he enjoys telling involves a baptism painting.

'One Baptist preacher took offense at the baptism of Christ depicted in my *Salvator Rosa*,' he says. 'He wanted to know how I could hang a picture that shows the pouring on of water instead of immersion. I said what do you expect? It was painted by a Catholic and donated by a Presbyterian.'" Wohlwend, "Art of the Sacred," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

⁵ Ibid.

works of art."⁶ It reminds one of the paltry historical records we possess for the great English dramatist William Shakespeare.

Fortunately, Rembrandt's work itself reveals a great deal about him. But before we take an overview of that, let us briefly contemplate his life.

Family Background and Education (1606–1620)

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Ryn was born in the rich and powerful Dutch town of Leyden on July 15, 1606. His father, a miller, was Harmen Gerritszoon van Ryn, who traced his Leyden connections back to 1575.⁷ Rembrandt's mother, Neeltge van Suydtbroek, was a literate and devout woman, judging from her son's paintings of her reading the Bible. It is very likely, judging from these pictures, that it was from his mother that the artist began to develop his love for God's Word.

Rembrandt was the sixth of seven children. When he was seven the lad was sent to the Latin School and seven years later to the University. Here he was out of sympathy with the humanistic learning of his day, although in later life, because of these studies he was quite capable of looking up classical texts as background for a painting.

Early Leyden Period (1620–1631)

Fortunately for the art world Rembrandt's parents let him go into painting, his passion. He learned the mechanics of painting under a local architectural painter, but his real art education started with Pieter Lastman, a successful painter of religious and mythological subjects. It was here that young Rembrandt developed his deep love for painting biblical subjects, which, unlike most of his Dutch contemporaries, he maintained until his death. He was also introduced to the work of Caravaggio, whose works influenced his love of the light and shade technique known as *chiaroscuro*.

In 1625 Rembrandt set up as an independent artist. Self-portraits from this period reveal an aggressive young man with a bulbous nose and unkempt hair. These self-portraits would continue for decades and give a unique display of the maturing and perfecting of his talent and style.

⁶ Christopher White, *Rembrandt and His World* (New York: The Viking Press, 1914), 5.

⁷ White, *Rembrandt*, 7.

Early Amsterdam Period (1631–1642)

Rembrandt moved to the cultural capital of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, in 1631, and in 1634 he married Saskia van Uylenburch, an heiress. Happiness and great popularity mark this period of the artist's life. In fact he became the most fashionable painter in Amsterdam. In 1642 he was commissioned to paint a group portrait of a voluntary militia. This was "The Night Watch," the prized possession of Netherlands' Rijkmuseum, in Amsterdam. It is considered by many to be his greatest masterpiece.

Rembrandt executed many small and charming landscapes of the Dutch countryside. The National Gallery in Washington has an excellent collection of various types of Rembrandts, including a landscape with windmill.

Rembrandt is equally famous for his etchings as for his paintings. Many are on a biblical theme.

Late Amsterdam Period (1642–1669)

In 1642, not long after delivering a son, Titus, to Rembrandt, the artist's beloved Saskia died. This tragedy coincided with reversals in his business fortunes. Extreme financial difficulties were to plague the painter's steps from that point on. His *subjects* now became less emotional and more serene.

His biblical paintings, which earlier had stressed drama and tension, now became simple and profound, such as "The Pilgrims at Emmaus," "Jacob Blessing His Grandsons," and "The Woman Taken in Adultery."

When facing bankruptcy in 1656, Rembrandt had to sell his fine collection of art objects, costumes, paintings, and etchings. Only two books were found among his possessions: Josephus's *History of the Jews* and an old Bible. In 1669, when he died, there was only one book: his old Dutch Bible.

W. A. Visser 't Hooft writes:

He was a painter and not a theologian . . . One thing is certain: he lived with his Bible. He was in truth '*homo unius libri*' [man of one book]. The Bible was the 'backbone of his life, his comfort in his grief and loneliness, his only hope when everything turned against him, his sheet-anchor, his vindication'.⁸

⁸ W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt and the Gospel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957, translated from the German *Rembrandt's Weg Zum Evangelium* by K. Gregor Smith), 30.

III. Rembrandt's Works

This Dutch genius left the world about 700 paintings,⁹ 300 etchings, and many drawings and sketches. His influence on 18th and 19th century art was great, and he is still considered one of the masters of the art world.

Bredius's *Rembrandt: the Complete Edition of the Paintings*,¹⁰ contains 544 pages of (unfortunately!) black and white reproductions and about 90 pages of "Notes to the Plates." Besides an Outline, a Biography, and a Foreword, Bredius classifies Rembrandt's works and presents them under 11 categories.¹¹ While all of this material is of interest to the art buff, *JOTGES* readers should be interested at least in the last three sections: OT events, NT events, and individual figures of biblical subjects, such as Christ, the apostles, and others.

Old Testament Subjects

One of the truly Protestant features of Rembrandt's religious works is that he used ordinary people, and frequently Jewish models from the Amsterdam ghetto, to pose for his Bible pictures. His Virgin Mary is not a glamorous blonde (or brunette) Italian in pink and blue satin robes, but (perhaps going to the other extreme!) a very plain and modestly dressed *huisvrouw* (housewife). Many of his models do *not* appear Jewish, however. Potiphar's wife, who is seeking to entice Joseph (Washington's National Gallery), is a Dutch blonde, and not at all Egyptian. The costumes are 17th century European, not very authentic.

The OT paintings I find especially telling include "David Presenting the Head of Goliath to Saul" (1625), "The Feast of Belshazzar" (complete with Hebrew letters written on the wall), "The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God" (1635), "The Blinding of Samson" (1636—dreadfully vivid, with Delilah smilingly holding Samson's shorn locks), "The Angel Ascending in the Flames of Manoah's Sacrifice"

⁹ White, *Rembrandt*, 13. Some paintings attributed to the artist, however, have later been considered to be by others.

¹⁰ A. Bredius, *Rembrandt: the Complete Edition of the Paintings*. Revised by H. Gerson (London: Phaedon, 1969 [first edition, 1935]).

¹¹ I include here the page on which each section starts so that interested readers can work out how many pages are devoted to each subject: p. 11, Self-Portraits; p. 59, Portraits of Rembrandt's Family; p. 119, Male Portraits; p. 257, Female Portraits; p. 315, Group Portraits; p. 333, Genre; p. 349, Landscape and Animal Studies; p. 369, Profane History, Mythology, & Allegory; p. 397, Old Testament; p. 443, New Testament; p. 505, Biblical Subjects: Single Figures.

(1641), "Moses with the Tables of the Law" (1659), and "Jacob Wrestling with the Angel."

Many of the OT subjects are not well known to the general public, showing that Rembrandt knew his Bible much better than his Roman Catholic contemporaries. The latter generally confined themselves to very well-known biblical scenes (*and* unbiblical ones!), as stereotyped by the ecclesiastical authorities.

Rembrandt's OT pictures include some Apocryphal stories, such as Tobit, a favorite of his, and Susanna and the Elders.

New Testament Subjects

New Testament paintings that are very vivid include: "The Martyrdom of St. Stephen" (1625), "Christ Driving the Money-Changers from the Temple" (1626), "Christ at Emmaus" (drawing), "The Raising of Lazarus," "The Good Samaritan," "Christ in the Storm on the Lake of Galilee" (1633), "The Return of the Prodigal Son," and his unfinished last painting, "Simeon with the Christ Child in the Temple" (1669).

Individual subjects include 12 "portraits" of Christ, apparently posed for by a sensitive Jewish model with a kind and winsome face and the traditional long hair (dark, not blond) parted in the middle.

Other "portraits" include "The Apostle Peter in Prison" (1631),¹² a wonderfully thoughtful "The Apostle Paul at His Desk" (National Gallery), "King David" (1651), "Uzziah Stricken with Leprosy" (1635, a *most* unusual theme!), several apostles and evangelists, and one Catholic subject, "St. Francis at Prayer" (1637).

All in all, an extremely impressive display of biblical understanding, human compassion, dramatic lighting, and exciting, interpretive genius! Because of this wealth of material there exists in Dutch a popular "Rembrandt Bible" fully illustrated by this one artist.

Thus, our expression: "All right, Rembrandt," addressed to a budding artist, is founded on solid fact. He was widely recognized in his own times and still is today, and *rightly* so.

IV. Rembrandt and Christianity

Dutch Protestants didn't condemn religious painting as a whole, but Reformed churches did not give commissions. Hence, a Dutch artist who did religious paintings did so because he *wanted* to. There was, happily,

¹² Until recently, a small Rembrandt featuring Peter was displayed on loan from a private American collector at the Dallas Museum of Art.

a market for them, but many of Rembrandt's drawings and sketches were for himself.

Rembrandt's Personal Religion

Documentary evidence is that Rembrandt was born, raised, married, and died in the Dutch Reformed Church. But there is also evidence that he had close fellowship with the evangelical wing of the Mennonites, the *Doopsgezinden*, who were virtually Baptists. He may even have belonged to one of their meetings in the 1640's.¹³

W. A. Visser 't Hooft summarizes "Rembrandt's Message" in chapter 9 of his book, as seen (very differently) by 11 scholars. He concludes with three more opinions:

Rembrandt was no Calvinist, no champion of any community of believers, nor supporter of any sect, writes Schmidt Degener. He kept aloof from any dogmatism. But he can see in Rembrandt a mild Pauline Christianity and a certain rationalism. He believes that Rembrandt is the only artist to have rendered the genuine temper of the gospel correctly.

In his treatise on Rembrandt's relation to the religious lay movements of his time, Hans Martin Rotermund comes to the conclusion that in the middle of the forties, Rembrandt was deeply affected by the outlook of the *Doopsgezinden* (Mennonites) and that this conditioned his attitude as a Christian.

The enumeration of all these opinions may be concluded by a saying of François Mauriac: 'It seems to me that Rembrandt has given the most faithful representation of the Bible stories.'¹⁴

One thing is certain: Rembrandt was a Protestant and a lover of God's Word!

Rembrandt and Christ

Rembrandt believed Christ to be the Son of God, but he presented Him very differently from the resplendent images of the almost Maccabean Messiah of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. His Christ is the Christ of Isaiah 53. Visser 't Hooft explains:

In his later years, however, Rembrandt ceased to depict the Christ resplendent in human glory. The Bible revealed to him the mystery of

¹³ See Reformed scholar Visser 't Hooft's discussion in chapter 7, "Rembrandt and the Church" in *Rembrandt and the Gospel*.

¹⁴ Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt*, 109-110.

the Messiah and of his *unknown coming* into the world. Rembrandt realized that the meaning of the Incarnation is not the deification of human nature, but the love of God who abases himself to accept even the form of his creature, the form of a servant. He now knew what was known to Luther, Calvin and Pascal, that the Revelation is not a demonstration of God's power and glory which is at once evident to everybody, but a descent of God which is only intelligible to faith. Luther says: 'To know Christ, that he has become man, and has abased himself so deeply that he looked like the most despised and unworthy of men, afflicted and chastised by God, (Isa. 53), and all that for our sake—this is the right golden art of Christians and their highest wisdom.' Calvin speaks of the lowliness of the flesh of Christ, which like a veil hides his divine majesty. Pascal writes to Mlle de Roannez: 'As long as he was invisible, he was much easier to know than now that he has shown himself visibly.'¹⁵

Rembrandt and Mary

Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, but especially Counter-Reformation art had transformed the "handmaiden of the Lord" (*ancilla Domini*) of Luke 1 into the "Queen of Heaven" (*Regina Coeli*). Not satisfied with paintings of the Annunciation, the Nativity, and Mary at the foot of the Cross, Roman Catholic art showed Mary in satin robes with gilded halo being worshiped by "donors" (those who *financed* the paintings!), adored by men and angels in the "Assumption," and crowned by the Trinity in pictures labeled "Coronation of the Virgin."

Rembrandt, like Luther¹⁶ and Calvin,¹⁷ had great respect and fondness for Mary. In his earlier works he even showed her in ways based on Italian and other Catholic paintings. Rembrandt jotted down these words on some sketches of the *mater dolorosa* (sorrowful mother): "Pious obedience (*dyroot tgheehoor*) kept in her pure heart as a comfort for her trembling soul."¹⁸

¹⁵ Ibid., 33-34.

¹⁶ Luther stressed Mary's humility and her undeserved *grace from God* (but not as a "fountain" of grace herself). "The more we attribute deserving merit to her, the more we take away from divine grace and lessen the truth of the Magnificat" (*Selected Works*, Calwer, 90).

¹⁷ Calvin writes: "God has looked upon her, however disregarded and despised she was. From which follows that all those are false honours and not due to Mary, which do not solely praise God's omnipotence and undeserved kindness" (*Commentary on Luke*, 1:48).

¹⁸ Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt*, 45.

Rembrandt's portrayals of Mary are not glamorous or exalted, but humble, simple, and biblical. It has been suggested that there is a Mennonite influence in this, but Reformed poets also wrote of Mary in a scriptural fashion. For example, Jeremias de Decker, an important Dutch poet, who wrote of Rembrandt's art with sensitive perception, has these lines in his poem "Good Friday":

He sees his mother here with half-broken eyes,
 Moved to the depths of her soul
 By what he has to endure,
 A sword of sadness pierces her sorrowful soul.¹⁹

V. Conclusion

At a period in church history and the history of art when nearly all Roman Catholic artists and many Protestant ones (e.g., Rubens) painted glorified, unhistorical, and grandiose portrayals of biblical figures—Christ as "a superman," Mary as "a victorious queen, and the saints as heroes,"²⁰ Rembrandt painted in subject and style close to the biblical records. Visser 't Hooft highlights this Protestant theology by quoting Luther:

Luther makes an unambiguous distinction between a theology of glory and the true theology of the cross. The theology of glory, he says, 'prefers works to suffering, glory to the cross, power to weakness, wisdom to foolishness, and in one word evil to good.' But the theology of the cross knows that 'it is not enough for anybody nor does it help him that he recognizes God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the abasement and ignominy of the cross.' In analogy to this we may describe Rembrandt's style as a 'painting of the cross.'²¹

Rembrandt was raised in the Dutch Reformed Church, the established church of his nation, and buried at one of Amsterdam's great churches. However, as we have noted, he was influenced by other groups, such as the Mennonites,²² and his work transcends any party lines. Yes, he was a *Protestant* artist in the older, conservative sense of that word: in short,

¹⁹ Quoted by Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt*, 48.

²⁰ Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt*, 114.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 115-16.

²² Rotermund concludes that in the mid-1640's Rembrandt was deeply affected by the Mennonites (Hans Martin Rotermund, *Rembrandt und die religiösen Laienbewegungen in den Niederlanden seiner Zeit*, 189).

he was a *biblical* artist. Though Protestant countries did not take up his style—in fact, seemed unaware that it was much closer to God's Word than the Baroque style of Rome and admirers of her style—Rembrandt's heritage remains for all Bible-lovers to revel in. He scrapped the classical and humanistic tendencies of his earlier works and more and more interpreted God's compassion and grace through such etchings as "The Return of the Prodigal Son," the popularly (and poorly) named "Hundred Guilder Print,"²³ and various sensitive portrayals of our Lord.

Let Dr. Visser 't Hooft close for us in words penned concerning his countryman, the great Protestant Christian artist, Rembrandt van Ryn:

Thus Rembrandt is the painter whose art seeks to express a faith exclusively rooted in the gospel. His message may be summarized in the words of Ecclesiastes: 'I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God hath done it, that men should fear before him.'²⁴

²³ This is virtually an exposition of Matthew 19: Christ's compassion on the multitudes, His healing ministry, and the various responses of the people.

²⁴ Visser 't Hooft, *Rembrandt*, 116.

BOOK REVIEWS

Tyndale's Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah. Trans. by William Tyndale. In a modern-spelling edition and with an introduction by David Daniell. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992. 643 pp. Cloth, \$40.00.

Since everything the Grace Evangelical Society believes and practices and this Journal promotes is firmly based on the Holy Bible, and for practical purposes of reaching the masses, on conservative English translations in the Tyndale–King James tradition, it is only just that we give an adequate review of this large and elegant volume. It is the companion to the NT edition reviewed in the Spring 1990 issue of *JOTGES*, also edited by David Daniell.

We can hardly do better than to quote from the concise summary of Tyndale's contribution to OT scholarship (and evangelical truth) on the front flap of the dust jacket: "Tyndale was the first to translate the Hebrew Bible into English—the first, in fact, to translate anything from Hebrew into English. At the time, that language was virtually unknown in England, and Tyndale had learned his excellent Hebrew while he was exiled to the Low Countries and Germany for political reasons. The publication of Tyndale's Old Testament, on top of his earlier and later translations of the New Testament, outraged the clerical establishment by giving the people access to the word of God in English. Tyndale was hunted down and subsequently burned at the stake for blasphemy."

For comparison, here is Gen 3:1-7 in three versions, in the 1539 Tyndale (Tyndale's original spelling and what little punctuation there is are copied from the frontispiece to this book), in the 1611 King James (the original spelling and punctuation of the 1611 KJV are from the 1982 Thomas Nelson reprint of it), and in the 1985 New King James:

Tyndale (1539)

But the serpent was sotyller than all beasts of the felde which the LORde [sic] God had made / and sayd unto the woman, Ah syr / that God hath sayd / ye shall not eate of all manur trees in the garden.

And the woman sayd unto the serpent / of the frute of the trees in the garden we may eate / but of the frute of the tree that is in the myddes of the garden (sayd God) se that ye eate not / and se that ye touch it not: lest ye dye.

Then sayd the serpent unto the woman: tush ye shall not dye: But God doth knowe / that whensoever ye shulde eat of it / youre eyes shuld be opened and ye shulde be as God and know both good and evell.

And the woman sawe that it was a good tree to eate of and lustie unto the eyes and a pleasant tre for to make wyse. And toke of the frute of it and ate / and gave unto hir husband also with her / and he ate. And the eyes of both them were opened / that they were naked. Than [sic] they sowed fygge leues togedder and made them apruns.

KJV (1611)

Now the serpent was more subtile than any beast of the field, which the LORD God had made, and he said vnto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said vnto the serpent, Wee may eate of the fruite of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eate of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the Serpent said vnto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.

5 For God doeth know, that in the day ye eate thereof, then your eyes shalbee opened: and yee shall bee as Gods, knowing good and euill.

6 And when the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she tooke of the fruit thereof, and did eate, and gaue also vnto her husband with her, and hee did eate.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, & they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge leaues together, and made themselues aprons.

NKJV (1985)

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Soon we shall be able to celebrate the quincentenary of the translator's birth (1494) with David Daniell's biography of Tyndale to be published next year. In the meantime, getting and reading Tyndale's contribution to OT translation work would be a good way to honor this great scholar and martyr.

Arthur L. Farstad

Editor

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Dallas, TX

Saved Without a Doubt: How to Be Sure of Your Salvation. John MacArthur, Jr. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992. 187 pp. Paper, \$7.99.

John MacArthur claims to publish this book out of a pastoral concern for those in the churches who lack assurance of salvation. It is out of the same pastoral concern that I would discourage the use of this book for such a purpose—it will never work!

Actually, the reader will soon discover that MacArthur is more concerned with those who *think* they are saved (but may not be) than with those who *doubt* that they are saved (but really are). By the end of the book, only those who *reject* the author's assertions will be sure that they are saved.

The reason assurance will be elusive is that the book focuses on the *subjective evidence* for salvation to the minimalization of the objective grounds. The first third of the book includes three chapters discussing the objective grounds from Romans 5 and 8. Chapter 2 digresses to handle problem passages which are sometimes used to argue that Christians can *lose* their salvation. Predictably, in three of the four (Gal 5:4; Heb 6:4-8; John 15:1-6), MacArthur argues that the subjects were not Christians to begin with—an unacceptable conclusion when contexts are considered!

It is most telling when MacArthur criticizes discussions on assurance which focus "almost exclusively on objective grounds" (p. 11). If we evaluate his theology of assurance based on how he proportions the material, then it is clear that his real basis of assurance is the subjective evidence. Exactly twice as much of the book (the last two sections) is devoted to topics such as tests of salvation (1 John), growth in Christ (2 Peter 1), victory over sin (Romans 6-8), and perseverance (Jas 1:12).

I was temporarily encouraged that MacArthur began the body of the book with John 5:24, which he says, "may be the most monumental statement ever made in the Bible relative to the security of salvation" (p. 15). But it merits only one sentence of explanation! Just one more page is used to discuss the promises of salvation from the Gospel of John. This short-handed treatment is inexcusable, considering the number of such promises in John. The promises of God must form the only sure and objective basis for any real assurance.

What is both disturbing and confusing about MacArthur's approach is that he speaks out of both sides of his theology. For example, he declares that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone (pp. 82, 89), but also conditions it on commitment to Christ as Lord for all of life (p. 151). He teaches that rewards are a motivation and consequence of how we live our lives (pp. 128-29), but also holds that most rewards passages are tests of genuine salvation (p. 152). He explains that 2 Pet 1:1-11 shows that assurance comes from adding virtues to our initial faith (pp. 111-27), yet holds v 11 as a promise of rewards instead of entrance into heaven (pp. 128-29).

The chapter on perseverance is most confusing. There the reader is told to *look back* at his faithfulness in trials to see whether he is a true Christian (p. 152). But this is irrelevant to MacArthur's understanding of perseverance, which teaches that all who are true believers *will* persevere through trials and love for God *until the end*. And what is his advice if you are wondering whether you will endure to the end? Well, he teaches you will, of course, if you "made the proper commitment to Christ," because God will preserve you (p. 152). Logically then, there is no assurance until the end. Just as a student who wonders if he can do the school work necessary to graduate will not know until he graduates, so salvation depends on performance and perseverance, with no ultimate assurance. "Only the faithful are of the faith" (p. 150). Of what comfort is this circular reasoning to an already confused believer?

The book comes with a study guide in the back which does little to clear up the book it discusses. An example of one of the exercises: "Ask God to help you objectively evaluate your Christian life in light of the tests of 1 John" (p. 168). These eleven tests include sensitivity to sin, obedience, rejection of the world, eagerness for Christ's return, sinful patterns in your life, love for other Christians, the experience of answered prayer, and suffering rejection for your faith. How is objectivity even possible for such tests?

The book is a compilation of MacArthur's sermons. His methodology is theological exposition rather than exegetical exposition. Quotations

from the Puritans and the use of proof-texts without explanation of context abound.

I am concerned about where MacArthur's theology comes from and where it will ultimately lead him (not to mention his followers!). Of special concern is how he defines justification as "*made right* with God" (p. 61), which evidently fits his system better than the Reformation definition of justification as "*declared right* with God." His definition echoes the theology of Rome (see Paul Holloway's article "A Return to Rome: Lordship Salvation's Doctrine of Faith," *JOTGES* 4 [Autumn 1991], 13-21).

There is no reason to buy this book other than to see what this popular teacher is promoting so that you can warn other Christians. A Christian seeking a book on assurance would do well to read instead Charles Stanley's book, *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* (Oliver Nelson, 1990; Reviewed in *JOTGES*, Spring 1991).

Charles C. Bing
Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Pastor, Burleson Bible Church
Burleson, TX

Aftershock: What to Do When Leaders (and Others) Fail You. Ted Kitchens. Portland: Multnomah Press, 1992. 245 pp. Paper, \$9.99.

Just about every Christian can recount a tragic story about another Christian who fell into sin. Unfortunately, they can usually also recount the tragic way the offender's church responded to the fallen believer. Kitchens's book is an important apologetic and manual for the biblical way of dealing with moral failure in a church.

This is an excellent book, so let me get my only criticism out of the way. It's the *title*. *Aftershock* (a metaphor for the *earthquake* of moral failure in the church) does not help define the book for potential readers. This is also true of the subtitle. Though special disciplinary considerations for fallen leaders are addressed at the end of the book, the subject for most of the book is simply why and how to administer church discipline to those who sin.

This subject Kitchens handles masterfully and thoroughly. All of my questions about church discipline were either answered or addressed,

and relevant biblical passages were explained satisfactorily. He also explores the reasons behind the moral problems we encounter in the church, discusses the "Seven Reasons Why Christians Don't Dare to Discipline," and shows why biblical church discipline is the only real solution to moral failure.

Of most help to pastors, leaders, and church members will be the practical sections on how to proceed with discipline, what sins to discipline, and how to handle the accompanying problems that may arise. The final section of the book addresses the discipline of church leaders. Kitchens finds no biblical basis for the view that a fallen leader can *never* be reinstated to a position of leadership. He argues instead that each person must be dealt with according to his sin, the circumstances, and his repentance. However, he admits there are situations where it may not be possible to reinstate fallen leaders.

Kitchens has a realistic view of the reality of sin in believers. He does not simply dodge the problem of sin by arguing that the offender must not be a "genuine" believer, as some would. His solution is to seek the offender's restoration to God and the local fellowship. He unceasingly exhorts that this be done with an attitude of grace and love.

The book reflects Kitchens's in-depth research for his doctoral dissertation on the subject (Dallas Theological Seminary, 1989), but is written so that the average church member can follow with understanding. The reflection of Kitchens's long and successful experience as a pastor also adds to the book's believability and practicality.

Aftershock should be read and referenced by pastors, elders and deacons, and other leaders as regularly as Christians need to be disciplined—which is to say, *read it and keep it handy!*

Charles C. Bing
Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Pastor, Burleson Bible Church
Burleson, TX

Are Blacks Spiritually Inferior To Whites? The Dispelling of an American Myth. By Anthony T. Evans. Wenonah, NJ: Renaissance Productions, 1992. 158 pp. Paper, \$7.95.

I commend Evans for the courage to go public with his unpopular biblical views. His impeccable credentials will confirm his conservative evangelical scholarship, since he earned both a Master's and a Doctor's degree from Dallas Theological Seminary. Evans is an African-American who serves on the boards of several evangelical institutions and is a widely sought-after speaker. He is senior pastor of a racially mixed church with over three thousand in weekly attendance. He has his own thriving national urban missionary organization and daily national radio program.

A few readers might predictably react to the title of the book by rejecting it as sensational. However, such conclusions are incorrect. The daring reader will be more than compensated by its well-written contents. Chapter 7 alone, "The Biblical Mandate," is worth the price of the book. Here, as throughout the book, Evans demonstrates his insights into world history by showing how God uses not only individuals, "but also cultures and races and people groups as well" (p. 134). He points out that "God gives cultures strengths that become important for the on-going . . . of His activity in history" and that cultural groups are "free to express themselves . . . unless . . . they impede the program of God" (p. 135).

Following his comments on the meaning of unity and the limitations of culture, he gives a passionate description of unity's price. Evans believes that [black and white] "pastors are going to have to begin preaching the whole counsel of God . . . stop skipping James's condemnation of class distinction in the church . . . [and] explain to our congregations the racial implications . . . in terms that are meaningful and applicable to the contemporary Black-White debate" (p. 140).

Evans correctly asserts that there is a skeleton in our evangelical Christian closet: black and white dissension. He "desire[s] that this work will be used by sincere Christians in putting the myth [of racial superiority/inferiority] to rest and placing race relations in its proper perspective" (p. 9). The author makes several significant contributions toward this end. For example, readers reap the fruit of Evans's theological expertise when he skillfully relates African-American history and evangelical theology. The book is brimming with narrations and interpretations of African-American church history, with theology, and with practical suggestions. His forceful, balanced writing speaks equally to both sides, and (what is more important) for biblical unity.

This book should be welcomed by those who embrace the biblical teaching of grace and who hold to its practical implications for Christian living. What a colossal failure it would be if black and white evangelical Christians did not exercise grace toward one another! I enthusiastically recommend this book.

Willie O. Peterson

Pastor, Bethel Bible Fellowship
Addison, TX

Transformed by His Glory. By Charles C. Ryrie. Wheaton: Victor Press, 1990. 144 pp. Cloth, \$12.99.

I must admit at the outset that my love and respect for Dr. Ryrie as a man of God—for who he is and for what the Lord has done through him—do not allow me to be objective in reviewing his latest book. I began reading many of Ryrie's works while still a minister in the Churches of Christ. Even then I found them biblical, clear, concise, and helpful. This book is no exception.

Subtitled *Regaining a Sense of the Wonder of God*, the book is concerned with understanding in our minds and reflecting in our lives the glory of God. Ryrie believes that the glory of God is a neglected topic, even, by his own admission, omitted in his *Basic Theology*! The only other works I could think of which treat this glorious theme were J. Dwight Pentecost's *The Glory of God* and John Owen's classic work, *The Glory of Christ*.

Dr. Ryrie writes: "Too many Christians live lives that for all practical purposes exclude God's presence and are therefore glory-less. For such people God is a convenience to be used when necessary, but not the control to be submitted to always. They want God to be a solver of problems, not a sustainer in the midst of them. And in their minds, love can only mean that God will cuddle us, never chasten us. But His glory will return as we clean out the temple of our lives." He rightly points out that the goal of the Christian is conformity to the image of Christ and a reflection of His glory.

Of special note to readers of *JOTGES* is his satisfying treatment of John 15 entitled "Bearing Much Fruit to the Glory of God."

Ryrie's style of writing, which I greatly respect and desire to be able to imitate, is, as always, concise and clear. However, I believe even he

would agree with Wilbur M. Smith's confession in writing *The Biblical Doctrine of Heaven*, that his rhetoric was not grand enough to match the glorious reality of the theme.

In conclusion, to say *Transformed by His Glory* is pure Ryrie is to give the highest recommendation and motivation I can think of to buy and read this book.

Lanny Thomas Tanton

Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church
Lincoln Park, MI

Made in America: The Shaping of Modern American Evangelicalism.
By Michael Scott Horton. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 198 pp. Cloth, \$13.95.

This book by a young Reformed Episcopal minister in California reveals the weakness of the evangelical church at the close of the twentieth century. In eight chapters he tackles the ways in which a democratic, feeling-oriented, pragmatic, and individualistic culture has shaped the modern American church according to its own image. The book is brief, to the point, and hard-hitting. Michael Horton does not pull punches.

First of all he questions the concept of a "Christian America" and the popularly held notion that modern secular humanists have wrested the heritage of our forefathers. While there was a time when a biblical kind of *morality* was more prevalent, Horton demonstrates that many of our founding fathers were opposed to the biblical concept of a holy and sovereign God, and purposefully wrote the laws of the land to perpetuate the sovereign power of the human spirit. A "Christian America" never existed; it is time to let the concept die.

The weakness of modern evangelicalism is detailed well also. The Church has become, like the culture, market-driven rather than truth-driven, pragmatic rather than principle-based, and individualistic rather than corporate in focus. As a result we appear in the marketplace as one more sub-culture on the social landscape of America. We have lost sight of the biblical concept of the people of God as the representatives of the life-transforming Gospel of God.

This good and readable book is, however, marked by some noticeable flaws. Horton views the basic problem with American Christianity as a

departure from *Calvinism*. In this assessment, he shows remarkably little acquaintance with the difference between *Reformation* theology and *Reformed* theology. He seems to regard the Puritans as the only true successors of the Reformation and the truest representatives of biblical Christianity since the days of the apostles. This viewing of Calvinism as a seamless robe is not only historically inaccurate but theologically untenable. As a result, while Horton paints the present scene well, his analysis of what led us to this place in history is not as convincing. His frequent jabs at the Free Grace understanding of the Gospel (as on p. 83) are based on this narrow view that the Puritan theology of about 1650 is the only possible understanding of the Bible's message. Thus he attempts to prove Lordship Salvation by the simple argument that "it's what the Church has always believed"—a doubtful argument at best, blatantly reductionist at worst.

Coupled with this weakness, and contributing to it, is the fact that Horton relies almost entirely on secondary sources. A full 20% of the endnotes are divided between three authors (Martin Marty, Richard Hofstadter, and George Gallup). The reliance on secondary sources is an indication that the book is not so much a reflection on the theological declension in modern evangelicalism as a collection of the reflections of others.

The book fails to offer clear direction as to where we might go from here to recapture the kind of vibrant theological and corporate vitality that will reveal us as the living Body of Christ. Yet it does offer some analysis of the present scene that should be read and considered by Christians today. For that contribution this is a worthwhile book.

Tom Lewellen

Senior Pastor, Grace Countryside Church
White Lake, MI

Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? By Eta Linnemann. Originally published in German as *Wissenschaft oder Anfragen und Alternativen*. Neuhausen: Friedrich Hänssler, 1986. Translated by Robert Yarborough. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 169 pp. Paper, \$9.95.

Eta Linnemann is an eminent continental scholar, a former student of Rudolf Bultmann, and a member of the prestigious Society for New

Testament Studies. In 1978 she literally threw her many publications into the trash and invited others to do likewise. She had, in her own words, said *Nein!* to Historical Criticism because she had said *Ja!* to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Historical Criticism of the Bible is Professor Linnemann's first book since her conversion, and she is not mincing words. Addressing the state of affairs in the German universities in the first part of her book, Linnemann calls for a break-away Bible College movement. She then turns to her main topic, Historical Criticism and the Bible. Simply put, Historical Criticism, which operates *ut si Deus non daretur* ("as if there were no God"), is inherently hostile to evangelical faith. It is not merely that the Bible isn't read from the *perspective* of faith, it isn't even read from the perspective of the *possibility* of faith.

Readers of *JOTGES* will obviously share Linnemann's concern that faith not be excluded *a priori* from the academy. And they should applaud her frankness and courage. Yet from the perspective of NT scholarship, *Historical Criticism of the Bible* is little more than a personal confession of faith. I seriously doubt that it will get much (if any) of a hearing from her former colleagues who have probably not heard a pulpit pounded since before their qualifying exams. For my money, a second volume in which she constructively engages those elements of Historical Criticism that are hostile to faith would be welcome.

On a more positive note, time and again Linnemann makes reference to the subtle pressures placed on students in liberal (and sometimes "conservative") institutions to toe the line. Barraged by an endless litany of "obviously," "of course," "everyone now knows," along with peer pressure from fellow students—who are often more unsparing than professors—and what Linnemann kindly calls "the process of socialization" (e.g., finding someone who will eat lunch with you), most eventually cave in. Linnemann lists herself among the weak. Her humility is disarming, and her point well taken. Most liberals are as coercive as . . . well . . . as most of the rest of us. In the end it is not our brains that typically fail us, but our character (cf. James 4:4).

Reading *Historical Criticism of the Bible* reminded me that the Christian faith is just that. It is a set of beliefs resting ultimately on a personal trust in Jesus Christ. Those who study at institutions that are not sympathetic to such faith should expect to be faced with questions they cannot answer. They should expect their colleagues to find them a little odd. This is the scandal of the Cross, the foolishness of Christianity.

It is a privilege Eta Linnemann now personally knows, and which she seems to have taken in stride.

Paul Holloway

Graduate Student

Department of Early Christian Literature

The University of Chicago

Chicago, IL

Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse? By H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice. Portland: Multnomah, 1988. 460 pp. Cloth, \$15.99.

Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse? is an evaluation of Theonomy from a premillennial, dispensational perspective. The book is very well written and researched. One of the authors, Thomas Ice, was himself a theonomist from 1974 to 1986. However, he was always troubled by the eschatological system of postmillennialism that Theonomy seemed to require. After attempting to unite Theonomy with premillennialism, the author came to the conclusion that the two doctrines were mutually exclusive. This caused him to reject Theonomy as a system. This book reveals a thorough acquaintance with theonomist literature.

The book divides into three parts.

Part one is a review of Theonomy. In this section the authors state the factors that gave rise to Theonomy and the main evidences used by its advocates. The authors then present in detail the postmillennial eschatology on which the system is based. Next there are case scenarios of what a reconstructed America would be like if Theonomy were to take over.

Part two refutes the theonomist view of the Mosaic Law and its relation to believers and society. *This is the most fundamental issue in the entire debate.* The theonomist understands the moral and penal sanctions of the law to be binding on all of society today, whereas the dispensationalist understands the law in its entirety to be done away with, as a system or rule of life. In chapter 6 the NT passages in which the law is said to be done away are considered. The theonomists' view of the abrogation of the law, restricting it to the ceremonial aspects, is evaluated and convincingly refuted. The book also gives an exposition of Matt 5:17-19 and shows that the emphasis on Christ's fulfillment of the law was prophetic, as opposed to a present establishment of the law.

This section also has a discussion of the Great Commission. Theonomists believe that the Great Commission is a re-articulation of the original admonition to Adam to rule the earth. The passages are clearly shown to refer to evangelism and discipleship as opposed to world dominion. The mission of the Church in the age of Grace is to evangelize the lost and to disciple believers.

Part three deals with the other major differences between Theonomy and dispensationalism, which are in eschatology. The hermeneutical basis of the different views is scrutinized here. Dispensational premillennialism has the strength of being *consistently literal* in its approach to prophecy. Postmillennialism adopts a hermeneutic of spiritualization when evaluating prophecy. This is evidenced in a discussion of the Book of Revelation and of our Lord's Olivet Discourse.

House and Ice also include several helpful appendices. An especially interesting appendix is about the charismatic following that Theonomy has. The progression from the healing of individuals to the healing of society is incorporated into their system.

In spite of the many strengths of this book, it does have a few weaknesses. A chapter contrasting dispensationalism with covenant theology would have been helpful. Another omission in this book is a dispensational understanding of the OT in the NT. In one short paragraph (p. 267), the authors also reveal that they subscribe to the Reformed doctrine of perseverance.

This book is an excellent evaluation of Theonomy and I would highly recommend it to anyone desiring to understand this movement better.

R. Michael Duffy

Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society

Dallas, TX

Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ. By Trevor McIlwain with Nancy Everson. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1991. 582 pp. Paper, \$24.95.

Few books will promote the grace position as well as *Firm Foundations*. This is not a theology book on the issue of grace. Rather, it is a study of the Bible from a grace perspective that is intended to help believers understand who God is and how this knowledge should affect their lives. It is a Bible study series that follows selected topics beginning

with Creation and ending with Christ. The book includes 50 studies written in a lesson-plan style to be used by the teacher. McIlwain includes a 100-page introduction that explains his purpose for the book.

The book was written to evangelize tribal peoples who have never heard of Jesus Christ. McIlwain found that it was better to start from the beginning and communicate who God is and what He is like before discussing what Christ did on the Cross. He covers in particular the different redemptive analogies that God has placed in the Bible to help the OT people understand the necessity of the coming death of the Messiah. These analogies include, among others, the covering that God required for Adam and Eve, which necessitated the death of an animal, the account of Abraham and Isaac, the blood on the doorposts in the Exodus, and animal sacrifices. They show that God is holy and that He must judge sin, but that He does provide a substitute for man. McIlwain feels that American Christianity is answering questions that no one is asking. Unless people know that they are lost, they see no need for Jesus Christ. Using the OT rightly includes using it to show man his lostness. The author feels that if we spent more time talking about God and His character we would see more people asking, "What must I do to be saved?"

In the introduction McIlwain explains his philosophy of missions and why it is better to start with who God is and what He is like before going to the Gospel. I found the ideas presented there to be very challenging and enlightening.

Some GES readers will be bothered by McIlwain's presentation of perseverance. It is, however, very mild, though, since he states that a person could commit adultery, murder, steal, etc., and still be a believer. He believes that the reason people do not persevere is because they were taught a "Lordship" gospel which does not really save.

I highly recommend this study for anyone who wants to teach grace in a way that will positively change lives. It is an excellent overview of the Bible and a great way to build a solid foundation of grace in the lives of believers.

R. Michael Duffy
Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Dallas, TX

The Body: Being Light in the Darkness. By Charles Colson with Ellen Santilli Vaughn. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992. 455 pp. Cloth, \$19.99.

Colson and Vaughn have written a powerful and thought-provoking work about the Body of Christ, the Church. It has three parts: "Part 1: What Is the Church?," which addresses the identity crisis within the Church today and examines both scriptural and contemporary examples of the Church in action; "Part 2: The Church Versus the World," which examines the Church's battle for truth in an age of accommodation; and "Part 3: The Church in the World," which discusses the mission of the Church and how it can impact the world.

The authors write from a Reformed and Presbyterian perspective (p. 34) which manifests itself several times. For example, in their discussion of *conversion* they write: "For there is a great difference between a decision and a true conversion. Conversion is a process which begins with God's regenerating work—an instant when the Spirit gives life—and continues as we grow in faith through the process of sanctification" (p. 85). They confuse the term *conversion* with the whole of the Christian life. Yet, in other places in the book they are precisely on target about the Gospel: "The Christian experience begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ made possible as men and women are declared righteous by their faith" (p. 163).

There are many good things about the book. The authors correctly dissect the current identity crisis of the Church today, which seems more interested in *fitting into* the culture than in *changing* the culture. The Church today measures itself more in quantitative terms (numbers in attendance and dollars) than in qualitative terms (changed lives and growth in holiness). The authors stress the primary role of the local church. The Christian life cannot be lived in isolation, but requires involvement in a local assembly. The congregation is God's primary instrument for accomplishing His work. The real-life stories and anecdotes will provide a rich background for illustrations in preaching or teaching on the local church. The glimpses of the Church in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are particularly compelling and convicting.

The authors stress the need for unity among believers and give examples of how various churches have set aside differences to work together for some common causes. However, they seem to be overly optimistic about the outcome of Vatican Council II in suggesting that the Roman Catholic Church has given a clear signal that salvation can be found outside of her. Surely it is right to suggest that in many respects

we have much in common with various denominations, and with the Catholic Church, in an increasingly post-Christian culture. But the issue of the Gospel by faith alone still rightly separates us.

Colson's and Vaughn's solution to the ills of the church is a renewed sense of the fear of the Lord, but they do not discuss how the Church is to develop this fear. There is no mention in the book of the Judgment Seat of Christ, the future accountability of believers, and the motivation of rewards or loss of eternal reward. The NT points to the day of future accountability as a reason for the believer to conduct himself in holy fear during the course of his life (Rom 14:10-13; 2 Cor 5:9-11; 1 Pet 1:13-17). The inclusion of such references would have greatly strengthened their argument.

The book concludes with an example of the fear of God in a believer on death row. The story is gripping and moving, but short of a death-row experience, what will move Christians out of complacency and contentment with this present world, since there is no mention of judgment of believers for their works?

Robert W. Oliver

Pastor, Forked River Baptist Church
Lanoka Harbor, NJ

No God But God: Breaking with the Idols of Our Age. Edited by Os Guinness and John Seel. Chicago: Moody Press, 223 pp. Cloth, \$16.99.

The preacher of Ecclesiastes, Qoheleth, warns us that the writing of many books is endless and wearying to the soul. But here is a welcome exception. In *No God But God* one finds the insight most evangelicals have come to appreciate from Guinness and the irenic spirit one often fails to experience in evangelicalism. This is not just another shallow Christian cultural analysis. This is top-flight reflection and writing. It comes from authors who are well versed in the Scriptures, who know their field of scientific expertise, and who possess spiritual sensitivity as they express their findings and feelings.

The editors and contributing authors have taken on a challenge of Herculean proportions. They face the possible danger of encountering the wrath of many evangelicals who might realize that the authors are talking about them. *No God But God* examines and evaluates the present Christian culture through the lens of history and Scripture and has come

to a painful diagnosis: The Church has strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel or two. The focus of the book is to investigate the idol factory of twentieth century American Christianity. This is done as the writers examine the precarious connection of the Church with "political agendas," management and marketing theories (a.k.a. the church growth craze), Christian pop psychology, and the "D.Min-ization" (the search for security and significance) of the modern pastor.

The authors demonstrate biblical insight, cultural awareness, and historical erudition as they evaluate the idols which have been constructed within evangelicalism that have both a short-term function and a long-term foundation. They refuse to lower themselves to name calling and, in fact, identify very few individuals with the issues that are evaluated. However, you will frequently be able to guess who's who.

This is a book that will force you to examine what the authors are saying and evaluate your own ministry in light of their insights. Since you cannot and should not read all of the Christian cultural studies on the market, *No God But God* is one you really should not miss.

Fred Chay

Director, Christian Medical and Dental Society
Western Division
Redlands, CA

Dr. Dobson: *Turning Hearts Toward Home*. By Rolf Zettersten. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989. 183 pp. Cloth, \$10.99.

This reviewer is a long-time listener to Dr. James Dobson and his "Focus on the Family" radio broadcast. I have found his insights on the family to be very helpful and biblically based.

It was thus with great interest that I read this biography. I like biographies; they help me walk in someone else's shoes. This book provides helpful insights into the life of Dr. James Dobson. It repeats and expands upon many of the stories about Dobson which have been aired on the radio broadcasts. Here is a man dedicated to prayer, Bible study, church, family, and serving God in all he does. His is a life that challenges others to serve God wholeheartedly.

There was a surprising element in the book for me. Dr. Dobson was so driven for a time that some people in his ministry found him a very rough taskmaster. While I suppose there were hints of this on the radio

broadcast, I never really thought of Dobson as driven and hard-driving before.

While I greatly admire Dr. Dobson and his ministry, I cannot end this review without pointing out the one grievous fault I see in his ministry and in his biography as well.

While clear and biblical on family issues, Dobson is terribly unclear and unbiblical on the Gospel. He believes that Christians can lose their salvation and that it requires great diligence and care to “stay saved”! The following is what he told his son, Ryan, immediately after Pete Maravich died in his arms: “My message to you is *Be There!* Be there to meet your mother and me in heaven. We will be looking for you on that glad morning. Don’t let anything deter you from keeping that appointment . . .” (p. 179, italics his).

He then addresses the reader and says: “That message . . . is also the heart and soul of what I have to convey to this present generation. *Be There!* That must be our ultimate objective in living!” (p. 179, italics his).

So, while this is a helpful biography, let the reader beware. This book garbles the Gospel and undermines assurance. I recommend it only for well-grounded believers.

Robert N. Wilkin
Executive Director
Grace Evangelical Society
Roanoke, TX

PERIODICAL REVIEWS

"The Disappearing Disciple: Why Is the Use of 'Disciple' Limited to the Gospels and Acts?," Lawrence O. Richards, *Evangelical Journal* 10, 1992, pp. 3-11.

Students of the Bible have long observed that the term *disciple* is absent from the NT epistles. Richards, a well-known author and former teacher at Wheaton Graduate School, offers a novel and fresh explanation for the missing term. However, his solution itself is not without problems.

Richards explains that the early church rejected the use of the term *disciple* as it left Judaism to form a new and separate faith. He claims that rejection of discipleship as a model for Christian growth had its origin in Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees. They reproduced themselves in disciples who were equally full of pride and externalism because their system promoted religious elitism. However, Jesus' system of discipleship is unique because He is the Word Incarnate.

Richards goes so far as to argue that Jesus explicitly rejects the Judaistic model of discipleship. He cites two passages. In Matt 23:9-12 Jesus taught that no one should be called "Rabbi" or "Teacher" except Himself because "the greatest among you will be your servant." Also, in Matt 20:25-28 Jesus forbade a leadership style that lords it over people.

The NT church, Richards contends, rejected the elitist model of Judaistic discipleship in favor of a model of shepherding and nurture. So, he says, must the Church today.

Though Richards's argument is interesting as a fresh approach, it is fraught with weaknesses. First, Richards has an unrealistic view of authority in the Church. Authority will always be recognized in the Church, whether formally or informally. One who is gifted or has advanced training, experience, age, or maturity will usually be looked upon as an authority figure and expected to mentor or share his knowledge with others in a local assembly.

Second, the discipleship process does not necessarily have to take on *an authoritarian structure* or *air* as it did with the Jews. Discipleship can be achieved, and achieved better, using *a servant model* of leadership. The error with the Pharisaic model was not the structure as much as the underlying spiritual values which inevitably produced legalism,

externalism, and pride instead of spirituality, servanthood, and humility. Richards has thrown the proverbial baby out with the bath water.

Third, the epistles *do* assume a model of leadership (e.g., evangelists and pastor-teachers) responsible for equipping others for the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11). Also, church leaders are to teach others (e.g., 1 Tim 3:2; 4:11; 2 Tim 2:2) and teachers are, by virtue of their position, more of an authority and consequently more accountable (Jas 3:1).

Richards too quickly dismisses the method used successfully by churches, individuals, Bible colleges, and seminaries today for a method he never really clarifies. We admit that there are narrow perceptions of discipleship in the Church which *do* promote elitism among Christians. We agree with his admonition to the Church to exercise authority from the position of servanthood. But authority and elitism are not necessarily yokefellows.

The absence of the word *disciple* from the epistles does not mean the absence of the concept of discipleship. Paul communicates the essence of discipleship in words like *imitator* and *imitate*, by which he ultimately teaches the imitation of Christ (cf. 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 1 Thess 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7, 9). Christlikeness is the goal of all discipleship.

One question Richards never raises or answers is derived from Matt 28:19-20. If Jesus condemned discipleship as a model for the Church, why does He command it as the way to reach the world? Discipleship, as the activity that brings people into Christlikeness, will forever remain the essential activity of biblical churches and will be effective as long as it is done in humility.

The reader will find that the article's real value is the historical study of discipleship. Richards's thesis, though stimulating to one's thinking, does not pass the tests of biblical verification and pragmatic experience.

Charles C. Bing
Editorial Board

Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society
Pastor, Burleson Bible Church
Burleson, TX

"Unless A Man Is Born Again . . ." by R. C. Sproul, *Tabletalk* 17, February 1993, pp. 40-41.

Sproul begins well: "To describe someone as a born-again Christian is (technically speaking) to be guilty of redundancy. There is no such thing as a nonborn-again Christian. An unregenerate (nonborn-again) Christian is a contradiction in terms" (p. 40).

From here the article—forgive the pun—degenerates.

Sproul repeats the illogical and unbiblical theological construct of modern Reformed thought: "Regeneration is not the fruit or result of faith. Rather, regeneration precedes faith as the necessary condition of faith" (p. 41).

One wonders how anyone could possibly draw such a conclusion from the passage from which the article's title is drawn. The point of John 3:1-18 is that regeneration cannot occur apart from faith.

Reformed theology counters that unbelievers are spiritually dead and unable to believe without being regenerated (p. 41). However, while it is true that unbelievers are spiritually dead, it is not true that they are unable to believe apart from regeneration.

Spiritual deadness does not mean that a person is incapable of responding to God's drawing. Why else would Satan need to blind the minds of those who do not believe, "lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them" (2 Cor 4:4)? Why else would the devil need to "come and take away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:13)?

Cornelius, a spiritually dead unbeliever, sought God and prayed for help. While he was fasting, God told him through an angel, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God" (Acts 10:31).

While unbelievers will never seek God if left to their own initiative (Rom 3:11), they can, like Cornelius, seek God in response to His drawing of them.

Regeneration occurs at the moment of faith—and not a moment before!

Robert N. Wilkin
Executive Director
Grace Evangelical Society
Roanoke, TX

"An Unchanging Standard," R. C. Sproul, *Tabletalk* 17, April 1993, pp. 4-6.

This article deals with biomedical ethics. Sproul argues that God's Word, not the U.S. Supreme Court, should be our guide in these matters. He rightly rejects the relativism of our day for biblical absolutism. And, while he acknowledges that some biomedical questions today require great wisdom (e.g., whether to remove life-support systems), he feels that it is possible by applying the principles of God's Word to make God-pleasing decisions.

The reader, however, should beware of some statements at the end of the article. There Sproul seems to imply that those who make biomedical decisions which are contrary to Scripture will go to hell. Note the following statement: "God's law is law. It requires a response of obedience for which we are held accountable, absolutely. The Last Judgment prophesied by the New Testament refers to a final absolute tribunal from which there is no court of appeals. This tribunal is a cosmic Supreme Court" (p. 6).

Then he goes on to say, "The Final Judgment will be the occasion for final and ultimate law enforcement. Lawlessness and disobedience will be punished according to justice. Obedience will result in the distribution of rewards" (p. 6).

There are two problems with these remarks. First, Sproul seems to forget that believers sometimes make bad, even sinful, choices. Taken in one way, his remarks could even be thought to teach that ongoing obedience is a condition for eternal life.

Second, there will be no rewards given out at the Final Judgment. The Great White Throne Judgment is only for unbelievers. There will be no believers there (cf. Rev 20:11-15).

Believers who live faithful lives will receive rewards, yes. But they will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a final judgment to determine who goes to heaven. Believers will never come into such a judgment; they have already passed from death to life (John 5:24).

Robert N. Wilkin
Executive Director
Grace Evangelical Society
Roanoke, TX

"A Wild Play of Fantasy: How Music Can Be Destructive to the Soul,"
Kyle Henderson, *Tabletalk* 17, February 1993, pp. 16-18.

Henderson is a former professional bass player and singer of the rock 'n' roll variety. In this short article he suggests that one's taste in music is not necessarily amoral. Some musical tastes, he says, are contrary to the "aesthetic norms rooted in creation" and hence are "aesthetically degenerate" (p. 17).

There is much of value in this article. The author challenges us to judge music just as we do photographs, paintings, plays, movies, and television shows. Some styles of music may be harmful and destructive even if the lyrics themselves are unoffensive—indeed even if the lyrics are theologically sound.

In our pluralistic age many are saying just the opposite: that taste in music is totally neutral. As a result some churches use rock 'n' roll and even heavy metal music in their services. I agree with Henderson: music is not morally neutral. Some styles are destructive, dangerous, and inappropriate vehicles for the communication of biblical truths or simply for the enjoyment of committed Christians.

So, let the beat go on—as long as the beat is consistent with the "aesthetic norms rooted in creation."

Robert N. Wilkin

Executive Director

Grace Evangelical Society

Roanoke, TX

"Four Questions Christians Must Answer Anew," Dave Breese,
Special Publication of Christian Destiny, Inc., June 1989.

Dave Breese, known to many through his speaking, writing, and radio ministries, has produced a very valuable, though brief, essay touching on four important topics. The second of these should be of special interest to readers of *JOTGES*. The four questions he discusses are: (1) Why did Christ come into the world? (2) What must I do to be saved? (3) What is the mandate for the Church? and (4) What form does the kingdom take in our world?

Concerning the second question, "What must I do to be saved?", Breese defends the Free Grace position. He then takes the Lordship

Salvation view to task on five particulars: (1) It tends to deny the doctrine of imputed righteousness; (2) It tends to deny that there are imperfect believers; (3) It weakens the body of truth for believers because it is pointless to admonish believers to good behavior if good behavior is inevitable for true believers; (4) By requiring faithfulness as a condition to be saved, it militates against assurance of salvation; (5) It obscures the difference between salvation and discipleship.

This is a concise and refreshing article which would make a handy reference or handout. Dave Breese is to be commended for taking a strong Free Grace stand in his ministry and for not waffling either in print or in person on this vital issue.

Stan Nelson
Port Byron, IL

"What is the Message of 1 John?", Gary W. Derickson, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January–March 1993, pp. 89–105.

Derickson tackles one of the most difficult problems in the NT. He begins by presenting the two major views of 1 John. The "Tests of Life" view seeks to assure believers of their salvation by applying a variety of "tests" to their lives. The Fellowship view sees John encouraging believers to "maintain fellowship with God" and "to provide assurance of that fellowship through tests . . ." (p. 95).

He then evaluates the two views. He accomplishes this by employing six selected questions to resolve major issues.

Derickson attempts to demonstrate that the two major views of 1 John are *not* mutually exclusive. He suggests that one should use "both [purpose] statements . . . in seeking to ascertain the message of 1 John" (p. 105). One must then evaluate each passage in the epistle to decide its meaning in light of which purpose it fulfills. Only then can one arrive at what Derickson calls John's "overarching purpose" (p. 105).

Derickson's spirit is commendable. He is not contentious. He presents the two views well, though his treatment is perhaps a bit generalized.

His analysis reflects thought and insight. For example, he points out that 1 John 1 is the major obstacle to the Tests of Life view. He recognizes 3:1–10a as the biggest challenge to the Fellowship view.

The article is not without problems, however. It seeks to wed two

views which are exegetically and theologically *incompatible*. They have no business even "dating"!

The major problem with Derickson's attempt is in the very nature of the Tests of Life view. As an assurance approach, it doesn't assure.

In this vein, Derickson explains that while "the Gospel [of John] was written so the readers could *have* eternal life . . . the epistle was written so that the readers could *know* that they have eternal life" (p. 91, emphasis supplied). This is conceptually flawed.

The Gospel properly understood and believed inherently brings assurance. This was true for a group of Samaritans (John 4:39-42), for the man born blind (John 9:36-38), and for Martha (John 11:25-27). They *knew* that they had eternal life!

John's Gospel gives assurance upon the exercise of faith. No "follow-up" work is needed—especially work which actually adds doubt, not assurance! If we look to our lives instead of to the promises of God, we will *never* have assurance.

Derickson suggests that each of the purposes in question be seen as a "subpurpose." Then "the influence of those purposes on their immediate contexts must be recognized and properly utilized in discerning John's intended meaning . . ." (p. 105). These meanings are considered with "the message of the epistle as a whole, as introduced in its prologue . . ." (p. 105), and the proper interpretation is reached.

So one is left to evaluate each passage to see which purpose it fulfills. Derickson provides little help here, except perhaps the earlier reference to 1 John 1 and 3 [1-10a] belonging to the Fellowship and Tests of Life views, respectively.

A fatal flaw in this approach is that only one passage, 1 John 5:9-13, deals primarily with assurance. *That* assurance is available to all who believe the testimony of God, apart from any alleged "tests of life."

What then *is* the message of 1 John? Derickson never clearly states the "overarching purpose" of 1 John. Since he believes neither of the traditional purposes is adequate, Derickson should clearly articulate his own view of the message of 1 John so that the readers can evaluate it.

Dan Hauge

Pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Church
George, IA

A HYMN OF GRACE

FRANCES A. MOSHER

Pianist, Christ Congregation
Dallas, Texas

JESUS LIVES AND SO SHALL I

Christian F. Gellert
Translated by Philip Schaff

Jesus lives, and so shall I.
Death! thy sting is gone forever!
He who deigned for me to die,
Lives, the bands of death to sever.
He shall raise me with the just:
Jesus is my Hope and Trust.

Jesus lives and reigns supreme;
And His Kingdom still remaining,
I shall also be with Him,
Ever living, every reigning.
God has promised: be it must;
Jesus is my Hope and Trust.

Jesus lives, I know full well,
Naught from Him my heart can sever,
Life nor death nor powers of hell,
Joy nor grief, henceforth forever.
None of all His saints is lost;
Jesus is my Hope and Trust.

Jesus lives, and death is now
But my entrance into glory.
Courage, then, my soul, for thou
Hast a crown of life before thee;
Thou shalt find thy hopes were just;
Jesus is the Christian's trust.

"Jesus Lives and So Shall I" is worthy to be called a hymn of grace because of its unconditional expression of the absolute assurance of the

believer's salvation. The hymn proclaims that this assurance is based solely upon Christ's death for us (stanza 1), and God's promise to us (stanza 2), and that the Lord's resurrection is our positive proof that His sacrifice on our behalf secured everlasting life for those who believe. The final phrase of each stanza emphasizes that the Lord Jesus, rather than one's own merits, is the true basis of the believer's hope and trust. Perhaps the author had been meditating on 1 John 5:13: "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God" (NKJV).

Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (whose middle name means "God-fearing") was a German poet who lived from 1715 to 1769. He wrote many hymns which became popular with both Lutherans and Roman Catholics.¹ Philip Schaff (1819–1893) translated the lyrics into English. Schaff was born in Switzerland and educated in Germany. After coming to the United States he became a professor at the German Reformed Seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, in 1844. In 1870, he became a professor at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He edited a great deal of theological literature, including an American adaptation of Herzog's *Realencyclopädie* and a series of translations of the church fathers.²

The hymn tune "Zuversicht" was written by the post-Reformation composer, Johann Cruger (1598–1662), who served for forty years as cantor of St. Nicholas Church in Berlin.³ The Reformation's revival of congregational singing created a need for suitable hymn tunes. Cruger was one of the outstanding composers of such melodies.

Reynolds evaluates him highly:

Cruger was a skillful composer and his tunes are sturdy, simple, and syllabic, with firm metrical rhythm. There is a lyric quality quite unlike the early, primitive chorale melodies.⁴

Gellert's words, skillfully put into English by Schaff and wedded to Cruger's strong melody, make for a powerful statement of the grace of God in Christ.

¹ *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 208.

² *Ibid.*, 461.

³ William Jensen Reynolds, *A Survey of Christian Hymnody* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The second part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The third part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The fourth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The fifth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The sixth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The seventh part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The eighth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The ninth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time. The tenth part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is a branch of linguistics which deals with the changes in the language over time.

