

PSALLO

Psalm 116:1–9

The Psalm setting you have before you this year makes use of a new melody and metrical translation the author hopes will lend itself to ease of learning, singing, and memorization. The Psalm is an orphan Psalm, that is, it has no title ascribing historical circumstance, authorship, or other details. Further, it is one of the Hallelujah Psalms, that collection of Psalms (113–118) sung by Hebrew believers as a part of their Passover celebration, and one most probably found upon the lips of the Lord Jesus after He instituted the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:30). The translation is very straightforward, with only a few very small deviations from the original in order to render this Hymn more suited to English meter. The tune is simple, sober, and yet retains some of the joy and peace of the Psalmist as he recounts the greatness of the Lord to him.

Scholarship is divided regarding the authorship and occasion of the writing of Psalm 116. Davidic authorship is held by Calvin, Henry, and others. The eminent E. W. Hengstenberg holds that it was written after the return from the exile. William Plumer, in his worthy commentary on the Psalms prefers to remain agnostic on the authorship and occasion, stating, "The character of the ode defies all attempts to fix it to any one occasion." For my part, I am inclined to understand the Psalm, as did the ancient Hebrews, as written in the days of Hezekiah, descriptive of his affliction with illness unto death, and his gracious deliverance from the Lord. In more modern times this view has been advanced by John Morison, D.D., Scottish Divine of the 18–19th century in his 8–volume commentary on the Psalms, as well as by others. If written in the days of Hezekiah, the exact author could be Isaiah, another of the school of the prophets, or even Hezekiah himself. If one compares the language of Isaiah 38:10–20 to Psalm 116, there are a number of phrases that evince a similarity in support of this view that while not rising to the level of certainty, will commend it to our consideration.

As for the Psalm itself, as has been intimated above, it is a Psalm expressing the love of the Psalmist for the Lord for hearing him, helping him, granting him rest, dealing in bounty with him, and delivering him from death. It is a Psalm of grateful and loving response to the Lord for His merciful and gracious ways of dealing with His people, and especially this

individual author. It is interesting to note that as with many of the Psalms the author enjoys a blessing from the Lord that is quite personal, and yet desires to make it known, to proclaim his thanks unto the Lord in a very public sense. This public sense is seen in these expressions:

First, his expression of walking before the Lord "in the lands of the living ones" (verse 9) clearly expresses the desire of the Psalmist to involve himself in the communion of saints. In other words, his deliverance is not unto himself considered as a private individual, enjoying his deliverance from death, but as a man desiring to commune with his brethren in the life that he has been given from the Lord.

Second, he declares that he will "take the cup of salvation"—a clear reference to the Passover, which was both a communal and private meal, having aspects of both. His deliverance, according to the Psalmist, has much larger implications than those of a private man, as it frees him unto the public sacramental observance of his day.

Third, there is the fulfilling of his vows unto the Lord "in the presence of all His people" (verse 14). Here again although his deliverance from death was private in the sense that it was he who was sick, he considers his commitments and vows to the Lord in those days of affliction a matter to be consummated publicly, for the benefit and encouragement of himself, and for the Church of his day.

Fourth, verses 17–19 present the desire of the Psalmist to offer yet another public display of his thankfulness for the Lord's great deliverance, that of a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and that accompanied with the paying of vows, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of Jerusalem. Surely this author was quite forward to have others in the Church of his day rejoice with him in his deliverance.

However, these expressions of public joy and praise for private deliverance speak also of the character of the Psalmist here as a public person. This has been recognized in that many of our Fathers in the faith have seen David as the author, and others even Hezekiah himself, or one of the "men of Hezekiah" (Proverbs 25.1) in behalf of the King. Seeing that the life of covenant king was bound up with the well being of the nation, deliverance of the king's life was not only a private affair, but a public one as well; hence the phrase "God save the King" (1 Samuel 10:24; 2 Samuel 16:16; 2 Kings 11:12; 2 Chronicles 23:11). In the deliverance of David, or Hezekiah, there is a deliverance of the nation; a right and joyful celebration of the blessing of the Lord upon His people to provide a wise and faithful king over His people to rule "in justice and in right." Psalm 72 also teaches this same principle in that while the Psalm is speaking in its immediate historical context of

Continued on Page 251.

THE AUTHOR: The Rev. Todd L. Ruddell is pastor of Christ Covenant Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCGA) in Wylie, Texas.

neglects the modal status of both the granted premise and the theistic conclusion. The overall conclusion of our discussion is that a transcendental argument intended to establish the necessity of God's existence must be *purely* transcendental²¹—i.e., it must be composed *exclusively* of necessary truths.■²²

Review: Douglas Bond, *The Mighty Weakness of John Knox*. D.M. Lloyd-Jones and Iain Murray, *John Knox and the Reformation*. Continued from Page 212

already discovered, and which had been forgotten" (13). This is a salutary point in today's church, where many people seem to think that church history started in 1517.

The bad point is a small indication that Lloyd-Jones was influenced by R.T. Kendall's "Calvin versus the Calvinists" school. He lambastes the "scholastic philosophy" of the Medieval period (pp. 18–19), as if the term "scholastic" indicated the content of what was taught rather than the method (Richard Muller, in particular, has been helpful in making the point that "scholasticism" refers to a method of teaching, not the content of what is taught).

The second essay is a bit more helpful, in this reviewer's opinion. He praises John Knox's "sense of discrimination" (42), a quality that we usually refer to today as "discernment." He argues that this quality was one of the most outstanding features of his life, alongside "shrewdness" (43), "wisdom" (44), and "moderation" (45). This last characteristic sounds pretty silly when talking about John Knox, a man not precisely known for moderating his tone. However, there are some examples of moderation in Knox's life that show that he could be moderate sometimes. This reviewer would have appreciated a few more examples to counter-balance the evidence for the opposite position taken by many historians.

In getting to the thesis itself, he argues that originality as a character trait was one of the hallmarks of both Knox and the Puritans (52). Furthermore, the principle that the Scriptures have the supreme authority in our lives is also one the Puritans upheld (although it can certainly be argued that all the Reformers did this). The third piece of evidence he adduces is that Knox put into practice his principles (55–56), surely a characteristic of the Puritans, if there ever was one.

One last fascinating historical point that Lloyd-Jones explains is the origin of the so-called "Black rubric," a sheet of paper added to the Book of Common Prayer by Cranmer, but, as Lloyd-Jones argues, forced to do so by John Knox (pp. 58–63). This sheet of paper had a warning in it designed to be a compromise between the Anglicans and the Puritans concerning kneeling during the Lord's Supper. The rubric explains that such kneeling has nothing to do with adoration or worship of the elements or anything else. Lloyd-Jones's conclusion concerning the Black Rubric is that "Here is proof positive that this man was the leader of the Puritan party in this explicit manner" (63).

Murray's essay is purely biographical, in order to complement Lloyd-Jones's more thesis-oriented essays. It is entitled "John Knox and 'The Battle.'" Murray desires to point out how controversial a figure Knox was (83). After a helpful and orderly marching through the key events in Knox's life, Murray ends with a section entitled "What We May Learn from Knox" (pp. 114ff). The first helpful point he makes here is that we have an advantage that Knox never had. He had to fight against every tradition, because almost every tradition in the church was bad. We, however, have many good traditions which we do not have to jettison. The second helpful point is that Knox engaged in a very extensive ministry of encouragement (120). Knox used key doctrines like election to encourage people (see the same point made above concerning the Bond book). The third point he makes is about the power of preaching. In an age where digital media are constantly threatening to make preaching obsolete, we must never lose faith in the God of the Word, who has promised us that His Word will never return to us void. This reviewer does recommend this book also as a helpful analysis of several key issues in play during the time of the Scottish Reformation. It is a great place to get one's feet wet in Scottish church history, which has Knox for its main fountainhead.

Psallo. Psalm 116:1–9. Continued from Page 213.

Solomon, it speaks prophetically of Christ and His eternal reign. "God save the King" applies most assuredly to Christ as the King of Israel forever, and hearing the proclamation of the Psalmist in 72.15 "and he shall live!" gives great comfort to us in that we know that our King reigns by the power of an endless life.

Finally, as we meditate upon Psalm 116 let us see our Lord prophetically represented as that public Person whose deliverance from death brings joy and salvation to His people. Let us remember that the Father always hears Him (v. 2, cf. John 11:42). In His being brought low, and in His exaltation, (v 6–8) our salvation is accomplished. In His taking the cup of salvation (v. 13, cf. Matthew 26:27), and in keeping His covenant bond with the Father (v. 18, cf. Titus 1:2), our King takes our sins to Himself, and provides for us a righteousness not our own. As He calls us to Jerusalem for the great feast (vv. 18–19), so we are gathered to Him. And as He lives, so shall we live also (v. 19, cf. John 14:19).

TODD L. RUDELL ■

21. On the basis of my work in the present paper, I have articulated three different argument patterns for theistic arguments (see my forthcoming "Rejoinder to Anderson" for my best formulation of these). The Modal Transcendental Argument Form is logically equivalent to a pattern III theistic argument where all premises are necessary truths.

22. I thank Bill Evans and John Wingard for helpful conversations and comments concerning this paper.

Psalm 116:1-19

Ahavti-Yahveh

Todd L. Ruddell

¹ I love the LORD be - cause my voice my sup - pli - ca - tion heard.
⁴ And then up - on the Name of the LORD, up - on Him did I call.
⁷ Now to thee my soul I say re - turn un - to thy place of rest
¹⁰ I be - liev - ed there - fore will I speak, I was af - flict - ed sore.
¹⁴ I'll pay my vows now to the LORD be - fore His peo - ple all.
¹⁷ Thank - off - rings I to thee will bring, and up - on the LORD's Name call.

² And while I live I'll cry to Him for to me His ear He turn'd.
 I cried O LORD I Thee be - seech, de - liv - er Thou my soul.
 For the LORD has un - to thee made known His boun - ty thus ex - press'd.
¹¹ I in my haste de - clar - ed did that all men li - ars are.
¹⁵ Dear in the LORD's sight is the death of His saints when they fall.
¹⁸ I'll pay my vows now to the LORD be - fore His peo - ple all,