

work of “the character fitness of the last generation” (69). When this work is done, that is, when God's people demonstrate the perfection of their characters, God's character will be gloriously vindicated in the whole universe and Jesus will return.

In relation to his arguments in this book, I want to contest Douglass on two points. First, in this book, he presupposes that the second coming of Christ has been delayed. But in this presupposition he overlooks the fact that the concept of delay is possible only from a human perspective. From God's perspective, nothing is delayed, for He is the God for whom there is no past, no present, and no future.

Secondly, it is also hard for me to agree with the author on his idea of “divine-human cooperation” (63) in the work of human salvation. It seems to me that Douglass argues that the completion of the plan of salvation is dependent on human works, for he believes that God is waiting for the demonstration of the perfection of character by human beings, and that this is why Christ has not come yet. In this argument, however, one important fact is ignored. It is that the plan of salvation is entirely God's work. The perfection of character, if it were possible, is to be understood as one of the results of God's salvific work, not as the condition of Christ's coming, for this great event of the Second Coming is also a part of the plan of salvation.

Despite these perceived weaknesses in its argument, this book, though quantitatively small, is quite commendable to those who study the doctrines of the sanctuary and salvation, for the following two reasons. First, it presents the significance of the sanctuary doctrine, which has been ignored for a long time by most of the schools of Christian theology. The other reason is that this book gives us an overall picture of the great controversy between good and evil. The author, throughout the whole book, tries to show the inseparable relationship between the great controversy theme and the plan of salvation.

Kyung Ho Song

Johnsson, William G. *Glimpses of Grace: Scenes from My Journey*.

Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2001. 126 pp.

In seventeen brief chapters, Johnsson provides a biblical exposition on grace. He does not approach this subject from a strictly theological perspective. Rather, his approach is experimental; that is, for Johnsson, grace is the fruition of living life to the fullest because of the indwelling Christ. Indeed, “there is a word that, better than any other, describes Jesus. Grace” (24).

While the book holds theological language to a minimum, this does not mean that Johnsson disregards exegesis. Indeed, to the contrary, he makes excellent use of exegetical method, as can be easily detected in his word studies (for example, see his description of *sapros*, “decayed,” “rotten,” on p. 74) and extended discussions on certain pericopes (for example, see his evaluation of 2 Cor 12:7-10

on pp. 99-101). His base is the Bible as the authoritative word of God. From this platform he launches his exposé on grace. But he delivers grace from the clutches of theological jargon and places the effects and blessings of this totally free, undeserved gift of God to humanity, within the flesh of life. Grace is not merely a word or a concept; it is a living, breathing, feeling experience. This experience affects our laughter (32-37), our family relations (60-70), our speech (71-77); (he describes encouraging words as “grace bouquets” on p. 76), and in fact, all of life. So while Johnsson has not written a theological treatise, strictly speaking, his work is entirely theological. What draws the reader’s attention is that grace is operative in life; hence, the subtitle, “Scenes from My Journey.”

Using a narrative approach, Johnsson effectively illustrates grace within the gifts of life: freedom, being oneself, being surrounded by beauty, and so forth. Totalitarian societies that are based on suspicion, phoniness, force, and fear (33-35) deface grace. Yet grace is demonstrated in the “obedience of poverty” (50), as seen in children. They receive freely with happiness and joy.

The child is a pauper, and so are we. But the child can respond with a smile, a squeal of delight That gift costs nothing but means everything. And we come to God with nothing in our hand. Any monetary offering seems an insult; any good deed we might claim, a banality. We can give only a poor man’s gift, but that means everything to God. We can . . . be content to receive without deserving and without returning. (Ibid.)

For Johnsson, grace is help from outside, as illustrated in the experience of Hagar (57). It is like the atmosphere, all around us, yet we may not be cognizant of it. “Grace is as close as the nose on your face, but you can go through life and not see it” (21). That is why we must turn to Jesus, because He is “grace personified” (26), as demonstrated in His life of active goodness, compassion, thoughtfulness, giving, and forgiving (25-31). Our only condition for receiving the gift of grace is our need of it. And in this regard, Jesus is “reckless in His generosity” (27). Hence, Johnsson can conclude, “*As powerful a force as evil is in our world, grace is even more powerful*” (119, emphasis his).

Despite its many positive features, I have three concerns regarding this book:

1. Since grace is a marvelous gift, there should be an expression of gratitude and praise. One is surprised that Johnsson does not dedicate at least one chapter to describe this response.

2. In noting that grace does not keep score of wrongs, Johnsson presents several examples of the effects of the “payback” mentality which characterizes those who do not operate by grace. One of these examples deals with the sensitive factor of racial realities in the USA. He says, “Time was when no Southern jury would bring down a guilty verdict for a White man’s atrocity against a Black. Is it any wonder that the Los Angeles jury in O. J. Simpson’s first trial acquitted him

after minimal deliberation?" (30). In this question, Johnsson reflects his own bias. It suggests the assumption that Simpson was guilty and explains his acquittal as merely a revenge factor by a majority black jury. How then would he explain the second trial where a majority white jury convicted Simpson? Perhaps we all need to live the dictum, "Grace gives, and grace forgives" (31).

(3) After detailing the feeling of being unwelcome in the graceless former East Berlin, Johnsson describes his joy in crossing back to West Berlin. He says, "Dragging our cases, we came to a line across the road. We looked up and saw, instead of slogans vaunting the triumph of capitalism, neon signs and billboards for Coke and McDonald's" (37). The idea is suggestive that big businesses are a symbol of true freedom. This does not show sensitivity for those, especially in the developing world, who are all too familiar with the greed and exploitation of big businesses.

However, Johnsson is not a person of malice. In fact, I am touched by his honesty and openness—that he is not a perfect family man (65) or that he spoke words that hurt and wounded others (74). The reader can identify with him. He recognizes his weaknesses and failures but lives by the grace of God so abundantly and freely given. Indeed, while Johnsson does not define grace, upon completing this book, the reader knows exactly what grace is. Grace, like love, is better *experienced* than *explained*.

For the sheer power of its depth of thought, clarity of expression, and gripping illustrations, this book stands in the same aisle with Philip Yancey's bestseller, *What's So Amazing About Grace?* It teaches us to be more than friendly. Be gracious!

I believe that the learned theologian, ordinary churchgoer, and even the casual reader will find rich benefit in reading this book. *Glimpses of Grace* is the kind of book you would like to gobble up in one sitting, but are obliged to digest slowly, thoughtfully, like a cow chewing its cud.

Kenneth D. Mulzac

Koranteng-Pipim, Samuel. *Must We Be Silent? Issues Dividing Our Church*. Ann Arbor, MI: Berean, 2001. 640 pp.

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