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# Evangelical Quarterly

**An International Review  
of Bible and Theology**  
in Defence of the Historic Christian Faith

Vol. LXXXIV No. 3 July 2012

Editors: I Howard Marshall, John-Paul Lotz,  
John G F Wilks



# 'One in Christ': Galatians 3:28 and the holiness agenda

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KEY WORDS: American Holiness Movement; slavery; women; abolitionism; Galatians; hermeneutics

## Introduction

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.' (Gal. 3:28 KJV)

These words have become, for many, a declaration of independence from human-fashioned boundaries, particularly those dividing ethnic groups, social classes and gender. One group which found this verse meaningful was the American holiness movement<sup>1</sup> which flourished in the nineteenth century and continues in several small evangelical denominations today. Those from the movement could be found at the forefront of the antebellum fight for abolitionism and women's rights, with Gal. 3:28 one weapon in their arsenal.

The importance they attached to this passage varied, however, depending on the issue. Like other abolitionists, those in the holiness movement made relatively little use of Gal. 3:28 in their argument. By contrast, they relied heavily on this verse when defending a woman's right to preach. After setting the holiness movement in its historical context, this paper explores the movement's varied use of Gal. 3:28 and addresses possible reasons for the shifting emphasis. We conclude by considering why the holiness movement was drawn to support radical social stands, using passages such as Gal. 3:28 for scriptural support.

The story of the American holiness movement begins in England with the Anglican cleric, John Wesley (1703–1791) who called people to conversion and entire sanctification. According to Wesley, sanctification restored the defaced image of creation, resulting in perfect love for God and humanity. 'Entire sanctification or Christian perfection', said Wesley, 'is neither more nor less than pure love; love expelling sin, and governing both the heart and life of a child of God. The Refiner's fire purges out all that is contrary to love'.<sup>2</sup> According to Wesley, this perfect love had social consequences as well. Although he considered him-

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1 This descriptive term, admittedly, is somewhat anachronistic since those Christians who championed holiness would not describe themselves as the holiness movement until the last half of the nineteenth century.

2 As quoted in Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, Studies in Evangelicalism 1 (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1980), 4.

self primarily an evangelist, Wesley worked tirelessly for the improvement of society, and insisted that those truly converted would do so as well.

As American Methodism mushroomed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, so too did the doctrine of Christian perfection, but with modifications. Wesley had emphasized the progressive nature of sanctification, but in America there was a growing tendency to regard sanctification as experienced in an instantaneous crisis. A major figure behind this shift was the Methodist lay woman, Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874). After experiencing entire sanctification, Palmer became the movement's leading spokesperson.<sup>3</sup>

Palmer promoted her 'altar theology', teaching that Christ is not only the sacrifice for sin, but also the altar on which Christians must offer themselves to God. In this act of total consecration, the altar sanctifies the gift. Process, struggle and long delay were unnecessary. If God wanted a person to be sanctified, which he surely did, one need only take the 'shorter way' and claim it by faith.<sup>4</sup> While professing to carry on Wesley's message, Palmer clearly carried it beyond Wesley.

Another important development was the use of the language of Pentecost to describe this second work of grace. The connection between sanctification and Pentecost is not prominent in Wesley, but is more prominent in the work of his designated successor, John Fletcher. Equating entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the use of Pentecostal language became the American holiness movement's preferred way of promoting the experience in the mid to late 19th century.

Wesley's emphasis on social transformation crossed the pond, at least among some of his followers. The Wesleyan Methodist Connection, formed in 1843, was the first denomination to have an explicit article of religion devoted to entire sanctification. It was also composed of radicals who supported abolitionism and the ordination of women. The 1848 Women's Rights Convention was held in the Wesleyan Methodist church in Seneca Falls, NY. The Salvation Army is another group with both strong holiness roots and a very clear commitment to social ministries. Another holiness denomination, the Free Methodist Church, was begun by abolitionists and supporters of women's ordination. The church took its name, in part, from its refusal to charge rent for its pews, a practice seen as restricting access of the poor to worship.

### The use of the Bible in the struggle over slavery

To understand the holiness movement's use of Gal. 3:28, we must begin by considering how the Bible was used in the struggle over slavery. Those who held

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3 Charles E. White, *The Beauty of Holiness*, (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury-Zondervan, 1986), 9, 22. By 1870, Palmer's *Guide to Holiness*, reached a circulation higher than probably 90 percent of all magazines published in the United States at that time (White, *Beauty*, 92–94).

4 White, *Beauty*, 129–130.

that the Bible opposed slavery tended to rely on biblical principles rather than a more literal, grammatical and exegetical approach, the approach preferred by those who argued that the Bible did not oppose slavery.<sup>5</sup> Abolitionist Jonathan Blanchard contrasts the two approaches while expressing reluctance

to take a solemn practical question at first into Greek and Hebrew lexicons, grammars, critics, and commentators, one half of whose ideas are baked stiff in the oven of German hermeneutics. Before letting in what light may be had from these sources, (and a just use of them yields much) I have thought proper to argue the question of slavery upon the broad principle of common equity and common sense.<sup>6</sup>

### Galatians 3:28 in the struggle over slavery

One would think that a verse claiming there is neither slave nor free in Christ would play a key role in the debate over slavery. This verse, however, plays only a minor role in the struggle for the abolition of slavery.<sup>7</sup> When Jonathan Blanchard and N. L. Rice faced off on the topic of slavery over four days in October, 1845,

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- 5 It is something of a misnomer to refer to them as pro-slavery. Many, like Moses Stuart, were opposed to slavery but did not think such a view could be proven from scripture. Cf. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction Of Social Order: Religious Foundations of the Southern Slaveholders' World View', *Journal Of The American Academy Of Religion* 55 (1987): 211–233; Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as Theological Crisis*, (ed. William A. Blair; The Steven and Janice Rose Lectures in the Civil War Era; Chapel Hill: the University of North Carolina Press, 2006) 40, 50; Ralph C. Wood, 'Eugene Genovese and the Biblical Tragedy of the South', *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 28 (2001): 99–113; Moses Stuart, *Conscience and the Constitution with Remarks on the Recent Speech of the Hon. Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United States on the Subject of Slavery* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1850) 47, 69, 100, 111. Online: <http://books.google.com/books?id=ClSAAAAIAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Conscience+and+the+Constitution&cd=1#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
  - 6 *A Debate on Slavery: Held in The City of Cincinnati, on the First, Second, Third, and Sixth Days of October, 1854, Upon the Question: Is Slave-holding in itself Sinful, and the Relation Between Master and Slave, a Sinful Relation?* J. Blanchard and N. L. Rice. (Wm. H. Moore and Co., 1846; Reprinted NY: Negro Universities Press/Greenwood Publishing Corp., 1969) 228. Cf. Laura Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context: A Case Study in the Antebellum Debate Over Slavery', *Fides et Historia* 38 (2006): 47. One can find pro-slavery principlizers and exegeting abolitionists, contra J. Albert Harrill, 'The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy: A Case History in the Hermeneutical Tension between Biblical Criticism and Christian Moral Debate', *Religion and American Culture*, 10 (2000): 149–186, and Earl Eugene Eminhizer, 'Alexander Campbell and James Hartzell Interpret the Bible on Slavery', *The Iliff Review* 30 (1973):59-71. In 'The Scriptural Argument for Slavery' *The Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* 11 (1857): 30–44, the author argued for slavery both from proof-texts and from the principle of love for others.
  - 7 Contra Pamela Eisenbaum, 'Is Paul the Father of Misogyny and Antisemitism?' *Cross Currents* 50 (2000–2001):511.

Gal. 3:28 was only mentioned a handful of times.<sup>8</sup> Blanchard's strongest use of the verse was in his assertion that it abolished the Jewish institution of slavery. By drawing a parallel between how Jews treated slaves and women, Blanchard contended that Christianity also ameliorated the oppression of women as found in Judaism.<sup>9</sup>

Blanchard's limited use of Gal. 3:28 is typical of other abolitionists. An 1851 speech by Thomas T. Slone opposing the Fugitive Slave Law alludes only slightly to the verse.<sup>10</sup> Although Moses Stuart, the greatest American biblical scholar of the nineteenth century, defended the biblical basis for slavery, he stood personally opposed to the institution. In *Conscience and the Constitution* he argued for gradual emancipation from five biblical passages; Gal. 3:28 was not one of the five.<sup>11</sup>

Another influential abolitionist was Charles G. Finney (1792–1875). An effective evangelist, Finney also exercised significant influence on the theology and practice of nineteenth century American Christianity. He closely associated personal and social sin, insisting that the converted should work for the conversion of society's evils, such as slavery. It was the refusal to work for societal conversion which kept God from sending revival.<sup>12</sup> In all his attacks on slavery,

8 Blanchard and Rice, *A Debate on Slavery*. For an excellent treatment of this debate, cf. Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context'. Jonathan Blanchard was already associated with abolitionism when he moved to Cincinnati to pastor a Presbyterian church. He was influenced by Charles Finney, sharing his view that sin – including the sin of slavery, 'could and should be immediately conquered' (Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context', 41). Blanchard went on to become president of Wheaton College, a school that had originally been part of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (cf. Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979], 11).

9 'Blanchard hereby anticipated the argument that the biblical passage did not dissolve the biological and social distinction between men and women; that is, if progress had been made in the relation between the sexes, then there ought to be similar progress in the relation between slaves and masters' (Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context', 46).

10 *An Address before the Salem Female Anti-Slavery Society, at its Annual Meeting, December 7, 1851* (Salem, Mass.: William Ives, 1852), cited by Laura L. Mitchell, 'Matters of Justice Between Man and Man: Northern Divines, the Bible, and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850', in *Religion and the Antebellum Debate over Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 155.

11 The passages are Matthew 22:39; Matthew 7:12; Acts 17:26; Romans 3:29; and Ephesians 2:15 (Moses Stuart, *Conscience and the Constitution*, 100ff.).

12 Finney set the example for societal conversion, promoting the role of women by inviting them to speak at his revivals and by supporting the temperance movement. He became president at Oberlin College, a stop on the Underground Railroad and the first college in America to award the bachelors degree to women and African Americans (Jim Rice, 'The Roots of Justice Revival: During the Second Great Awakening, the Fruits of Conversion included Social Reform', *Sojourners Magazine* 37 [April 1, 2008]: 31). Finney would later back away from abolitionism, concerned it was diverting attention from the more important cause of evangelism (Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 32–33).

however, Finney makes little use of Gal. 3:28.

The minor role played by this verse is also evident in how little the passage troubled anti-abolitionists. They spend little time explaining it away, content to assert that the verse is to be interpreted spiritually, not literally. After all, it not only speaks of slave and free, but also male and female. These divinely instituted gender distinctions were still clearly in effect, they asserted, so those between slave and free must be as well.<sup>13</sup> Anti-abolitionists knew this verse was being used both by abolitionists and those supporting women's rights and intentionally point out how the verse connects these two issues. Their motive in doing so, however, is not to defend the status quo against a powerful *crux interpretum*, but to discredit abolitionism by associating it with those who 'unsex the female gender'.<sup>14</sup> Some anti-abolitionists actually used Gal. 3:28 to prove that slavery was practiced among Christians in the New Testament period and therefore slavery could not be sinful in itself.

### Galatians 3:28 in the holiness movement's fight for the abolition of slavery

The most prolific author in the holiness movement's fight against slavery was the Rev. Luther Lee (1800–1889). Lee left the Methodist Episcopal Church over the slavery issue to help found the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in 1843. Although lacking formal schooling, Lee developed a reputation as an intellect, earning the epithet, 'Logical Lee'.<sup>15</sup> In addition to numerous sermons and tracts on the subject, he wrote a full-length treatment, *Slavery Examined in the Light of the Bible*.<sup>16</sup> In all his vociferous and biblical attacks on slavery, Gal. 3:28 plays only a minor role.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Harrill, 'The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy', 170, citing James A. Sloan, *The Great Question Answered; or, Is Slavery a Sin in Itself* [Memphis, Tenn.: Hutton, Gallaway, 1857], 209). Dayton is correct that in this verse the issues of abolitionism and women's rights 'conjoin', but says too much when he refers to the verse as a 'crucial text', at least as it concerns abolitionists (Donald W. Dayton, introduction to *Five Sermons and a Tract by Luther Lee* [Chicago: Holrad House, 1975] 16).

14 Harrill, 'The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy', 185, n. 82.

15 William C. Kostlevy, 'Luther Lee and Methodist Abolitionism', *Methodist History* 20 (1982): 93. Additional bibliographic material can be found in Dayton, introduction to *Five Sermons and a Tract*, 9–10; Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 73–84.

16 Syracuse, NY: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1855. Republished by Negro History Press, Detroit, MI (n.d.).

17 Lee does not offer Galatians 3:28 among scriptural arguments against slavery in this book length argument, nor does he refer to the passage in 'Dying to the Glory of God' (1860), a sermon preached to commemorate the death of John Brown (Luther Lee, *Five Sermons and a Tract by Luther Lee* [ed. Donald W. Dayton; Chicago: Holrad House, 1975], 101–119). The evidence does not support Dayton's claim that Gal. 3:28 played an important role in Lee's abolitionism (Dayton, introduction to *Five Sermons and a Tract*, 16; Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 83).

When he cites the passage, it is for defensive purposes. Anti-abolitionists were arguing that slavery was not sinful because Paul knew of slavery and did not condemn it. Lee answered this objection by employing the Barnes Hypothesis. Albert Barnes was a nineteenth century anti-slavery Presbyterian who argued that when biblical authors use the Greek word, *doulos*, (as in Gal. 3:28), they are referring to something other than chattel slavery.<sup>18</sup> There are three Greek words which can be translated slave; the two that can only mean slave are absent from the New Testament. Lee, following Barnes, pointed out that the third word, *doulos*, 'may mean a slave, or a free person, who voluntarily serves another, or a public officer, representing the public or civil authority'.<sup>19</sup> Most of the New Testament uses of *doulos* refer to free rather than enslaved persons. For Lee this represents what is 'almost a moral demonstration, that the inspired penman did not mean to spread a justification of human bondage upon the record. There was a word which appropriately expressed a chattel slave which they have never used, but have always used a word which properly express [*sic*] the condition of free persons in the voluntary service of another...'.<sup>20</sup>

It is here that Lee makes one of his few references to Gal. 3:28. Although we cannot prove *doulos* here refers to a free servant, we need not see it as a reference to a chattel slave. Even if it did, this verse prohibits slavery among Christians for, as Lee put it, 'the gospel abolishes the relation of master and slave so soon as the parties are converted'.<sup>21</sup> Since Lee considered many slaves in the south as 'righteous' and 'members of the flock of Jesus Christ',<sup>22</sup> they should be immediately freed.<sup>23</sup>

### Galatians 3:28 in the fight for women's rights

Lee's very limited use of Gal. 3:28 in the fight for abolition becomes even more striking in light of the significant use he makes of it to promote women's rights. Already regarded as a supporter of the right of a woman to be ordained, Lee was asked to preach at the ordination of Antoinette Brown in the fall of 1853. He recognized Gal. 3:28 as 'a singular text from which to preach an Ordination sermon'<sup>24</sup> and he explains his reasoning:

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18 The Barnes hypothesis fell out of favor after its thrashing by Moses Stuart in *Conscience and the Constitution* (1850), though five years later Lee appears unaware of or unfazed by Stuart's argument (Harrill, 'The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy', 151).

19 Lee, *Slavery Examined*, 109.

20 Lee, *Slavery Examined*, 110–111.

21 Lee, *Slavery Examined*, 133.

22 Lee, *Slavery Examined*, 30–31.

23 In his commentary, Albert Barnes did not interpret Galatians 3:28 to support abolitionism (<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bnn/view.cgi?book=ga&chapter=003>; accessed 8/11/10).

24 Luther Lee, 'A Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel', *Five Sermons and a Tract by Luther Lee* (ed. Donald W. Dayton; Chicago: Holrad House, 1975), 79.

the text which I have selected for this occasion, presented itself to my mind and I reasoned thus: – 'I acknowledge the candidate [Antoinette Brown] to be in Christ, to be with me a sister in Christ; if I deny her the right to exercise her gifts as a Christian minister, I virtually affirm that there is male and female, and that we are not all one in Christ Jesus, by which I shall contradict St. Paul, and though he is not among us to reply to me, to know myself at variance with him, would give me more uneasiness than to differ from modern doctors of divinity, and divinity schools. I am then brought to this conclusion, which I will state in the form of a proposition as the sequence of the text. FEMALES HAVE A GOD-GIVEN RIGHT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL.'<sup>25</sup>

In the sermon Lee argues that 'males and females possess equal rights and privileges'. He comes short of an appeal for full equality, acknowledging '[t]here may be differences of rights and positions growing out of incidental relations, and conventional rules and usages, in matters which do not affect the fundamental rights of humanity...'.<sup>26</sup> Paul here counteracts the Judaizers by showing that Christians need not observe the Mosaic law.<sup>27</sup> This law had made a distinction between Jews and Gentiles and between Jewish men and Jewish women, the latter being excluded from the priesthood and saddled with other limitations.<sup>28</sup> With this verse,

[t]he Apostle clearly designs to say that females are exempt, under the gospel, from the disabilities imposed by the law, and that they enjoy equal rights with men. There is clearly an extension of their rights and privileges under the gospel, and if so, how far does such extension reach? The text fixes no limits, prescribes no bounds, names no places, occasions, subjects or duties, but affirms in general and unqualified terms, that there is neither male nor female, but that all are one in Christ Jesus, and this is done by way of proclaiming the abrogation of the Mosaic law, and it of necessity places males and females upon an equal platform of rights under the gospel.<sup>29</sup>

If it does not place male and female upon an equal footing, says Lee, neither does it place Jew and Gentile upon an equal footing.<sup>30</sup> For Lee, Gal. 3:28 and other passages support the '[a]bsolute equality of males and females, under all circumstances, and in all relations'.<sup>31</sup> Lee anticipates a likely objection: if 'this

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25 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 81 (emphasis original).

26 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 80. Elsewhere he will argue that in marriage, husbands and wives may not have same rights, but have equal rights in number and importance (Luther Lee, 'Slavery – A Sin Against God', *Five Sermons and a Tract by Luther Lee* [ed. Donald W. Dayton; Chicago: Holrad House, 1975], 130).

27 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 82.

28 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 82–83.

29 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 83.

30 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 83.

31 Lee, 'A Woman's Right', 95.



sense of the text has not been discovered before, why has it lain hid until this hour?<sup>32</sup> He answers that it had been ‘discovered and understood, but not practically applied, as has been the case with a great many other truths’.<sup>33</sup>

Lee’s heavy reliance on Gal. 3:28 to argue for a woman’s right to preach is typical of other holiness advocates. B. T. Roberts would go on to become one of the founders of the Free Methodist church.<sup>34</sup> Roberts’ strong stand in favor of women’s ordination was eventually embraced by his church. In *Ordaining Women – Biblical and Historical Insights*, Gal. 3:28 takes pride of place, appearing on the title page.<sup>35</sup> According to Roberts,

[i]t is contrary to all sound principles of interpretation to say that this passage accords to a Greek the same rights in the Gospel that it does to a Jew, in *one sense*, and to a *woman* the same rights that it does to a *man* in *another*, and much more *restricted sense*. If this gives to *men* of all nations the right to become ministers of the Gospel, it gives to *women* precisely the same right.<sup>36</sup>

Roberts recognizes that, for some, this verse refers only to salvation for all by faith,<sup>37</sup> but believes this curtails the passage’s ‘full, natural, comprehensive, broad meaning. We must understand it to teach, as it actually does, the perfect equality of all, under the Gospel, in *rights* and *privileges*, without respect to *nationality*, or condition or sex’.<sup>38</sup> There are passages which seem to prohibit the right of a woman to preach, Roberts admits, but offers this counsel:

[m]ake this the KEY TEXT upon the subject, and give to other passages such a construction as will make them agree with it, and all is harmony. The apparent conflict is at an end. The fetters are taken off from woman, and she is left free to serve Christ in any position she may be qualified and called to fill.<sup>39</sup>

A similar emphasis on Gal. 3:28 comes from Julia Foote, a black woman holiness evangelist called to preach in the mid to late 1840s. Foote offers no extended apology for a woman’s right to preach, only a brief defense in her auto-

32 Lee, ‘A Woman’s Right’, 81.

33 Lee, ‘A Woman’s Right’, 81.

34 Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (NY: Abingdon, 1957), 130–132.

35 Like Lee, Roberts found support for this use of Gal 3:28 from the Methodist commentator, Adam Clarke (Benjamin Titus Roberts, *Ordaining Women – Biblical and Historical Insights* [Rochester, NY: Earnest Christian Publishing House, 1891; Indianapolis: Light and Life Press, 1992], 40), though he acknowledges that Clarke offers only qualified support for women preachers (Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 41). In fact, Clarke was used on both sides of the slavery debate (cf. Blanchard and Rice, *A Debate on Slavery*, 437).

36 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 37.

37 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 38.

38 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 39 (emphasis original).

39 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 38.

biography, *A Brand Plucked from the Fire*.<sup>40</sup> No doubt remembering her own call and resultant excommunication from the African Methodist Episcopal church, Foote writes:

[w]e are sometimes told that if a woman pretends to a Divine call, and thereon grounds the right to plead the cause of a crucified Redeemer in public, she will be believed when she shows credentials from heaven; that is, when she works a miracle. If it be necessary to prove one's right to preach the Gospel, I ask of my brethren to show me their credentials, or I cannot believe in the propriety of their ministry. But the Bible puts an end to this strife when it says: 'There is neither male nor female in Christ Jesus.'<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the most prolific author in the holiness movement, W. B. Godbey (1833–1920), was raised in the south within a family that for several generations had abstained from the practice of slavery.<sup>42</sup> On the phrase from Gal. 3:28, 'in Him there is neither male nor female', Godbey comments:

[t]his brief and terse statement of the Holy Ghost forever sweeps from the field all the world-wide controversy relative to woman's gospel rights, by simply annihilating sexhood in the kingdom of grace and glory. You enter Christ in regeneration, are established in Him in sanctification, and are eternally identified with Him in glorification. This affirmation establishes the conclusion irrefutable that sexual distinction is unknown in the kingdom of grace and glory, consequently all controversy as to woman's gospel rights is simply futile and impertinent, as the problem is here solved positively, unequivocally, and irrefutably by the infallible *ipse dixit* of the Holy Ghost.<sup>43</sup>

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40 Cleveland: W. F. Schneider, 1879.

41 Foote, *Brand Plucked from the Fire*, 78–79.

42 His publications number more than 200, including a complete commentary and new translation of the New Testament. Graduating from Georgetown College in Kentucky in 1859, he became a Methodist Episcopal pastor, then served as president of Harmonia College in Perryville, Kentucky. After experiencing entire sanctification, he gave away his library, resigned his presidency, and began a ministry of evangelism and writing. For biographical material cf. D. William Faupel's 'Preface' to *Six Tracts by W. B. Godbey*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), vii–xvii; W. B. Godbey, *Autobiography*, (Cincinnati: God's Revivalist Office, 1909). While he defended a woman's right to preach (1891), he was less concerned about women's ordination, largely to relieve her of unnecessary burdens (W. B. Godbey, *Woman Preacher* [Atlanta: Office of the Way of Life, 1891], 6).

43 W. B. Godbey, *Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 4, *Corinthians–Galatians; Paul, the Champion Theologian* (Cincinnati: M. W. Knapp, 1898 [1899]), 499. He is equally adamant on this topic in *Woman Preacher* (11). For holiness writers outside the United States, cf. Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army. Cf. *Female Ministry* (London: n.p. 1859 [London: Salvation Army Printing and Publishing Offices, 1891]; [NY: The Salvation Army Supplies Printing and Publishing Department, 1975], 17).

In addition to the radical element of the holiness movement, represented by Lee, Roberts, Foote, and Godbey, there was also a more moderate strain. Within this latter group was Frances Willard, a staunch and eloquent defender of women's rights, including the right to be ordained. She offered a full and spirited defense of this right in *Women in the Pulpit*,<sup>44</sup> which included Gal. 3:28 on the title page. Willard quotes with approval the words of an unnamed Methodist Doctor of Divinity:

[o]ur children will be as much astonished that we could hold to the divine subordination of women, in the face of this last clause [Gal. 3:28], as we are now astonished that slave-holders and Jews could hold to the divinely ordained subordination of the African and other races in the face of the first two clauses.<sup>45</sup>

Not all holiness writers made prominent use of Gal. 3:28 in their defense of a woman's right to preach. Phoebe Palmer supported this right, expressing her views most fully in *Promise of the Father* (1859).<sup>46</sup> As suggested by the title, Palmer bases her argument primarily on Acts 2 where, in fulfillment of the heavenly Father's promise, the Holy Spirit descended on both men and women. This anointing continued through the New Testament period and would have continued on both men and women down to the present, she claims, had it not been squelched by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>47</sup> In her defense of a woman's right to preach, Palmer refers to Gal. 3:28 only a handful of times, and only as a secondary support for her main text.<sup>48</sup>

### The shift in the use of Galatians 3:28

Why would those committed to the emancipation of both slaves and women selectively employ a text that appears to promise liberation to both in Christ?<sup>49</sup>

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44 Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1888. Online: [http://books.google.com/books?id=iLsMAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA49&dq=Women+in+the+Pulpit&hl=en&ei=yiEuTKf-C8L58AbY9My7Aw&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=book-thumbnail&resnum=10&ved=0CFoQ6wEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Women%20in%20the%20Pulpit&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=iLsMAAAAIAAJ&pg=PA49&dq=Women+in+the+Pulpit&hl=en&ei=yiEuTKf-C8L58AbY9My7Aw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=book-thumbnail&resnum=10&ved=0CFoQ6wEwCQ#v=onepage&q=Women%20in%20the%20Pulpit&f=false) (8/2/10).

45 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 79.

46 In this work she makes clear she is not defending women's rights in general or women's ordination, only a woman's right to preach (Phoebe Palmer, *Promise of the Father; or, A Neglected Speciality of the Last Days. Addressed to the Clergy and Laity of all Christian Communities* [Boston: Henry V. Degen, 1859; New York: Garland Publishing, 1985], 36).

47 Palmer, *Promise of the Father*, 22.

48 Cf. Palmer, *Promise of the Father*, 59. Palmer's avoidance of Gal. 3:28 may have been an attempt to steer clear of the controversy dividing the Methodist Episcopal church. The same limited use of Gal. 3:28 is found in *Woman's Ministry*, (London: Pillar of Fire, n.d.) published in the early 20th century by Alma White, bishop of the Pillar of Fire church who, like Palmer, drew her primary argument from Pentecost.

49 Some might challenge this question by asserting that we only have Luther Lee's

One significant factor was the outcome of the Civil War; nothing succeeds like success. Emancipation provided indisputable evidence, at least in the minds of some, that Gal. 3:28 had long been misunderstood. It did not only address who could be saved but was meant to be fulfilled literally.<sup>50</sup> If emancipation meant there was now 'neither slave nor free', then it followed there should be neither male nor female.

More than one holiness writer explicitly connected the emancipation of the slave with that of woman. Roberts posed the question thus,

[i]f those who stood high as interpreters of Reason and Revelation, and who expressed the prevailing sentiment of their day, were so greatly mistaken on a subject which we now think so plain that it does not admit of dispute, that every man has a right to freedom, is it not possible that the current sentiment as to the position which WOMAN should be permitted to occupy in the *Church of Christ* may also be wrong.<sup>51</sup>

Events have proven, said Roberts, that '[w]e cannot ascertain the truth of an opinion by inquiries about its age. Let us decide that as the Church did, for ages, misinterpret the teachings of the Bible on the subject of slavery, so it may now fail to apprehend its teaching on the question of woman's rights'.<sup>52</sup>

While this helps explain why Gal. 3:28 came to be seen as a key text for abolitionism after the war, it does not explain the varied use of the passage in the antebellum period. Some might suggest the possibility of latent racism within holiness abolitionism. Those who labored diligently in defense of the humanity of the enslaved were not always willing to recognize the slave as an equal.<sup>53</sup> A

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example; perhaps other holiness abolitionists adopted a different strategy. This seems unlikely, however, since the verse plays such a minor role in the argument of those abolitionists who are not a part of the holiness movement. Furthermore, we have the enemies of abolitionism using Gal. 3:28 to link the fate of women and slaves (Harrill, 'The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy', 170, 185).

50 On an even more fundamental level, support for slavery was linked to the prior subordination of women to men (cf. Fox-Genovese and Genovese, 'The Divine Sanction Of Social Order', 219–220).

51 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 11.

52 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 11. We meet something analogous in Bernard C. Lategan's description of his own shift in understanding Gal. 3:28 in a context of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa ('Reading the Letter to the Galatians from an *Apartheid* and a Post-*Apartheid* Perspective', in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* [NY: Routledge, 1998], 133–139).

53 White efforts at colonization represented one way to make slavery and blacks go away, literally. 'The American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color in the United States' began in 1816. Cf. James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War 1860–1869* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 87. This effort was optimistic about slavery's imminent end but pessimistic about black integration into American society (Moorhead, *American Apocalypse*, 87). Charles Finney opposed slavery, but like other abolitionists, did not support either

careful reading of Lee and other early holiness writings, however, demonstrates no such view. Instead it describes the slave as fully human, possessing inalienable rights, and made in the image of God.<sup>54</sup>

Two more fruitful explanations concern the implications of the phrase, 'in Christ', and the important role attached to experience by the holiness movement. To insist that 'in Christ' women had the same right as men to preach the gospel is one thing, to prove that in Christ all slaves had the right to freedom is another. Just what did it mean to be 'in Christ?' Lee was willing to grant that 'the gospel abolishes the relation of master and slave so soon as the parties are converted'.<sup>55</sup> The Christian slave of a Christian master should be immediately freed for they are both 'in Christ'. Lee fought for more than this; he wanted the complete and immediate emancipation of slaves, Christian or not. This scenario, however, did not fit what he understood by 'in Christ'. The situation was different when it came to women preachers. Since a woman called to preach the gospel must be 'in Christ', of course, she should be free to do so. 'In Christ' she is free of the restrictions placed on her by society.

Another factor which may have influenced the use of Gal. 3:28 would be the role of experience. One of Wesley's innovations was to add experience to the Anglican methodological triad of Scripture, reason, tradition. One could determine the meaning of the Bible, in part, by identifying what God was doing. The holiness movement made much of experience. Daniel Steele (1824–1914), a well-respected Methodist academic<sup>56</sup> and staunch supporter of entire sanctification believed one of the secrets of Methodism's remarkable growth was 'an open Bible, interpreted in the light of a spiritual experience'.<sup>57</sup> When it comes to scriptural interpretation, he wrote, 'it will not do to lean on the authority of a majority of experts'. Instead, the Holy Spirit can do such a work that

the unlearned minority who have put the doctrine to experimental proof may be very much wiser than the learned majority of the magnates of the modern church, who have never subjected the question to the test of personal experience. Here the testimony of some Uncle Tom or Amanda

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integration or the end to racialization (Emerson and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 33). Even William Wilberforce maintained attitudes which could be regarded as racist (Ted Olsen, 'The Abolitionists' Scandal', *Christianity Today* 54, no. 10 [October, 2010]: 46–49).

54 Cf. the excellent, unpublished paper by Patrick A. Eby, 'The Worth of the Slave: Arguments for the Freedom of the Slave in Early Wesleyan Methodist Connection Poetry and Hymns' (M.Phil. thesis, Drew University, 2006).

55 Lee, *Slavery Examined*, 133.

56 Steele taught theology and New Testament Greek at Boston University School of Theology, and served as president of Syracuse University. His scholarly acumen is evident in his commentaries on Leviticus and Joshua in the *Whedon's Commentary* series from Methodist publishers, Hunt and Eaton.

57 Daniel Steele, *Milestone Papers: Doctrinal, Ethical and Experimental on Christian Progress* (Salem, OH: Schmul, n.d. [1878]), 155.

Smith of the slave plantation may outweigh the opinion of a whole faculty of German theological professors. Experience outweighs theory; faith makes philosophy kick the beam.<sup>58</sup>

Although nineteenth century America provided some examples of black success, it offered many more examples of successful women preachers, temperance advocates, missionaries, and suffragettes; the holiness movement provided more than its share of such women leaders.<sup>59</sup> Being genetically disposed to value experience, the movement was quick both to celebrate such examples and find biblical support for them in passages like Gal. 3:28. 'God only can make apostles', wrote Roberts, '[b]ut if he sends a woman out to do the work of an apostle, and she does it faithfully, why should we hesitate to give the Scriptural name to the office, to fill which she is called and qualified by God?'<sup>60</sup>

### The significance of Galatians 3:28 to the American holiness movement

The question remains why a theologically conservative movement seemed drawn to interpret this text in such socially radical ways. Here again, one explanation concerns the outcome of the Civil War which not only emancipated the slaves but also vindicated the principle approach to interpreting scripture, an approach that permitted the sweeping egalitarianism of Gal. 3:28. Willard mocks 'literal exegesis' for furnishing the argument 'upon which excellent ecclesiastical authority claimed the divine origin of African slavery'.<sup>61</sup>

On the other side of the Civil War it became easier to see the need for a new approach to Scripture. Willard believed that, 'as the world becomes more deeply

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58 Daniel Steele, *Half-Hours with Saint Paul and Other Bible Readings* (Rochester, PA: Schmul, n.d. [1894]), 239–40.

59 In her book, *Occupations for Women: A Book of Practical Suggestions for the Material Advancement, the Mental and Physical Development, and the Moral and Spiritual Uplift of Women* (Cooper Union, NY: The Success Company, 1897), Frances Willard offers a variety of occupational options for women – including pastoral ministry – supporting these options by relating examples of successful women practitioners.

60 Cf. Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 55; Godbey, *Woman Preacher*, 12.

61 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 17–18. She not only finds fault with literalism, but with male-dominated interpretation in general, proposing the then-unusual solution of 'women commentators to bring out the women's side of the book; we need the stereoscopic view of truth in general, which can only be had when woman's eye and man's together shall discern the perspective of the Bible's full-orbed revelation' (Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 21). Mullin summarizes well the post-Civil War situation regarding biblical interpretation. 'For many an evangelical the formal exegetical method with its emphasis upon the objective text had been weighed in the balance in the great national crisis over slavery only to be found wanting, because of the wedge it drove between the Scriptures and the moral will' (Robert Bruce Mullin, 'Biblical Critics and the Battle over Slavery', *Journal of Presbyterian History* 61 [1983]: 223).

permeated by the principles of Christ's Gospel, methods of exegesis are revised. The old texts stand there, just as before, but we interpret them less narrowly. Universal liberty of person and of opinion are now conceded to be Bible-precept principles...'.<sup>62</sup> Exegesis, she argues, 'is in no sense an inspired work, but grows in breadth and accuracy with the general growth of humanity'.<sup>63</sup>

Emancipation allowed many to see Gal. 3:28 more clearly, but the holiness movement was defending radical social stands from this verse prior to the war. What was it about the holiness movement that allowed it to be among the first to see the full egalitarian implications of Gal. 3:28? We have already noted one reason for this predisposition toward liberation, the holiness movements' emphasis on experience. The example of successful women leaders fostered a hermeneutical predisposition toward defending women's rights. There are at least two other reasons why the holiness movement was quick to support the liberation movements of its day using Gal. 3:28 as ammunition.

The first concerns the holiness movement's early embrace of and great facility with the principle approach to biblical interpretation. This movement flourished among those less-educated and with a distinctly anti-authoritarian bent. When the Wesleyan Methodists formed in 1843, they not only supported holiness and abolitionism, they intentionally abandoned the episcopal structure of Methodism to give greater influence to the laity. The most influential person in the mid-century holiness movement was a lay woman. Holiness ministers were not required to have a formal education for each person was thought to have the ability to interpret the Bible for himself or herself.<sup>64</sup> For this reason it was characterized by a common-sense hermeneutic, one which favored the interpretive ability of the individual commoner over the elite and educated.<sup>65</sup> The principle approach with its appeals to common sense rather than the assured results of critical scholarship fit comfortably with the holiness movement's hermeneutic; the egalitarian implications of Gal. 3:28 emerge more easily when one takes the principle approach.

The holiness movement was also predisposed to and skilled in the principle approach because of what we might refer to as a hermeneutical 'key'. The literal approach was more congenial to a Reformed hermeneutic which, according to Laura Rominger, required a 'self-sufficiently meaningful, plenary-inspired, morally authoritative, comprehensive and infallible divine word'.<sup>66</sup> By contrast, the principle approach assumed a hermeneutical key which could open the

62 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 23.

63 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 24.

64 Many holiness denominations even today do not require a seminary or even college education to meet ordination requirements.

65 Cf. Stephen J. Lennox, *Biblical Interpretation in the American Holiness Movement, 1875–1920*, PhD diss., Drew University, 1992; cf. 153–183. For a wider context in which to understand this phenomenon, see Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

66 Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context', 48.

treasures of the Bible. Blanchard's key was a moral sense which allowed one to find Scripture's fundamental teachings.<sup>67</sup>

Holiness interpreters easily accepted this hermeneutical approach, in part because they were used to interpreting scripture with a key of their own, the doctrine and practice of entire sanctification. Steele, while strongly supportive of biblical scholarship, spoke of sanctification as providing 'an astonishing insight into the Holy Scriptures and a daily hunger for the word of life'. For the entirely sanctified, 'Gospel truth ceases to be vague and shadowy. It becomes real. A mysterious power unveils its meaning, and applies it to the soul. There is a voice within which attests the objective truth. An invisible interpreter attends the reading of the sacred page and "we discover wonders in God's law"'.<sup>68</sup> Like Jesus' second touch on the eyes of the blind man, '[w]e see into the Word of God as never before. Passages that were obscure and mysterious become luminous with a deeper and truer meaning. The Bible becomes a new book and an illuminated one at that'.<sup>69</sup> 'Theologians may howl and Satan may rage', wrote Godbey, 'but the Bible is a book on perfectionism'.<sup>70</sup> Already experienced in the use of a hermeneutical key, the holiness movement embraced the principle approach and followed where it led.

A second reason the holiness movement was quick to adopt liberating positions and an egalitarian reading of Gal. 3:28 lay in the theology of the movement. Entire sanctification was seen as a liberating work in the life of the believer which would restore the divine image and enable perfect love for God and others. Liberation was a key component of the holiness message for the gospel was seen to have the power to liberate people from sins – both corporate and personal – and to establish new social relationships. In his sermon, 'The Radicalism of the Gospel', Lee argued 'the Gospel is so radically reformatory, that to preach it fully and clearly, is to attack and condemn all wrong, and to assert and defend all righteousness'.<sup>71</sup>

This emphasis on liberation was strengthened by the prominence given to the Holy Spirit. Although Wesley did not closely link entire sanctification with the Spirit, John Fletcher, Wesley's hand-picked successor did. Fletcher's influence is apparent in Phoebe Palmer and others who spoke of entire sanctification in Pentecostal terms, such as the baptism of the Spirit. This shift in language fos-

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67 Although she does not refer to it as a key, Rominger suggests as much when she speaks of Blanchard having 'a kind of moral sensibility able to mediate scripture and thereby reveal its immutable principles' (Rominger, 'The Bible, Commonsense, and Interpretive Context', 48).

68 Daniel Steele, *Love Enthroned: Essays on Evangelical Perfection* (New York: Nelson & Phillips, 1876), 261.

69 Beverly Carradine, *Second Blessing in Symbol*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Pickett, 1896), 212.

70 W. B. Godbey, *Christian Perfection* (Louisville: Pentecostal Publishing, 1886) 108–9. For more on the holiness movement's hermeneutic, see Lennox, *Biblical Interpretation in the American Holiness Movement*.

71 As cited in Dayton, *Discovering Evangelicalism*, 81.



tered holiness egalitarianism by emphasizing spiritual power over such things as social rank and education. What Barclay says of evangelical abolitionists is especially true of holiness folk: possessing ‘an enormously strong psychological resilience: with a powerful sense of Providence and personal calling, they felt able by grace to combat the evil in themselves and in the world’.<sup>72</sup> Pentecostal imagery implied a new day had dawned with the coming of the holiness movement and the evidence validated this view. In the mid-nineteenth century the holiness movement was widespread in America with hardly any Protestant denomination untouched.<sup>73</sup> The triumph of abolitionism, aligned as it was with holiness teaching, only furthered the impression of latter-day glory.

This emphasis on the work of the purifying and empowering work of the Holy Spirit led, in the words of Janette Hassey, ‘to increasing openness to the exercise of women’s gifts’. According to Alma White, Bishop of the holiness denomination, Pillar of Fire, ‘so long as the Holy Spirit operates in the world, women must necessarily preach the Gospel’.<sup>74</sup> The disappearance of gender based limitations meant, according to Willard, that we are rapidly approaching a Christian civilization.<sup>75</sup> ‘God declares a fact that man in his lapsed estate will rule over woman; but God does not speak with approbation of this act, and the whole tenor of the Scriptures is to show that in Christ the world is to be restored to the original intent of its creation when “there shall be no more curse.”’<sup>76</sup> For Roberts, ‘Christ re-enacted the primitive law and restored the original relation of equality of the sexes’,<sup>77</sup> an equality made manifest at Pentecost. ‘This enfranchisement of the sisterhood’, said Godbey, ‘is the crowning glory of the present age’.<sup>78</sup>

Some considered this dawning age as a seed growing secretly now burst into sight. Others echoed the Puritan, John Robinson, who believed ‘God has yet more light to break forth from his holy scriptures...’.<sup>79</sup> Godbey takes the latter approach, asserting, ‘[t]he Bible is our text-book, and the Holy Ghost our Teacher; but some of us are very slow scholars. The Holy Ghost is leading us on, and teaching us as we are able to receive it’. He continued, ‘The Holy Spirit

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72 John M. G. Barclay, “‘Am I not a Man and a Brother?’ The Bible and the British Anti-Slavery Campaign”, *Expository Times* 119 (2007): 12. Barclay credits Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810*, (London: Macmillan, 1975, [157–199]) for this view.

73 Cf. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 63–79.

74 Janette Hassey, ‘Evangelical Women in Ministry a Century Ago: The 19th and Early 20th Centuries’, in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (ed. Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 46.

75 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 80, 54 n. 1.

76 Willard, *Women in the Pulpit*, 37.

77 Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 103.

78 Godbey, *Woman Preacher*, 11. Cf. Booth, *Female Ministry*, 16.

79 As quoted by Donald W. Shriver, Jr., ‘The Bible and Southern Ethics’, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 31 (1976): 101.

is still opening the Scriptures, and revealing them more and more, to the saints of God'. Godbey considered that the Spirit had called the holiness movement to reveal the truth of entire sanctification, but also to shed more light on Christ's second coming, divine healing, and the ministry of women.

Shall we stand still, or go round like the blind horse in the treadmill? God's commandment to Israel is, 'Go forward'. This will be true indefinitely in the department of Biblical exegesis, which, like God its Author, is absolutely illimitable. We will not only learn during this life, but on through all eternity, and more rapidly after we get to heaven than ever before.<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

Today many see Gal 3:28 as the Magna Carta of Christianity,<sup>81</sup> but this was not always the case. Prior to the Civil War, most understood this verse to speak only to the scope of salvation, believing it silent on behalf of egalitarianism, whether for slaves or women. During the antebellum period, within a theologically conservative but socially radical branch of Protestantism, another understanding began to appear; after emancipation, this understanding burst into full flower. Gal. 3:28 became a leading text in the fight for liberation, especially the liberation of women. The holiness movement tended toward such radical positions in part because of its predisposition toward the principle approach and because of its emphasis on the liberating work of the Holy Spirit.

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80 W. B. Godbey, *Commentary on the New Testament*, vol. 7, *Gospels*, part 2 (Cincinnati: God's Revivalist Office, 1900), 239–40. See also Martin Wells Knapp, *Lightning Bolts from Pentecostal Skies* (Cincinnati: Office of the Revivalist, 1898), 137. A helpful and progressive treatment from a respected biblical scholar is I. Howard Marshall, *Beyond the Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). Cf. William J. Webb, 'A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic: The Slavery Analogy', in *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy*, (ed. by Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis; Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2004), 382–400.

81 Christians for Biblical Equality describes itself as 'a nonprofit organization of Christian men and women who believe that the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of men and women of all ethnic groups, all economic classes, and all age groups, based on the teachings of Scriptures such as Galatians 3:28' (<http://www.cbeinternational.org/?q=content/our-mission-and-history>; accessed 11/16/10). Cf. Sakenfeld who considers this the 'parade example' of texts which speak positively of women (Katherine D. Sakenfeld, 'Feminist Uses of Biblical Material' in *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 57 as cited by John E. Alsup, 'Imagining the New: Feminism, Galatians 3:28, and the Current Interpretive Discussion', *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 105 (1990): 107, note 35). Not all see it this way. Cf. Monica Cooney, 'Men and Women as Equal Partners in Christian Community: A Biblical Meditation with Special Reference to Galatians 3:28', *The Ecumenical Review* 60 (2008):102; Sheila Briggs, 'Slavery and Gender', in *On the Cutting Edge* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 171–192; Doug Heidebrecht, 'Distinction and Function in the Church: Reading Galatians 3:28 in Context', *Direction* 34 (2005):181–193; Ed L. Miller, 'Is Galatians 3:28 the Great Egalitarian Text?' *Expository Times* 114 (2002) 11.

## Abstract

During the antebellum period in America, a theologically conservative, but socially radical branch of Protestantism known as the holiness movement began to employ Gal. 3:28 to striking ends. After the American Civil War, this passage flourished as a leading text in the fight for liberation, especially the liberation of women, including calls for women's ordination. The holiness movement tended toward such radical positions in part because of its predisposition toward what has been called the principle approach (as opposed to the literal and contextual approach more typical of Reformed hermeneutics) and because of its emphasis on the liberating work of the Holy Spirit.

### By Faith, Not by Sight Paul and the Order of Salvation

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.

How, according to the teachings of Paul, does the individual receive salvation? That is the focal question behind this book. Against some recent scholars Gaffin argues that it is both a meaningful and an appropriate question to ask. So what does the application of salvation to sinners involve for Paul? Does he distinguish between salvation accomplished (*historia salutis*) and salvation applied (*ordo salutis*) and, if so, how, and how important is the latter for him? And what exactly is the place of justification in his theology? Gaffin argues that:

'No matter how close justification is to the heart of Paul's gospel, in our salvation, as he sees it, there is... a reality, that is deeper, more fundamental, more decisive, more crucial: Christ and our union with him, the crucified and resurrected, the exalted, Christ. Union with Christ by faith – that is the essence of Paul's *ordo salutis*.'

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978-1-84227-418-7 / 216x140mm / 128pp / £8.99

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Milton Keynes, MK8 0ES