

Meekness and Majesty. By R.T. Kendall. Scotland, U.K.: Christian Focus Publications, 1992. 224 pp. Paper, \$7.99.

Most Bible students agree that Phil 2:5-11 is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible. In these seven verses, the apostle Paul reveals more about Jesus Christ than possibly any other single passage. *Meekness and Majesty* is R.T. Kendall's exposition and application of these verses to the lives of his readers.

The thesis of this book is that if believers will become "meek," they will experience the "majesty" that can only come from Christ. Kendall begins by imploring that, like Christ, our attitude be one of meekness. He then concludes his first chapter with an emphasis on eternal rewards as they relate to meekness and servitude. This first chapter (an exposition of 2:5) expresses the thesis that will be fleshed out in the remaining chapters.

In the sixteen chapters that follow, Kendall explains what it means to develop a Christ-like attitude and how that will result in blessing in time and eternity. For Kendall, it is simple: "God's word to all of us is to let go of ourselves" (p. 35). How can we do this? By looking to Christ. Christ abandoned His rights, righteousness, riches, recognition, and reputation. "Without ceasing to be God He came to the earth and relinquished that ingredient by which men would see that He was fully God" (p. 106). While being fully God, He took on the form of a servant and dwelt with humanity. He then knelt in humility and obediently died on a cross for the sins of man. As a result of His death, the Father exalted and vindicated Jesus. Kendall challenges his readers to understand and apply the truths of this passage. If we do, Phil 2:5 will be true of us ("Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus"). The ultimate end will be true spirituality. "True spirituality is becoming nothing, letting God be God and desiring only the honor of His name" (p. 193).

If any paragraph of this book could be extracted as the sum of its worth, it would be the following: "We will participate in Christ's exaltation in proportion to our participation in His humanity. The more we give up, the more we get back; the greater the humiliation, the greater the exaltation; the greater the battle, the greater the victory. Without the cross, there is no crown" (p. 104). It is worth

mentioning that this is just one of numerous places where Kendall brings out the doctrine of rewards (e.g., see pp. 22-23, 33-35, 55-56, 58-60, 99-101, 120-123, 133).

Kendall also draws out the importance of unity in the church. He makes the point that unity was the reason Philippians chapter two was written. Paul reveals this in his context when he writes that his desire is that they would “stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel” (1:27ff).

Some readers will object to Kendall’s interpretation of Romans 10:9-10 (see also Kendall’s earlier work, *Stand Up and Be Counted*, Zondervan, 1984). Kendall states “The confession which is demanded in Rom 10:9 presupposes faith and repentance, for it embodies all that is true of the gospel and all that is necessary to have assurance of salvation” (pp. 201-202). For a better understanding of this passage see Dr. John Hart’s article “Why Confess Christ? The Use and Abuse of Romans 10:9-10” in the Autumn, 1999 *JOTGES*: <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1999ii/J23-99b.htm>

However, in answering the question “Why should we bow?” (and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, 2:10-11) Kendall makes the helpful observation, “We do not make Him Lord but merely acknowledge what is true. Our conversion does not change Him; conversion changes us so that we can see what is true” (p. 186). Throughout this work, Kendall is clear on the distinction between salvation and discipleship.

Kendall’s work is an invaluable aid for anyone who is preaching or teaching through the book of Philippians. Like all of his works, this book will also be a help to the Christian who desires to become more Christ-like in his worship and attitude. After reflecting on the contents of this book, Christian songwriter and worship leader, Graham Kendrick, wrote, “This subject is one of the greatest inspirations for worship I know.” *Meekness and Majesty* will do much to deepen your love and appreciation for the person and work of Christ.