

Abilene Christian University

## Digital Commons @ ACU

---

Stone-Campbell Books

Stone-Campbell Resources

---

1961

### Every Good Work

David Ellis Walker Sr.

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs\\_books](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books)



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christian Denominations and Sects Commons](#), and the [Ethics in Religion Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Walker, David Ellis Sr., "Every Good Work" (1961). *Stone-Campbell Books*. 189.  
[https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs\\_books/189](https://digitalcommons.acu.edu/crs_books/189)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Stone-Campbell Resources at Digital Commons @ ACU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Stone-Campbell Books by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ ACU.

VF Waller, D. Ellis

CENTER FOR RESTORATION STUDIES  
ADOLEN CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

**"Every**

**Good**

**Work"**

To  
Eloise

### APPRECIATION

I am deeply grateful to all concerned for permission to quote from the books and letters quoted in this book. I am also very grateful for the large number of helpful and often long letters received from distinguished scholars in America, Australia and the British Isles. My gratitude includes my son, David E. Walker, Jr. whose confidence prompted me to write this essay and who assisted in the research. Let me also express my great appreciation to those friends of University Avenue Church of Christ, Gainesville, Florida whose love for the truth made this first edition possible.

D. ELLIS WALKER.

### "EVERY GOOD WORK"

Copyright 1961 by D. Ellis Walker  
124 S. E. 7th Street, Gainesville, Florida

All rights in this book reserved. No part of it may be reproduced in any way whatsoever except by written permission of the author.

25¢ Each — \$18.00 per 100 — \$160.00 per 1,000

Printed by Pepper Printing Co., Gainesville, Florida

## "EVERY GOOD WORK"

### VERBAL INSPIRATION

*Every word* of the original text of the Bible was written by men who spoke from God as they were "moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Pet. 1:21). All of the inspired writers could have said with Paul, "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words" (I Cor. 2:13). The gospel was first announced through men who preached it "by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven" (I Pet. 1:12). These inspired men wrote just as they spoke, viz., "as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Yes, the Holy Spirit selected the very word to express the exact shade of meaning He wanted used.

It is no accident that every time we find the expression "every good work" in the New Testament that the English adjective "good" is always translated from the Greek adjective *agathos*. *Agathos* is the very word always selected by the Holy Spirit when a local church or an individual Christian is admonished to do "every good work." It is tremendously significant that the Greek adjective *agathos* is always the adjective found in the expression translated "every good work." The other Greek adjectives which are translated "good" are never found in the Greek phrases translated "every good work." In order that you may realize the importance of this matter, get a Greek-English Interlinear New Testament and check every passage where you find the expression "every good work" and as you check the passages, ask yourself the question, "Is it an accident that the Holy Spirit always used the adjective *agathos* in the expression translated "every good work?" Also, ask yourself, why did not the Holy Spirit use some other adjective, translated "good," in some of these same passages? Here are the passages: II Cor. 9:8; Col. 1:10; II Thes. 2:17; I Tim. 5:10; II Tim. 2:21; II Tim. 3:17; Tit. 1:16; Tit. 3:1; and Heb. 13:21. (Please note that in Heb. 13:21 where the King James Version has "every good work," the American Standard Version has "every good thing.")

## WHO IS TO DO "EVERY GOOD WORK"?

After you have read the above passages you will be ready for the question, "Who is to do 'every good work'?" The passages given above plainly teach that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work." For instance: Paul said, "unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (II Cor. 1:1), "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work. (II Cor. 9:8)" Again: Paul's prayer for "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ . . . at Colossae" (Col. 1:2) and for the "church of the Laodiceans" (Col. 4:16) was that they "bear fruit in every good work. (Col. 1:10)" The expressions in Col. 4:16—"read among you" and "read also in the church of the Laodiceans"—show clearly that Paul was speaking to the two churches as churches, rather than as individuals. Even the pronoun and verb forms are plural, both in the Greek and English, indicating that Paul was speaking to each group collectively, rather than individually. Still again, in regard to a local church, Paul's prayer for "the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thes. 1:1) was that God and Christ comfort their hearts and "establish them in every good work and word" (II Thes. 2:16,17). Here again the pronoun and verb forms are plural, indicating that Paul was speaking to the members collectively, rather than individually. This prayer was preceded by another in which Paul prayed that God might count them worthy of their calling and "fulfil every desire of goodness . . ." (II Thes. 1:11). "Goodness" is from the Greek *agathosune* and, according to W. E. Vine, "signifies that moral quality described by the adjective *agathos*."<sup>1</sup> (Note Vine's definition of *agathos* given further on in this paper.) Not only the local church, but also the individual Christian is to do "every good work." For example, the widow who is to be enrolled must have "diligently followed every good work" (I Tim. 5:10). Again, the man who has been properly purged from various evils "shall be

a vessel unto honor, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work" (II Tim. 2:21). Finally, let us consider two general admonitions. Paul urged Titus to teach the Cretan disciples "to be ready unto every good work" (Titus 3:1). Again, Paul prayed that the God of peace make the Hebrews "perfect in every good thing to do his will" (Heb. 13:20,21). (In this passage, the King James Version says: "make you perfect in every good work to do his will.") Now, from these scriptures we see that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good (*agathos*) work." Since this is true, we need to know the meaning of "good" (*agathos*).

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "GOOD" (*AGATHOS*)?

What is the meaning of "good" in the expression "every good work"? Shall we act arbitrarily and select the meaning we prefer from an English dictionary? For instance, shall we select the meaning we prefer from among Webster's fourteen definitions and thirty synonyms? If we act upon the principle of every man to his own preference, we shall have confusion and chaos. Since the New Testament was written in Greek, it seems more reasonable for us to go to those Greek dictionaries which define terms as they were used when the Holy Spirit was guiding the writers of the New Testament. Furthermore, this is wise because the Greek language afforded different shades of meaning not available in the English language. Now, since our admonition is to do "every *agathos* work"—not every *kalos* or *chrestos* work (Greek adjectives also translated "good"), we want to know the meaning of *agathos* so that we may know what we are to do when we do "every good work." Let us hear the testimony of some of the scholars who have tried to give us a clear idea of the meaning of *agathos* as it is used in the New Testament, so that we may understand its meaning in the expression "every good (*agathos*) work."

A. W. E. Vine: "*Agathos* describes that which, being good in its character or constitution, is beneficial in its effect."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Westwood, N. J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1956), p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

B. G. Abbot-Smith: "*Agathos* . . . in general, good, in physical and in moral sense, used of persons, things, acts, conditions, etc. applied to that which is regarded as "perfect in its kind, so as to produce pleasure and satisfaction . . . that which, in itself good, is also at once for the good and advantage of him who comes in contact with it (Crem-er)".<sup>3</sup>

The quotation above from Abbot-Smith is actually a double quotation as he quotes from Cremer, a great lexicographer. May we add, by the way of summarization that Cremer goes on to say that what in itself is good is good also for some person, to some purpose and that it heightens and promotes well-being beyond itself. So *good* is not only existence which is perfect but that which promotes perfection. For something to be good it must be that which is as in general the thing should be. In commenting on Rom. 5:7, Cremer points out that the *agathos* man does as much as he ever can and thus promotes the well-being of him with whom he has to do.<sup>4</sup>

C. Thomas Sheldon Green: "*Agathos* . . . good, profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, virtuous: whence *agathosune*, . . . goodness, virtue, beneficence."<sup>5</sup>

D. Boyce W. Blackwelder: "In rendering the Greek term *agathosune*, goodness seems too general. Active benevolence seems to be the idea, as the derivation from *agathos* (good) indicates the bestowal upon others of that which is beneficial."<sup>6</sup>

E. Marvin Vincent:

a. On Rom. 5:7: "*Agathos* is benevolent, kind, generous. . . . *Agathos* always includes a corresponding be-

<sup>3</sup> G. Abbot-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1954), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (3rd ed. with supp.; Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1886), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Sheldon Green, *A Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd.), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Boyce W. Blackwelder, *Light from the Greek New Testament* (Anderson, Indiana: Warner Press, 1959), p. 49. Used by permission.

neficent relation of its subject to another subject; an establishment of a communion and exchange of life."<sup>7</sup>

b. On Gal. 6:10: "Let us do good (*ergazometha to agathon*). . . . *To agathon* is, of course, the morally good, as distinguished from what is merely useful or profitable, but includes what is beneficent or kindly."<sup>8</sup>

F. A. T. Robertson:

a. On Rom. 5:7: ". . . The *agathos* man is 'beneficent and kind.'"<sup>9</sup>

b. On Rom. 15:2: "For that which is good (*eis to agathon*). 'For the good.' As in Acts 14:16,19. Not to please men just for popular favours, but for their benefit."<sup>10</sup>

c. Gal. 6:10: "Let us work that which is good (*ergazometha to agathon*). . . . 'Let us keep on working the good deed.'"<sup>11</sup>

d. Philemon 14: "Thy goodness (*to agathon sou*). Neuter articular adjective (thy good deed)."<sup>12</sup>

G. Harper's *Analytical Greek Lexicon*: "*Agathos* . . . good, profitable, generous, beneficent, upright, virtuous . . . whence *agathosune* . . . goodness, virtue, beneficence."<sup>13</sup>

H. Thayer agrees with the ideas suggested above for, in addition to saying that *agathos* means *excelling in any respect, distinguished, good*, he says, in commenting on Luke 8:15, that *agathe kardia* (good heart) not only means a soul inclined to goodness and eager to know the truth which saves, but also one which is anxious to bear the fruits of a Christian life. He seems to suggest that there is a connection between *agathe kardia* (good heart) and *karpous agathous* (good fruits) in James 3:17.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (4 vols.; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1946), III, 60.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 176.

<sup>9</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (6 vols.; Nashville, Tenn. Broadman Press, 1931), IV, 356.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 417.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 317.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 467.

<sup>13</sup> *Analytical Greek Lexicon* (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd.), p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: American Book Co., 1889), p. 2.

I. Arndt and Gingrich define *agathos* as "good." They go on to list seven of the passages containing the expression "every good work" under "a good deed"; viz., II Cor. 9:8; Col. 1:10; I Tim. 5:10; II Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 3:1. They list another one of the passages, II Thes. 2:17, under "benefactions."<sup>15</sup>

J. William Barclay: "When a thing or a person is *agathos*, it or he is good in the moral and practical sense of the term, and in the result of its or his activity. . . ." <sup>16</sup>

A little more can be learned about the meaning of *agathos* when you study the Greek noun *agathosune* found in the writings of the apostle Paul (Rom. 15:14; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9 and II Thes. 1:11). Harper's *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, Sheldon Green's *Greek-English Lexicon*, Boyce W. Blackwelder's *Light from the Greek New Testament* indicate that the *agathosune* is derived from the adjective *agathos*.<sup>17</sup> W. E. Vine says that *agathosune* "signifies that moral quality which is described by the adjective *agathos*" and then refers us to his definition of *agathos* given above.<sup>18</sup> Blackwelder states that the idea in *agathosune* seems to be active benevolence and quotes from Fredric Rendall and George Barlow to sustain his position.<sup>19</sup> Lightfoot in his comment on "goodness" in Gal. 5:22 says "*agathosune*, active, 'goodness, beneficence' as an energetic principle." Lightfoot also says that "*chrestotes* is potential *agathosune*, *agathosune* is energizing *chrestotes*." Of *chrestotes* he says, "neutral, 'a kindly disposition toward's one's neighbor's not necessarily taking a practical form.'" <sup>20</sup> So *agathosune* (goodness) causes a kindly disposition to take a practical form;

<sup>15</sup> William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature*. A transl. and adaptation of Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der ubrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (4th rev. ed.; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 2-3. Copyright 1957 by the Univ. of Chicago Press.

<sup>16</sup> William Barclay, *More New Testament Words* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1958), p. 92.

<sup>17</sup> *Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p. 2; Green, p. 1; Blackwelder, p. 49.

<sup>18</sup> Vine, p. 165.

<sup>19</sup> Blackwelder, p. 49.

<sup>20</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians* (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1892), p. 213.

i.e., to really do something to help one's neighbor. When you take all of the above information about *agathosune* and remember that *agathosune* is derived from *agathos*, it helps you to understand the meaning of *agathos* translated "good" in the passages that exhort both the local church and the individual Christian to "every good (*agathos*) work." *Agathos* is truly descriptive of that which is good in itself and beneficial in its effect.

## ARE KALOS AND AGATHOS ABSOLUTELY IDENTICAL?

It is important to our understanding of the meaning of the phrase "every good (*agathos*) work" to know that the Greek adjective *agathos* is an attributive adjective; that is, it tells what kind of work is under discussion. In other words, the expression does not mention all good works or just any good work but only "every *agathos* work." Actually, there are two Greek adjectives translated "good" in the New Testament which are used attributively to denote the kind of work or works under discussion in various passages, but only *agathos* is found in the exhortation to do "every good work." In fifteen passages the adjective "good", denoting the nature of the work or works in certain texts, is translated from the Greek adjective *kalos*: Matt. 5:16; 26:10; Mark 14:6; John 10:32; 10:33; I Tim. 3:1; 5:10; 5:25; 6:18; Titus 2:7; 2:14; 3:8; 3:14; Heb. 10:24; I Pet. 2:12. In thirteen passages the adjective "good", denoting the nature of the work or works is translated from *agathos*: Acts 9:36; Rom. 13:3; II Cor. 9:8; Eph. 2:10; Phil. 1:6; Col. 1:10; II Thes. 2:17; I Tim. 5:10; II Tim. 2:21; 3:17; Tit. 1:16; 3:1; Heb. 13:21. (Young's *Analytical Concordance* shows that, while the Greek adjective *agathos* is always translated by the adjective good (63 times), the Greek adjective *kalos* is translated by the following adjectives: better (7), fair (1), good (76), goodly (2), honest (2), meet (2), worthy (1), and well (1).<sup>21</sup> The question arises, Is there any distinction to be found between the adjectives

<sup>21</sup> Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co.), pp. IL57, 75.

*kalos* and *agathos*? Can they always be used interchangeably and casually without altering in the least the meaning of passages? If so, Paul made it impossible for a widow to ever be enrolled as he suggested in I Tim. 5:9,10. Paul taught in this passage that a widow, among other things, must have "diligently followed every good (*agathos*) work." Now Paul also taught that "if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). But the "good work" of a bishop is one good work that a widow can never do for the "bishop must be the husband of one wife," (I Tim. 3:2) and, as is evident, it is impossible for a widow to be a husband. So, if there is no distinction in the adjectives *kalos* and *agathos* found respectively in I Tim. 3:1 and 5:10, Paul made it impossible for a widow to diligently "follow every good work" and thus be enrolled, for she can never qualify for the "good work" of a bishop since she can never be the husband of one wife. But because God is good (*agathos*; Matt. 19:17; Mk. 10:18; Lk. 18:19), we know that he has never required anything of anyone which was impossible for that person to do. Therefore, good (*kalos*) as used in I Tim. 3:1 must have a shade of meaning that puts the "good work" of bishop out of the realm of "every good (*agathos*) work," commanded in I Tim. 5:10. Thus, we confidently believe that a widow may diligently follow "every good (*agathos*) work," even though it is impossible for her to do the good (*kalos*) work entailed in the office of bishop. But, let us take another example: In the parable of the sower, Luke 8:1-15, the same ground is twice called good ground (verses 8 and 15). Note this interesting point: In verse 8 the Greek adjective which is translated "good" is a form of *agathos*, while the Greek adjective translated "good" in verse 15 is a form of *kalos*. Does this prove that the translators thought that *kalos* and *agathos* are absolutely identical in meaning? No, not at all, for when they came to a form of the same terms (verse 15) used attributively of the heart (*kardia kale kai agathe*), they translated *kale* "honest", and *agathe* "good". So, even though it is evident that both *kalos* and *agathos* may each portray aspects of good, the translators evidently did not think that they are absolutely identical or that they can always be freely sub-

stituted one for another without any variation in the meaning. Let us continue this line of thought by examining some things others have said about the difference between *agathos* and *kalos*.

W. E. Vine: "*Kalos* and *agathos* occur together in Luke 8:15, an 'honest' (*kalos*) heart, i.e., the attitude of which is right towards God; a 'good' (*agathos*) heart, i.e., one that, instead of working ill to a neighbor, acts beneficially towards him. In Rom. 7:18, 'in me . . . dwelleth no good thing' (*agathos*) signifies that in him is nothing capable of doing good, and hence he lacks the power 'to do that which is good' (*kalos*). In I Thess. 5:15, 'follow after that which is good' (*agathos*), the good is that which is beneficial; in ver. 21, 'hold fast that which is good (*kalos*),' the good describes the intrinsic value of the teaching." <sup>22</sup>

B. F. Westcott:

"It is a misfortune that we cannot distinguish *kala erga* and *agatha erga* in translation; we are constrained to render both phrases by 'good works.' Yet the ideas suggested by the two phrases are distinct. In *agatha erga* we mark only the intrinsic character of the works: they are essentially good. In *kala erga* we emphasize the notion of their effect upon others, of their nobility which attract. The same work may be regarded both as *agathon* and as *kalon*, but so far as it is *kalon*, it is looked at under the aspect of moral beauty." <sup>23</sup>

Herman Cremer:

Cremer states that *kalos* is related to *agathos* as the appearance to the essence. In the moral sphere he considers *kalos* to be an aesthetic designation of what is morally good. He quotes Zezschwitz to show that *kalos* was the word used to call the attention of Christians to the beauty and nobility of perseverance in holiness. <sup>24</sup>

William Barclay:

"We may best of all see the meaning of *kalos*, if we contrast it with *agathos* which is the common Greek word for

<sup>22</sup> Vine, p. 164.

<sup>23</sup> Brooke Foss Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews (Greek text)* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952), p. 325.

<sup>24</sup> Cremer, pp. 339-341.

good. *Agathos* is that which is practically and morally good; *kalos* is that which is not only practically and morally good, but that which is also aesthetically good, which is lovely and pleasing to the eye.

"Hort, commenting on James 2:7 says: '*Kalos* is what is good as seen, as making a direct impression on those who come in contact with it—not only good in result, which would be *agathos*.' In the creation story when God looked at the world which he had made, he saw that it was good (Gen. 1:8), and *kalos* is the word which is used.

"When a thing or person is *agathos*, it or he is good in the moral and practical sense of the term, and in the result of its or his activity; but *Kalos* adds to the idea of goodness the idea of beauty, of loveliness, of graciousness, of winsomeness. *Agathos* appeals to the moral sense; but *kalos* appeals also to the eye."<sup>25</sup>

"In my view the difference between *agathos* and *kalos* is this. *Agathos* simply describes a thing or a person as good in the sphere in which he or it ought to be good. For instance, ground can be *agathos* when it is fertile ground. *Agathos* simply describes the goodness of the thing or person without distinctive reference to other personal qualities. On the other hand *kalos* always adds to the idea of goodness the further idea of beauty and of attractiveness. That which is *kalos* is not only good, it is also winsome and attractive and lovely, and *looks* good. I think that you will find that distinction almost universally in the words."<sup>26</sup>

Archibald M. Hunter, Dept. of Biblical Criticism, University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland:

"You ask me which is the broader term? I should say that *kalos* has the wider range, since starting from the idea of 'beautiful' in appearance, it goes on to mean 'useful' 'fine' (of quality) 'morally good' as well as 'blameless' or 'excellent' and 'advantageous' or 'desirable.' Per contra *agathos*, while it can mean—in an external sense—fit or useful, or even fertile (of soil), seems to apply more to inner worth, especially moral, and is applied in the NT to the character

of God and Christ; and, just as *kalos* has sometimes the meaning 'honourable', so *agathos* can mean 'kind' or 'generous.'"<sup>27</sup>

J. R. Mantey, co-author of *A Manual Grammar of The Greek New Testament*, and Professor Emeritus of New Testament Greek, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary:

"*Kalos* and *agathos* are almost identical synonyms, yet some differences are noted in Greek usage.

"*Kalos* to my mind is the broader and less intense word. It connotes the idea of proper integration, such as *free from defects, fine, precious, beautiful*. Cf. Luke 21:5; Mt. 13:48; Luke 6:43; Mk. 4:8,20; Jn. 2:10.

"It was used also of that which is good morally; i.e. *noble, praiseworthy, etc., blameless, excellent*. Cf. Mt. 5:16; 26:10; Mk. 14:6; Jn. 10:32; Tit. 2:7,14; I Tim. 4:6; I Pet. 4:10. In Lk. 8:15 both adjectives occur: 'with a *noble* and *good* heart.'

"*Agathos* on the other hand seems to have denoted a higher aspect morally and spiritually at times at least. It was often used of God in Gk. literature, thus indicating the acme of perfection (Cf. Mt. 19:16,17; Mk. 10:18b; Lk. 18:19b). It was also used of Christ Mk. 10:17,18a; Jn. 7:12. While *agathos* seems to have been used in a narrower sense it, because it alone was used of the higher type of moral and spiritual perfection, was not included in the broader aspects of *kalos*, in my opinion."<sup>28</sup>

Hugo McCord, Professor of Greek, Oklahoma Christian College:

"Thayer's lexicon, as you have observed in your study, uses the word *beautiful* to define *kalos* and uses the word *good* in defining *agathos*. Thayer observed that the meaning of *agathos* is *excelling in any respect*. John William White, *The First Greek Book*, pp. 5, 10, 15, 19, defined *kalos* as *beautiful, fine*, and *agathos* as *good*. Thomas Sheldon Green, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, defined *kalos* as having the proper meaning *beautiful*, and said that it is used also to mean *good*. G. Abbot-Smith,

<sup>25</sup> Barclay, p. 92.

<sup>26</sup> Letter from William Barclay to D. Ellis Walker, Aug. 27, 1961.

<sup>27</sup> Letter from Archibald M. Hunter to D. Ellis Walker, Aug. 26, 1961.

<sup>28</sup> Letter from J. R. Mantey to D. Ellis Walker, Aug. 25, 1961.



A *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, defined *kalos* by the words *fair, beautiful*. He also said that it is used to mean *good, excellent*. The word *agathos* he defined as meaning *good*. The *Classic Greek Dictionary* defines *kalos* as (1) *beautiful, fair*; (2) *serving a good purpose*; (3) *morally beautiful, good, right, noble*. It says that *kalos* is related to the noun *kallos, beauty*; to the verb *kalluno, to beautify*; and to the adverb *kalon, beautifully*. That dictionary defines *agathos* as *good* in its kind.

"From these definitions I get the impression that *kalos* is a broader word than *agathos*. A thing that is *good (agathos)* can be said to be *beautiful (kalos)*. But, it seems to me, some things may be beautiful when no idea of goodness is necessarily meant.

"*Kalos* and *agathos* are so close together that often times they are used seemingly interchangeably. As you know, the first and elemental meaning of a word does not always determine how it is used."<sup>29</sup>

Eugene V. N. Goetchius, Episcopal Theological Seminary, Cambridge, Mass.:

"I have always understood, however, that *kalos* is the broader of the two terms, and includes the meaning of *agathos*. (St. John, for example, speaks of Christ as *kalos poimen*.)"<sup>30</sup>

Raymond T. Stamm, Professor of N. T. Language, Literature, and Theology, Lutheran Theological Seminary, and a contributor to the *Interpreter's Bible*, summarized the lexical materials found in Liddell & Scott, the Arndt-Gingrich English edition of *Preuschen-Bauer*, and the articles on *agathos* and *kalos* in Gerhard Kittel's *Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. The summarized materials by Dr. Stamm show the following usage:

"I thought your question could be answered most readily and adequately by making the charts on page 3 of this letter. *Agathos* and *kalos* do overlap; but, as you see from the meanings which I have inserted in the circles from the respective lexicons, which illustrate them with many ref-

erences, each word has its own characteristic coloring; so that they do not coincide. Where they meet is in the idea of the excellent.

"In my own mind, in order to keep the two words distinct, I associate *agathos* primarily with 'good', *kalos* with 'beautiful' and our common word 'fine.' It is helpful to remember the root meanings. For *agathos* the root is 'significant,' or 'excellent,' 'apt.' *Kalos* belongs in the same group as the old-Indian *kalje* = 'sound,' 'strong,' 'equipped,' 'excellent'; it is something that is organically 'sound,' 'fitted,' 'apt,' 'useful.'

"In Greek thinking *kalos* is associated with *taxis* ('order') and *symmetria* ('symmetry,' 'proportion.'). When the Greek spoke of 'the beautiful' (*kalos*), he meant a condition that consisted of soundness, welfare, wholeness and order, both in outward appearance and inner constitution. For this reason *kalos* belongs also in the sphere of things that are divine.

"*Kalos* is combined with *agathos* in the phrase *kalos kai agathos*. A man who is *kalos kai agathos* is, according to Socrates, one who is pious and upright, wise and understanding, temperate and capable in his action; in every respect his way of living is orderly, hence 'beautiful.'

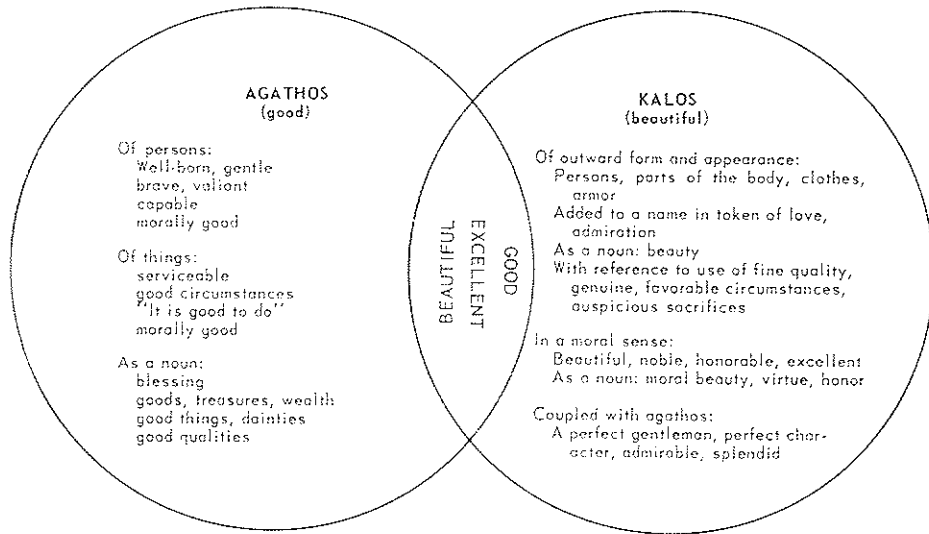
"In the writings of Plato, *kalos* is in closest connection with "the Idea of the Good" (*agathos*), which was his idea of God. The central core of this idea of the good was a combination of *kalos, symmetria, and aletheia* ('truth'); and the good is the cause of all things that are beautiful. 'But the beautiful (*kalos*) is not only an outflow of the good (*agathos*); it is another side of the good, and for this reason it can be identified with the good (*agathos*).' Beauty is the form of the good, the driving force of the Greek spirit, for which the highest form of knowing was a vision of the scope and manifoldness of the beautiful (*to kalon*). This was the perpetual motive of the Greek for his striving for self-perfection. (My source of the above information is the articles on *agathos* and *kalos* in the *Theologisches Worterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, Vol. I for *agathos* and Vol. III for *kalos*; if you have access to this work you will find it the most complete source of information for your

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Hugo McCord to D. Ellis Walker, Jan. 20, 1961.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Eugene V. N. Goetchius to D. Ellis Walker, Aug. 25, 1961.

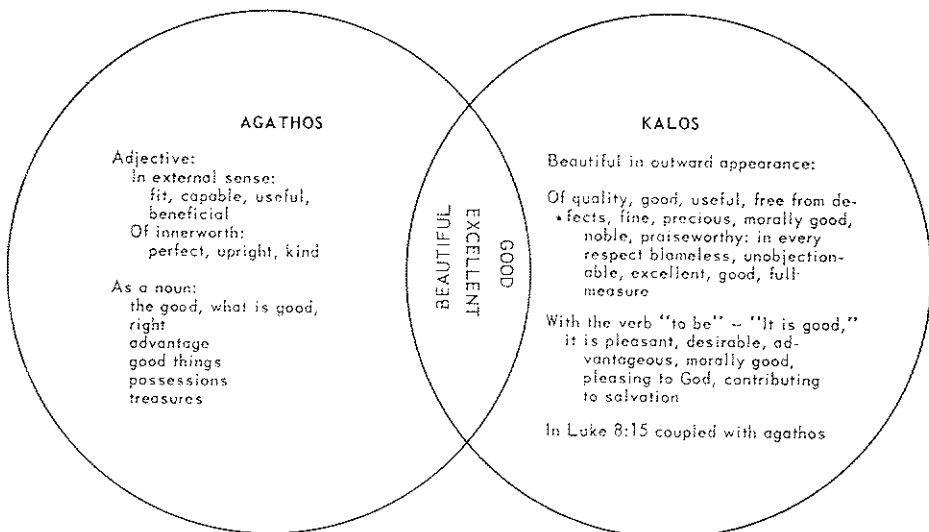
Charts prepared by Dr. Stamm

### CLASSICAL USAGE (Liddell & Scott 9th ed.)



### NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

(Preuschen-Bauer 4th ed., trans. by Arndt & Gingrich)



*Agathos* is the adjective corresponding to the noun *arete*, and so means 'excellent' in any way. (W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Vol. II, p. 145).

purpose. Some of the articles in this great work have been translated and are available in English.)

"The importance of keeping in mind the distinction between *agathos* and *kalos* appears in John 10:11,14 where Jesus is the *kalos* shepherd, which our translations render "good." He is the *kalos* shepherd because he is the *right* shepherd, the one as compared with all others who has the right to call himself *the* shepherd; he is capable, competent, good, and praiseworthy, and all this is expressed by *kalos*.

"In Luke 8:15c *kalos* and *agathos* occur together, and the translators AV, RSV, render 'honest (*kalos*) and good heart.' But in the parallels in Matthew 13:8 and Mark 4:8 and Matthew 13:23, Mark 4:20 *kalos* is translated 'good.' In the Lukan phrase a distinction had to be made because both *kalos* and *agathos* occur; notice that in Luke 8:15a *kalos* is 'good' soil, whereas in Luke 8:15c *kalos* is an 'honest' heart. Goodspeed has 'true' heart. Other possibilities would be 'sound' or 'noble' heart. Keeping closer to the parable, one thinks of a fruitful or creative heart, 'heart' being the whole person."<sup>31</sup>

### OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

There have been a few objections offered against the proposition that the New Testament teaches that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work." Strange to say, some of the objections, offered by seemingly sincere Christians, could be more readily expected of those who do not believe in the inspiration of the scriptures and thus feel free to destroy the text rather than to harmonize it with other scriptures. Time and again we have heard arguments set forth to prove that the local church is not to do "every good work." The amazing thing is that for almost a decade I have scarcely heard a murmur against the fact that Paul taught the churches at Colossae, Laodicea, and Thessalonica to bear fruit or be established in "every good work." Almost in every instance the arguments offered have been to prove that the phrase "every good work" does not mean "every good work."

<sup>31</sup> Letter from Raymond T. Stamm to D. Ellis Walker, Aug. 28, 1961.

**Objection No. I.** For example, one among the first objections against our proposition is based on the New Testament teaching that the "office of a bishop" is "a good work." Now, the objectors say, if both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work," then both the church and all individuals must do the work of a bishop, which, of course, is truly impossible for all churches and many individuals, since the bishop must be the husband of one wife. Thus it is concluded that our proposition is false and, therefore, none is to do "every good work," even though the New Testament says we must do so. What is the answer to this objection? The answer is simple: The adjective "good" in I Tim. 3:1 is from the Greek adjective *kalos* and its meaning in the passage is not identical with the meaning of the Greek adjective *agathos* as used in the expression "every good work."

**Objection No. II.** If both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good (*agathos*) work," they must operate within the realm of profit making ventures. Answer: Here again we have a mixing of terms for, according to the translation of the American Standard Version, such falls within the realm of the adjective *kalos*, not *agathos*. See Titus 3:8, 14 where the marginal rendering in the American Standard Version for the phrase "maintain good (*kalos*) works" is "profess honest occupations."

**Objection No. III.** If both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work," they must give to civic and sectarian charities. Answer: First, the objector fails to see that the expression "every good (*agathos*) work" denotes the nature of the work to be done. The emphasis is upon the nature of the work performed, not every act performed. The idea is that we must do all *kinds* of *agathos* works—not that we must have a part in the endless *number* of all *agathos* works performed. Secondly, the objections shows that the objector has confused "organizations" with "*agathos* works." The organization is one thing; the good (*agathos*) work is another. We can do the *agathos* work of helping orphans without giving to either one or all of the Catholic, Protestant, civic or frater-

nal organizations which do such works. We can give milk to children without giving to some civic club which does that work. Whether or not we help someone else to do an *agathos* work is a question of fellowship! "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light," we have fellowship both with God and with one another (I Jno. 1:3,7) but, on the other hand, we must "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:10).

**Objection No. IV.** The teaching that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work" would make it right for the church to give out of its treasury to help people who are not members of the church. Answer: Exactly right! Paul said to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2), "So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10) "Good" in this passage is from the Greek adjective *agathos*. Paul also said "unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 1:1), "the Lord make you to abound in love one toward another, and toward all men . . ." (I Thes. 3:12). When it comes to love for all men, we need to remember John's admonition: "Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth" (I Jno. 3:18).

**Objection No. V.** If both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good work" then the church could work with its "hands the thing that is good (*agathon*). See Eph. 4:28. Answer: Right. Where did we get the idea that the church can only operate collectively through the church treasury in order to do that which is good (*agathos*)? Eph. 4:28 teaches that we are to use our hands to do things which are helpful to people, not harmful. It would be wonderful to see an entire local church working with its hands to help rebuild, furnish, and supply a house lost by a destitute person in a fire. A local church has not even started to realize its potential power when the hands of the church are only used to drop a few nickels in the basket for the lost and needy.

**Objection No. VI.** How can both the local church and the individual Christian do every good work when children and grandchildren are commanded to care for their parents? Answer: First, when children and grandchildren care for their parents, they are not performing an *agathos* work. The King James Version says in regard to the care of widows by "children or nephews," "for that is good and acceptable before God." The adjective "good" is from the Greek adjective *kalos* and its meaning in this connection is not identical with the meaning of the adjective *agathos* as used in the expression "every good work." This fact can be easily demonstrated: The church is to bear fruit or be established in "every good (*agathos*) work." (Col. 1:10; II Thes. 2:17). The church is "not to be burdened" when widows have children or grandchildren to care for them. See I Tim. 5:3,4, 16. Therefore, for a church to care for widows who already have someone to care for them would not be a good (*agathos*) work. (Actually, it would be a waste of the Lord's money.) Again, Paul said that the children or grandchildren are "to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents" (I Tim. 5:4). The word "requite" carries the idea of repayment. The Greek term is *amoibe*. See Thayer and W. E. Vine. So we are not dealing with an act of benevolence suggested by *agathos* but something more in line with the payment of an obligation. "Repayment" is more in harmony with the idea found in *kalos* in Rom. 12:17: "Take thought for things honorable (*kala*) in the sight of all men." (The King James Version renders *kala* "honest.")

**Objection No. VII.** The definitions of *agathos* which you have submitted deal only with what is commonly considered benevolent work and exclude evangelization of the world and the edification of the church. Answer: This objection is utterly wrong! What could be more truly good (*agathos*) in its character or constitution or more beneficial in its effect than the preaching of the blessed gospel of Christ which saves the sinner and edifies the saint. The gospel is even called "glad tidings of good (*agatha*) things" (Rom. 10:15). Again, the one who is "taught in the word" is to "communi-

cate unto him that teacheth in all good things (*agathois*)" (Gal. 6:6). Furthermore, the church is to be established "in every good (*agatho*) work and word" (II Thes. 2:17). So there is no justification for the idea that "every good (*agathos*) work" does not include evangelization and edification.

## THE SCHOOL AND ORPHAN HOME QUESTIONS

We have found that the New Testament plainly teaches that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "every good (*agathos*) work." The question arises as to whether the local church and the individual Christian may contribute to the support of schools and orphan homes run by Christians. All of us are agreed that none has the right to have "fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." (Eph. 5:11). Further, all believe that if we are to "have fellowship with God and with one another" we must "walk in the light, as he is in the light" (I Jno. 1:3,7). The question that must be settled is whether or not our contribution to a Christian school or Christian home conducted by Christians for children comes within the realm of "every good (*agathos*) work." This depends, of course, as to whether those who are running the schools have a lawful right under God to exist and whether they are doing *agathos* works. Just as surely as faithful Christians running a school or a home have a right under God to establish a school or home for the purpose of doing a good (*agathos*) work, just that surely the local church and individual Christian may perform the good (*agathos*) work of fellowshiping them in their efforts "for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph. 5:9).

In order to prove that our Christian schools, not operated for profit, do not come within the realm of "every good work," four things must be shown. First, it must be shown that it is not a good (*agathos*) work for such an institution to teach the Bible. Secondly, that it is not a good (*agathos*) work for them to teach subjects related to a better understanding of the Bible. Thirdly, that it is not a good (*agathos*) work for them to provide the kind of training and en-



vironment necessary to the preservation of the students' faith in Christ. Fourthly, failing in the above, the opponents of individuals or churches helping such schools, will have to show that it is a sin to fellowship Christians when they are walking in the light and are doing *agathos* works.

On the other hand, let it be plainly said in the view that both the individual Christian and the local church are to do "every good work," that no school or home having a lawful right to exist in order to do *agathos* works, has the right to call upon individuals Christians for contributions while at the same time forbidding the churches to contribute to their work. Such a school or home sins by forbidding that which God has freely allowed.

But, suppose schools and childcaring institutions, having a lawful right to exist, admitting that they are not doing an *agathos* work (i.e., not benevolent, beneficent, etc.), having only as much right to exist as secular institutions, call upon us for contributions. Such institutions have no more claims upon churches and individual Christians than a hardware store run by Christians. Furthermore, we have no more business of furnishing them advertising space in the pulpits of the church buildings than we would to certain Christians to advertise their hardware store. The churches do well to grow weary of trumpeters who sound off in the pulpits against churches contributing to schools and homes for children out of their treasuries, while at the same time, they use the hours of worship to advertise their favorite brand of school or home, calling upon the members of audiences to make individual donations to it, and then later, stand piously at the door with a collection basket in hand. Such conduct is indefensible and should not be tolerated.

Again, suppose schools and child caring institutions claiming to be good (*agathos*), both in aim and operation, yet in reality are not doing a good (*agathos*) work, call upon us to contribute to them upon the basis we should be ready unto "every good work." They have no more claim upon us than the Christians of said hardware store previously mentioned. It matters not if such institutions may have started off in the realm of *agathos* works and later gradually drifted into secularism, they do not come within "every good

work." After they have drifted away from their original aim and operation, our contributions to them cannot be good (*agathos*) works, and we should contribute to them exactly as we would to the Christians running said hardware store. If they drift into worldliness, digression, etc., we should vigorously oppose them.

What should be our attitude toward a school that maintains an *agathos* Bible Department or Chair while the rest of the school is secular? Our attitude toward that Bible department or chair should be the same as the attitude of the early churches and Christians was toward the apostle Paul when he was busy "reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus." (Acts 19:9).

### HOW SHALL WE KNOW "EVERY GOOD WORK"?

How shall we know how to recognize "every good work." In II Tim. 3:16,17, Paul tells us that "every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good (*agathos*) work." Study the meaning of the term "good" (*agathos*) and then study the New Testament scriptures and you will be able to determine what kind of good works are required of both the churches and individual Christians in the exhortation to do "every good work." If individual Christians and local churches find themselves placing an interpretation upon this commandment which is similar to the interpretation the priest and Levite (Luke 10:25-37) placed upon the second commandment, they may know that they have missed the mark. Yea, one of our great failings is that we are so busy looking for exclusive specific commands that, like the priest and Levite, we fail to keep some of the great commandments of God.

### SUMMING UP

This paper's purpose has been to impress upon all of us the necessity of doing "every good (*agathos*) work." We do not say nor do we believe that the Greek adjective *agathos* is the only adjective translated "good" which describes any

aspect of the nature of the good works that local churches and individual Christians are to do. A careful study of listings under "good" in Young's *Analytical Concordance* will show that other words are used to denote the nature of good works that local churches and individual Christians are to do. For instance, *kalos*, translated by the adjective "good" seventy-six times, often indicates the beauty of goodness. (For a full discussion of *kalos*, please read the chapter on *Kalos* in *More New Testament Words* by William Barclay.) What we have emphasized is that the New Testament plainly teaches that both the local church and the individual Christian are to do "EVERY GOOD (AGATHOS) WORK." This, we think, has been clearly proven by the scriptures.

We have repeatedly stressed this matter in order to help everyone to understand, without any doubting whatsoever, the kind of good works that *both* the local church and individual can do. We want to help put an end to this arbitrary manner of decreeing that a particular good (*agathos*) work is for the individual Christian to do, but not for a local church. For instance, we are told that visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction" mentioned in James 1:27, is for the individual Christian to do, not for the local church. The error of this view is easily seen. First, beyond doubt everyone will grant that visiting "the fatherless and widows in their affliction" is a good (*agathos*) work. Secondly, since both the local church and individual Christian are to do "every good (*agathos*) work," the local church is also to do the good work of helping them. If it be said that their relatives are to care for them, we reply that all the fatherless and widows who have relatives to care for them are not in the affliction mentioned by James. In this connection let us observe that if it is a good (*agathos*) work for an individual Christian to give to an orphan home, it is also a good (*agathos*) work for a local church to do so, since both are to do "every good (*agathos*) work."

We hope that this paper has helped everyone to recognize as purely human and arbitrary the decrees that particular good (*agathos*) works may be done by an individual Christian, but not by a local church.

We also hope that everyone has been helped to think

more carefully about the meaning of the term "good," particularly as it is used as an adjective to qualify the meaning of "work." We believe that all of us will recognize as ignorance or sophistry the effort of anyone who tries to show that "every good (*agathos*) work" cannot mean "every good (*agathos*) work" by citing against it such scriptures as "if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good (*kalon*) work." (I Tim. 3:1). People who reason thusly hurt the cause of Christ.

We are equally desirous that this paper will help to curb the looseness of thinking on the part of some. We fear that some good, well-meaning Christians think that the expression "every good (*agathos*) work" covers almost every idea of "good" found in the English dictionaries. Such people are entirely too broad in their thinking for they go far beyond the limits of *agathos*. They seem to think that because various activities involved in play, politics, secular affairs, etc., may be called "good" in some sense that the local church is to engage in all of them. It is evident to you that the phrase "every good (*agathos*) work" does not authorize the church to go into the fun-making business, the political arena, secular affairs and such like. We look with sadness and dismay upon the misguided efforts of those dear people who, misunderstanding the nature of "every good (*agathos*) work," pervert the mission of the church. They too are a liability to the cause of Christ.

Finally, we hope that our study has led us to avoid two extremes. On the one hand, we must not follow those teachers who reduce the number of the kind of good (*agathos*) works by their human, arbitrary rulings. On the other hand, we must not follow the crowd which adds to the meaning of "every good (*agathos*) work" by trying to make *agathos* cover all other kinds of good works. Instead, let BOTH the individual Christian and the local church "bear fruit" or "be established" or "be prepared" or "be ready" unto "every good (*agathos*) work."

