



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 2

Complete in Christ

by – W. Hallman (edited)

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power,” (Colossians 2:8-10).

The greatest discovery that any human being can make is the discovery of the ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST, and the utter worthlessness of man without Him. Christ is all, and in Him we have all. Without Him we are nothing, absolutely nothing.

“**Christ is all**” is the covering principle of this Book of Colossians. Look at the following verses: “*That in all things He might have the preeminence*” (1:18); “*In Him should all fulness dwell*” (1:19); “*In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (2:3); “*In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*” (2:9); “*In Him, which is the Head of all principality and power*” (2:10); “*Christ is all, and in all*” (3:11).

It was Bishop Moule who said, “No surer test according to Scripture can be applied to anything claiming to be Christian teaching. Where does it put Jesus Christ? What does it make of Jesus Christ? Is He something in it, or is He ALL?”

When anyone says that we are to be saved or kept by the Law, they have never understood the phrase, “*Complete in Him*.” “*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (Romans 10:4). When any one suggests that we can add to our salvation by doing something, they never understood the phrase, “*Complete in Him*.” “*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God*” (Ephesians 2:8). When anyone suggests that water baptism in any form is necessary for salvation, or as a testimony to one's faith, or the door to the church, they do not understand the phrase “*Complete in Him*.” For we are “*buried with Him in baptism*” (Colossians 2:12). When we are told that we must keep the sabbath, we know men do not understand the completeness we have in Christ. “*... the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the Body is of Christ*” (Colossians 2:16-17).

Nothing can go beyond completeness. You can add nothing to it. You might well try to purge a sunbeam, or purify the whiteness of the newly fallen snow as to add to what is already perfect. It is not only true that “*all fulness dwells in Him*,” but also that we are “*complete in Him*.”

It is the privilege of every person to recognize their completeness in Christ. This can be done first by,

Recognizing Christ's Fulness

“*For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*”
(Colossians 2:9).

Christ's fulness is resident in His person (“in Him”). This phrase is

given the emphatic position in the verse, and draws our attention first to the One Who has the fulness. The Holy Spirit wants us to see Him, even before we see His fulness. This is important.

We must also recognize the Permanence of the fulness in the word “dwelleth.” This means “to settle down, to be at home.” Deity is at home in Christ, and dwells so in a permanent way.

There is also the Plentitude of this fulness as seen in the words, “*all the fulness of the Godhead*.” To make this matter exceedingly clear, the Apostle uses “all,” emphasizing that the fulness is complete. Christ is not merely **like** God – that is, divine – but he **is God**.

If the foregoing exposition is true, and it is, then certain things follow in logical sequence.

Christ Is the Head of All Creation. “*For by Him were all things created ... all things were created by Him, and for Him*” (Colossians 1:16-17). In creation Christ is preeminent. Every form and kind of matter, simple and complex were created by Him. Christ is the source, the means and the end of all creation. He is also the conservator of all – “*by Him all things consist*” (Colossians 1:17). The helm of the universe is in His hands that were nailed to Calvary for you and me.

Christ Is the Head of All Redemption. “*And having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself*” (Colossians 1:20). When He cried, “*It is finished*,” it was finished. Nothing was left undone, and nothing needed to be added. In His incarnation He became both God and man; in His crucifixion He became our means of peace and provision for every spiritual blessing; in His resurrection He became our power over death, the grave, and Lake of Fire; in His ascension and seating at God's right hand He became our guarantee of all future glory with Him. Nothing has been left undone for our future glorification with Him “*in heavenly places*.”

Christ Is the Head of the Church, His Body. “*And He is the Head of the Body, the church*” (Colossians 1:18). The head is the glory of the Body. There the chief beauty of manhood dwells. Christ is fairer than all. We are circumcised with Him, baptized with Him, risen with Him, ascended with Him, and seated with Him in glory. What a complete identification!

Christ Is Again the Head of Our Hope. “*When Christ Who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory,*” (Colossians 3:4). So our Lord Jesus Christ is ALL and in ALL. We (continued on page 11)

Dear reader,

Greetings once again in the wonderful grace of our glorious Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ! It is with great joy that we put forth this second issue of the *Bible Student's Notebook*.

We were encouraged by the many warm responses which were received from the first issue. We still have a few copies left. If you did not receive one, write to us and we will be more than glad to send you one. As you can see, the BSN is designed to that you may keep each issue in a standard notebook. We trust that this will be a help to pastors, teachers and all those who love the study of God's Word.

Prior to coming to an understanding of the distinct ministry of Paul and the wonderful truths of Grace, we published a periodical entitled *The Old Paths*. We have just finished sending out approximately 3000 dispensational packets to those who were on its mailing list. Please pray with us as we continue to have response from those who are showing an interest in the Word of God rightly divided!

In May we enjoyed the 2nd annual Mid-Atlantic Brace Bible Conference which was held here at Grace Bible Church. We had folks from seven states and heard wonderful preaching from brothers Jordan, Plessinger and Mefford.

Since the last issue we have also had the joy of speaking in three Bible Conferences (Altoona, PA; Glasgow, PA; and Wonderlake, WI). We were greatly encouraged by meeting the many dear saints of God at each place and enjoyed sweet fellowship around the Word of His Grace. What a joy to know that God's matchless message is getting out! These were special times which we will never forget.

We also had the privilege of having a few dear saints drop in to visit with us this summer. Some were even able to spend a night or two. This is always a pleasure. Don't forget that our home is open ... We would be more than glad to have YOU!

It is our prayer that this little paper will be used of God to strengthen His dear saints (Romans 16:25, 26) and to bring glory to Him. Our love to each of you!

Your servant,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
II Corinthians 4:5
10/1989

Bible Student's Notebook

This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "Movement," "Organization," "Mission," or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all "saints."

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Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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are God's heavenly people; our citizenship is in Heaven, and from thence we look for our Saviour. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

The Fulness of Christ is but half of the story: the apostle hastens on to show the other side. So we must also

Recognize the Christian's Fulness. "Ye are complete in Him," (Colossians 2:10). Note our present possession in the words "ye are." "In Him" is the richest little phrase in all of Paul's Epistles. It is the sphere of the believer's life.

If we are "complete in Him," and we are "saved by grace through faith," then it follows as Paul sets forth in this Epistle:

We Are Complete without Philosophy. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). We need no sophisms of this world to prop our faith. There is nothing new in philosophy except old error. One day three friend philosophers came to Job to comfort him and to "set him straight" as to his thinking. These three represent the reasonings of the best of men. Eliphaz reasons on human experience: "Even as I have seen," "I have seen" (Job 4:8; 5:3; 15:17). Bildad comes from human tradition: "For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age," "Search of the fathers" (Job 8:8, 10). Zophar reasons on human merit: "If thou prepare thine heart" (Job 11:13-14). This is the gospel of humanism. Six thousand years of human gropings after wisdom have not given men the true knowledge of God, nor His ways with man. Man's reasoning is inadequate to understand either the will or way of God. If man by his own reason could find God, and His way of redemption, then there would be no need of a revelation. Like little David we are content with the sling and the stones. As for the armor of philosophy, we leave that to proud Goliath to wear. "Spoil you," says Paul, means "to carry off as a captive, a slave, as booty."

We Are Complete without Ceremonies. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross; Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" (Colossians 2:14, 16-17).

All these ceremonies had their day. They belong to the time of shadows; we now have the Substance, Christ. Finished are the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. Circumcision, sacrifices, passover, water baptisms, temple services, priestly functions, etc., are but "beggarly elements" of a past age, encumbrances no longer needed. But man is prone to be religious, and add something to Christ. He must "touch", and "taste" and "handle" something.

Again, we are "**complete in Him**" without any human merit. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). If we were "dead in sins," and we were, how could a dead man do anything? He cannot see, hear, touch, smell, speak, or walk. So how utterly foolish it is like Zophar to talk about preparing one's heart to appease God or to merit His favor.

Therefore, if "in Him" there dwells "*all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*," and we are "*complete in Him*," let us live as those who know this fulness! The Pauline doctrine of Christ is His absolute fulness. Christ should therefore command all our worship, our admiration, our love. There is at our disposal the infinite merit of His righteousness, the infinite efficacy in His blood, and the infinite power of His resurrection and glorification. ■

That Wonderful Book

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

THE BIBLE IS TRUE

"Thy Word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever" (Psalm 119:160).

THE BIBLE IS ETERNAL

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven" Psalm 119:89

"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away" (Luke 21:33).

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6-7).

THE BIBLE IS ALIVE

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword ..." (Hebrews 4:12).

THE BIBLE REVEALS MAN'S CONDITION

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

DO YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE?

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 5:8-9).

The Bible is a wonderful book; but it will be of no value to you unless you believe it. The Bible reveals that God loves us and sent Jesus Christ to die for us. By faith in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and was bodily raised again from the grave, we have forgiveness of sins and assurance of eternal life with Christ. The Bible is trustworthy – God cannot lie! He has given us a wonderful book that is holy, perfect, eternal and unchangeable. Do not neglect to hear its message!

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). ■

The Ministry of Restoration

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Galatians 6:1-5

Every believer has been given two great ministries. One, the ministry of reconciliation is to the lost. The other, the ministry of restoration, is a ministry toward the saints.

I. Every believer is subject to the need of this ministry.

- A. Every believer has two natures.
- B. Every believer will always have two natures in this life.
- C. Both natures strive for dominance (Romans 7:17-23; Galatians 5:17).
 - 1. One nature will always succeed (Matthew 16:16-17, 22-23).
 - 2. The other nature will always strive to overcome.
- D. The believer's flesh is totally unreliable (Philippians 3:3, Romans 7:24). Even the most spiritual may be overtaken. George Williams has written, "The most spiritual may fall at any moment if tested with sufficient skill."

II. Every believer is responsible for himself.

"For every man shall bear his own burden," (Galatians 6:5).

Daniel Webster was once asked, "What is the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?" To which he replied, "My individual responsibility to God."

"For we shall all stand before the judgement seat of Christ ... So then every one of us shall give account of *himself* to God" (Romans 14:10, 12).

III. When a believer falls, he is to be restored.

- A. The possibility: restoration is possible.
 - 1. What is restoration? Restoration comes from the word *restore*, which Webster defines, "to join together again," as in "setting a joint." Members of the Body of Christ can never be severed, but many are dislocated. (p.s.: Restoration is *not* gossip!)
 - 2. Restoration by nature is complete. When this ministry is finished successfully the believer is restored! There are no second class saints!
- B. The process:
 - 1. Restoration is to be done in the spirit of meekness, (Galatians 6:1), which is the fruit of

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The New Covenant

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Jeremiah 31 ~ Hebrews 8

The New Covenant (or New Testament) is a subject which has caused much confusion when it comes to Bible doctrine, because many members of the Body of Christ have erroneously mistaken it as belonging to them. The New Testament is not a set of books making up the last part of the Bible. It is a "contract" which God will make exclusively with the nation Israel.

"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah," (Jeremiah 31:31; c.f. Hebrews 8:8; Ezekiel 20:37; Isaiah 59:21).

Israel is God's covenant people (Romans 9:4; Ephesians 2:12). They were the "Old Testament" saints, and they will be the "New Testament" saints. Often we hear "New Testament Church" or "New Testament Believers" used in relation to what God is doing today. Yet in doing so we neglect the great duty of right division. How is it that saints today take a "contract" to be made between God and Israel and make it theirs? This is simply another case of spiritual larceny, which is a common crime against Scripture.

It is God's objective to carry out all His purposes, laid forth under the Old Covenant, with the New. The failure of the Old Covenant was not with the covenant itself, or with God; but rather it was with the Nation of Israel itself. Israel did not fulfill her responsibilities and therefore "defaulted" the contract. Yet God shall perfect them with the New Testament (Hebrews 8:6-8; c.f. Romans 8:3). He will give them Divine enablement, by His Spirit, to accomplish all that He requires of them (Ezekiel 36:27). This is the *better* covenant with its *better* promises, (Hebrews 8:6). When God establishes this New Covenant with Israel, He shall:

- A. Gather Israel to their own land (Jeremiah 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17; 36:24).
- B. Purge Israel's sins, (Ezekiel 11:18; 20:38; 36:25, 29; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17). Thus, all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26-27).
- C. Put the law in Israel's inward parts, (Jeremiah 31:33; Hebrews 8:10; 10:16). Thus the primary difference is seen between the two Covenants: the Old was written on stone, the New on their hearts. Therefore Israel shall not need to "teach every man his neighbour" in those days (Hebrews 8:11), but shall then be the witnesses to the Gentiles of which Matthew 28:19-20 speaks (c.f. Isaiah 60:3).

The New "Everlasting Covenant" (Jeremiah 32:40) fulfills the Old, thus making it obsolete (Hebrews 8:13). The Old was a shadow and figure of the New (Colossians 2:17;

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Suffering

By – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;” (Philippians 1:29).

Paul had a special ministry of suffering (Acts 9:16), and as our Apostle and pattern (Romans 11:13; I Timothy 1:16), he teaches us its great value. Today, much of the preaching and teaching is centered on “deliverance” from suffering. Yet suffering actually plays an important role in the Body of Christ, as we shall see.

I. What is suffering?

James Strong gives us some words by which we can glean a better understanding of the word suffer: hardship, pain, affliction, lack (insufficiency), trouble, pressure, etc. Webster defines suffering as “the bearing of pain, inconvenience or loss.” Please make special note of the word “bear.”

II. What does the Scripture teach concerning suffering?

A. It is God’s gift to the believer:

“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake” (Philippians 1:29).

B. It is the believer’s appointment:

“That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (I Thessalonians 3:3).

C. It is a fruit of the Spirit:

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering” (Galatians 5:22 – c.f. I Corinthians 13:47).

Note: Longsuffering is a compound word, i.e., long and suffering, which means to suffer a long time. The fruit of the Spirit does not include “deliverance;” quite the contrary, it produces God’s attribute of longsuffering in the life of the believer.

D. It is Christ’s sufferings which the believer is called to bear:

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His Body’s sake, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us”
(II Corinthians 1:5).

III. What is God’s answer to suffering?

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth

by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation” (II Corinthians 1:3-7).

A. It should be noted that God’s method of handling our sufferings is through divinely enabled endurance, not through “deliverance.” Again, *longsuffering*, NOT deliverance is part of the fruit of the Spirit and goes hand in hand with Grace.

B. Concerning grace, Paul had this to say regarding his “thorn in the flesh:”

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My GRACE IS SUFFICIENT for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me” (II Corinthians 12:8-10).

IV. Why does the Body of Christ suffer?

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

“For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich” (II Corinthians 8:9).

“But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, when here in the flesh, although He was King and Master of Israel, did not live as such. Rather He gave Himself as a servant. He experienced the same cares and sufferings of life as did those to whom He ministered. He identified with them. He truly was *“a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief”* (Isaiah 53:3).

“Jesus wept” (John 11:35).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus Christ was a minister who identified with those whom He served; but He is no longer here in the flesh. Rather, He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. We no longer know Him *“after the flesh”* (II Corinthians 5:16). Although He is still ministering to the world today, He does it through the instrumentality of the believers, the Body of Christ.

“For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and ►

of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30).

Even though we have a position in Christ, seated in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (Ephesians 1:3), and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17), we are here as His ambassadors of grace.

"For the love Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:14-21).

Paul had spoken in the previous chapter of his sufferings (II Corinthians 4:8-9, 16-17). He spoke of "the light of the glorious gospel" which was a "treasure in earthen vessels" (i.e., that Christ dwells in us!). The reference to the earthen vessels reminds us of Gideon (Judges 7) and the pitchers that were broken so that the light was released. So it is with the Body of Christ: we are broken so that "Jesus Christ may be made manifest" in our bodies:

"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (II Corinthians 4:10-11).

When we were saved, we were not taken to glory. We have been left here, on foreign soil, "on assignment." If we were in our own country we would not be subject to any of the cares and sorrows of this life; but as ambassadors to a sin cursed land that is currently an enemy of God, we are constantly faced with the burdens of such a divine appointment. We are left here to take our full share in the trials under which the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans 8:22). Each of us is part of that of which Job spoke, "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" (Job 5:7). We, in identity with Christ, suffer so that others may know of His wondrous and full grace. Next to our salvation, we should have as our greatest desire that God use us. Each day that He extends free grace to mankind is but another day of extension

to our "tour of duty," but He will "make it up to us."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58).

V. The believer's present suffering is an eternal investment!

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (II Corinthians 4:17).

"... if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17-18).

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" (II Timothy 2:12).

Here's the principle: We bear the cross, we wear the crown. This is the standard of Christ:

"... when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Peter 1:11)

"... who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

Listen to the song writer Isaac Watts:

"Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His Name?

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease?
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed thro' bloody seas?

"Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vile world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

"Sure I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word."

Shall we shrink from this Christ honoring ministry? Should we not see trials for what they really are, opportunities ►

3. Believers are partners in burden bearing, (Galatians 6:2). In the military every soldier must carry his own pack, but in the case of the wounded, the well bodied soldiers come to his aid and share his burden. So it is to be with the members of His Body.

Finally, what should always be remembered is that any good which may come of our lives is a result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 15:10; 4:7). ■

(Restoration – continued from page 12)

the spirit, (Galatians 5:23). Law produces harshness; grace produces meekness. There is no place in the body for "bullies" (c.f. II Timothy 2:25-26).

2. Warning is given against fancied superiority over others (Galatians 6:3). This produces a critical spirit.

for eternal progress? Oh, that we might learn (Philippians 4:11) to yield unreservedly to the great wisdom of God's appointment!

VI. The believer's suffering also has current benefits.

A. Our sufferings drive us to Christ.

If we did not trust in Him, how else could we bear our difficulties? Whose love comforts the careworn and binds up the broken hearted like our Savior (II Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 4:6-7)?

B. Our sufferings enable us to demonstrate the grace of God.

Earthly sorrows produce in us God-like virtue, enabling us to show forth Christ to the world. Many times the world will listen to the voice of affliction after it has turned a deaf ear to impersonal sermons. How many unconcerned hearts have been touched by the sight of Christ-like endurance?

C. Our sufferings enable us to have compassion.

We can only have real compassion toward those to whom we minister, when we are able to identify with them (II Corinthians 1:4).

D. Our sufferings reveal to us our faults.

There is nothing that will bring us "to ourselves" quite like suffering. They truly have immense value in this regard. We will soon find, in the midst of personal problems, how *deeply selfish* we *really* are. We are truly *slaves* to our senses and appetites. We are brought to the place where God can use us when we are humbled. The principle has always been clear: without being made humble, no one will ever be exalted (Luke 18:14).

VII. Areas in which the believer may suffer.

For the purpose of this study we will divide these sufferings into two basic groups: Common, and Special.

A. Those sufferings which are common to all mankind.

The believer, because of the duty to which he has been called, must face the types of suffering which all men must face upon this sin ruined earth. He must "bear pain, inconvenience and loss." This comes with the territory and we do it for "His sake." "For every man shall bear his own burden" (Galatians 6:5).

1. Basic human needs (i.e., food, shelter and clothing):

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be happy, both to abound and to suffer need" (Philippians 4:11-12).

2. Health:

"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities (i.e., an unhealthy state), in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when

I am weak, then am I strong" (II Corinthians 12:10).

The above two sections are natural problems, but they may be sacrificially voluntary as well. We may choose to forgo certain comforts and willingly suffer further inconvenience, so as to advance the ministry of reconciliation. Examples:

"Because of the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me" (Philippians 2:30).

"How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (II Corinthians 8:24).

"And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you: though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (II Corinthians 12:15).

In all these examples we see nothing short of the Spirit of Christ (II Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5).

3. Temptation:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13).

B. Those sufferings which are special, relating directly to our vocation.

1. The religious costs.

Paul could say concerning all his religious past,

"Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

We, too, may have to suffer over the loss of our past "religion." Christ's ambassador will be outside the ecclesiastical systems of this world, and rightfully so.

2. The desire to live Godly.

"Yea, and all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12).

3. Receiving the Word.

"And ye became followers of us, and the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (I Thessalonians 1:6).

Compare this to what Jesus prayed concerning the Twelve: *"I have given them thy Word: and the ►*

world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of this world" (John 17:14).

4. The bearing of one another's burdens.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

We may take additional suffering upon ourselves, when we not only bear our own burdens (Galatians 6:5), but also those of our fellow comrades.

"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1).

5. The afflictions of the gospel.

"Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God" (II Timothy 1:8).

"And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased" (Galatians 5:11).

"... my gospel: wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds" (II Timothy 2:8-9).

"But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention" (I Thessalonians 2:2).

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach" (I Timothy 4:10).

Paul aggressively proclaimed the truth at great costs. He would permit nothing to be taken from the offence of the cross. What a folly to make it "popular" by omission or addition. How little do we appreciate II Timothy 4:7.

If we aggressively proclaim the truth, we too will be partakers of the affliction of the gospel. What a challenge!

VIII. Special Warnings

A. It is important that we realize that we are to bear problems, not provoke them. Surely, any of us could be in unnecessary trouble if we did not use great wisdom. The goal is not to *get into trouble*, but to bear it patiently when it does come.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Colossians 4:5).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18).

B. If our lives dishonor God it will lead to the fruit of such lives.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

We must remember that if troubles come to us in direct result of our own unconcern or sin, we will not receive reward for bearing that suffering; it is in itself a reward of our own previous decisions and actions. This sowing and reaping must not be viewed as the direct hand of God upon us, but rather the result of the natural law of "sowing and reaping." If you sin, God does not "catch up with you" and "get you;" your own sin will do that.

IX. Rest from our sufferings is promised.

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels" (II Thessalonians 1:7).

Let us, dear brethren, not murmur and complain about the conditions of our life, but rather learn in "whatsoever state ... to be content," and even more, to "... take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." For when we are weak, then are we strong! ■

Peter, James, John and Jude all wrote their epistles in harmony with this New Covenant. The blessings of this New Covenant began to be enjoyed and demonstrated after the cross on the Jewish feast of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. This was interrupted though, until God's present purpose is accomplished (Romans 11:25). Paul wrote progressively concerning this new program – the Dispensation of the Grace of God (Ephesians 3:2). In God's present purpose all covenant and national distinctions between Jew and Gentile are gone (Ephesians 2:14-15), and each believer can now enjoy the "Fellowship of the Mystery" (Ephesians 3:9).

In our study of the Scripture we must learn to make right division (II Timothy 2:15), leaving distinctive doctrines where we find them (i.e., where God has placed them), lest we diminish the glorious high calling of the Body of Christ by mixing teaching from other dispensational workings of God. ■

(New Covenant – continued from page 12)

Hebrews 8:5; 10:1). Israel shall regain her holy days as well as other ceremonial practices provided for under the Old (Ezekiel chapters 40-46).

The death of Israel's Messiah (Ephesians 2:12; Romans 9:4-5; 15:8; Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 53:8), is the basis of her New Covenant (Hebrews 9:15-17; Matthew 26:28). It is at this point that many make their mistake: since God made this Covenant with the blood of Christ (the same blood which paid our own sin debt), many assume that this Covenant must be ours also; but Israel's New Covenant was only a portion of the great work which Christ's blood accomplished. There was a hidden purpose, which Paul calls the *mystery* of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19), and the *mystery* of Christ (Colossians 4:3). The common ground between the Body of Christ and Israel is the blood of Christ, not Israel's special benefit (i.e., the New Covenant, with its distinctively Jewish characteristics).