



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 14

What You Don't See Is What You Get

by – Gary Sorge

“While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18).

A few years ago, a comedian once said, “What you see is what you get.” Where the world and it’s system are concerned, that is all too true. What you see (just what you see in front of you), is what you get and it’s all you’re going to get. But how does that apply to the Body of Christ?

When we found out that my father had terminal cancer, someone said to me, “Christians have their faith to sustain them.” And I thought, “If I’m depending on my faith to sustain me, I’m in trouble, because my faith can’t do that.” But the *object* of my faith – Jesus Christ – sustains me, and the entire Body of Christ.

Along with the well coined phrase, “Christians have their faith to sustain them,” I’ve also heard that, “Sooner or later you Christians have to face reality.” Having been raised in a Christian home, I’ve always thought that Christians were the only ones who were truly facing reality, and that the rest of the world kind of had its back turned on what was real.

It was Karl Marx that said, “Religion is the opiate of the people.” He said it was a drug used to escape reality. What is this reality that everybody says Christians are trying to escape? Let’s go to an authoritative source.

REALITY

To begin with, I quite agree that “religion” is the “opiate of the people – to escape reality,” if you’re looking at it from the world’s view of religion and reality. The world’s concept of religion is a system of man trying to reach out to God. That has been tried thousands of times, but has never worked; man always falls short.

The opposite of religion is salvation – which is God reaching down to man. God accomplished this by one act at Calvary. It was only done once, but it worked! It didn’t have to be attempted numerous times. But when man keeps consoling himself with the delusion that his system of reaching out to God is going to take away the sting of this world, then religion is a drug. What we have in the Body of Christ is not religion; it’s life. It is salvation in Christ, who is the Head of the Body. This is what the Word says is real, which is vastly different from what the world labels as real.

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:15-17).

Now, turn to Genesis chapter three; keep in mind that he didn’t say, “You’re going to die in a sense of the word,” or, “it’s going to be just like you died.” He said, “Thou **shalt surely die**.” If you want to look at it from one angle, the serpent was right because the bodies of Adam and Eve did continue to live. The serpent denied what God said, so did God make a mistake? Was the serpent right? Look at Genesis 5:5;

“And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years and he died” (Genesis 5:5).

When did he physically die? At nine hundred thirty years. But when did he surely die? Right away. God

(continued on page 111)

This month's editorial is taken from the foreword to the booklet from which this issue's article was taken.

The tremendous truth of this booklet will become all the more precious to you if you know more about its author. Gary Sorge was a dear friend of mine and a dedicated co-laborer in the work of the ministry. In all the years that I knew Gary, and in fact for almost all his life, he suffered from diabetes and all the debilitating consequences that this disease can bring. Finally, after much pain and suffering, at the age of 35, Gary went home to be with the Lord that he loved so much. In addition to the great physical suffering which Gary endured, he and his family suffered the emotional stress of dealing with the disease and the consequences that it brought.

In spite of this great suffering, Gary had within him, and instilled within his family, a marvelous inner strength and contentment. Gary's life and death became – a shining testimony of the writings of the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 12:9-10; *"And he [God] said unto me [Paul], 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. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak then am I strong."* Though Gary's flesh was indeed very weak, he experienced a great strength in his inner man which God renewed through His Word day by day (Ephesians 3:16; II Corinthians 4:16).

There are three basic ways in which we can handle the trials and tribulations that come into our lives. We can, as the world does, allow those circumstances to overwhelm and get the best of us. This method gives us a constant "woe is me" attitude. We can take the attitude of living above our circumstances; of simply ignoring them by claiming that they don't really exist. This method is totally unscriptural and illogical, and will eventually destroy our faith when the facts of our circumstances overwhelm our efforts to ignore them. Obviously, neither of the above methods is a proper way to face the adversities of our life. When dealing with adversity we must, as this booklet explains, face it head on, with confidence, knowing that the temporary, tangible sufferings of this life "are not worthy to be compared" with the eternal, "real" glory which Christ will reveal through us.

As you read this booklet it is my prayer, as I'm sure it would be Gary's, that you would learn to appreciate suffering for what the Bible says it is: a gift of God that works for us and in us to produce glory that will last for all eternity.

Tracy Plessinger Fallen Timber, PA
11/1992

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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PATRIARCHS

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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said, "... for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." He didn't physically die until he was nine hundred thirty years old, and there's Scripture to back that up. But God said that he would surely die in the day he ate thereof.

Was the day Adam physically died the day he really died? What I'm asking is, was the physical death real, as God saw it? And keep in mind we're looking at things from God's Word; the way God sees things – not the way we see things. Our theme verse is II Corinthians 4: 18. This verse, probably more than any other, has given me a handle on what to take seriously in life – what's real and lasting, and what isn't.

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are" (I Corinthians 1:28).

When I look at that verse, I see irony in it. Paul says that God uses the things which are not to bring to nothing the things which are. I see God using the things that are not (the things that are not physical) to bring to nothing the things that are (the things that are physical. "... even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17).

"Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith and not by sight:)" (II Corinthians 5:6-7)

We've all probably read that verse a hundred times, and most of us have never fully understood, much less appropriated it, because we still say, "Well look, I can see what I can see, so don't tell me that the physical problems I run into aren't real, because I can see them." But Paul says that we are not to look at the things which can be seen, but the things which are not seen, because these are what God looks at.

BLESSINGS

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" (Ephesians 1:3).

Ephesians 1:3 talks about spiritual blessings in heavenly places that God has given us in Christ Jesus. That's what we have right now. God says, "These are yours, and they're what you're to be looking at," and yet, we continue focusing our attention on the flesh, i.e., the physical.

"(For we walk by faith, not by sight:)" (II Corinthians 5:7).

Why do we walk by faith and not by sight? It's all connected to the spiritual blessings in heavenly places.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

This verse tells us what faith is all about. Faith is our substance or evidence of the things "not seen." We have faith which does not require proof. Proof is something physical.

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (II Corinthians 4:18).

This verse explains what temporal means. They're here for a time, then they are gone. The eternal things here in Ephesians 1:3 are "not seen".

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:13, 19).

When I look at these verses, along with Ephesians 1:3 and II Corinthians 4:18, I come up with a question: "Are the things that are in God's riches in glory temporary blessings?" Paul says God supplies your need "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Now "according to" means that if you and I are in accord, we are in agreement. If I say, for instance, "According to my wife, the car is out of gas," that means my wife told me it's out of gas, and if I'm going to agree with her, I'll say the car is out of gas. I don't know if it is (by experience), but if she says it is, then I'd say, "According to my wife," – in agreement with what my wife has said – "the car is out of gas." So I ask you, are these "riches in glory" temporal blessings? According to II Corinthians 4:18, the things "not seen" are eternal, not temporal. It's the things we see which are temporal. It is from these riches not seen that we are supplied.

CRUCIFIED – DEAD – BURIED – RESURRECTED

Let's take a look at something else that God says is real:

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24).

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

I have spoken with various Christians who appreciate a dispensational viewpoint of God's Word. I have told them that the Bible says you are dead and your life is hid with Christ, and they have said, "But that's positional (spiritual) and not experiential (physical, real)." But what God said (and meant!) is right there in Genesis 2:17, "... in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Notice carefully the tense of the verb. "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh.*" It's already done! Paul tells us through the Spirit that we are crucified in the person of Jesus Christ.

"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

When God's Word says that we have put on Christ, He means that everything that happened to Him happened to us. We who were illegitimate children were made natural born children, a son from day one. The washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), wipes out the past. It gives us a past we never had. It gives a past from "eternity past" in the Son of God.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:1-4).

Now remember II Corinthians 4:18, – the things which are *not seen* are **eternal**. Colossians 3:3 says, **"Ye are dead and your life is hid in God."** Now, are you *really* dead? Are you *physically* dead? God's word says, "Ye are dead." You are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God. But what you see with your eyes does not agree with that. You say "I'm alive, I'm an individual." Does God see you as an individual? That's not a trick question. When God sees you, who does He see? **Christ!** He sees the completed work of Christ on the cross. You can say, "I'm not really dead," but yes, you really are dead. If you are a member of the Body of Christ, you are not **physical-ly** dead, but *really* dead. **God said so.** Sometimes that's hard for us to assimilate in our minds. We say, "We're not **really** dead," but God says, **"ye are**

dead." And then he tells where your life is coming from in verse four. **"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."**

The Scriptures tell us that the flesh should not be getting the focus of our attention. Because we're walking by faith and not by sight, Paul says, "... *make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof,*" (Romans 13:14). In Romans 6:4, and Colossians 2:12, he says that we're buried by baptism into His death.

Are we *really* buried? Yes. But are we *physically* buried? No. But what does that tell you about the "physical"? God says one thing, and our flesh tells us another. You know which one we're supposed to believe. However, we still see the flesh, and that's why Paul tells us over and over not to look at the things which are seen. We're to walk by faith, not by sight. Don't trust what you can see, because you *can't* trust what you can see.

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:5-7).

Look at verse six: "*Hath raised us up together ... in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*" Is that a future tense? Does that say He's going to raise us up at a future date? We're told that He *already* has. Every member of the Body of Christ has been raised up together with Christ [where we now] sit in heavenly places.

My logical question to that is, "Really? Are we *really* seated in heavenly places?" We can all see that we're here, but God says through the Holy Spirit by Paul that He has caused us to sit in heavenly places. That's where God sees us.

Can we trust what we see? No, we can't!

REALITY FOR PETER

Let us take a look at another dispensation and see what reality was back then. It is not all that different. Go to Matthew 14:27-31. This was when Christ walked on the sea of Galilee.

"But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid

me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Here we have a case of Peter taking his eyes off what was *real*, what could sustain him, and looking at something that was *not real*; looking at the physical things, he was so convinced that he could have been killed. When we are talking about reality, the waves were not the reality, **Christ was the reality**. Christ (i.e., God) who made the ocean waves said, "Come, have faith in me, Come to me." Peter came, but then he took his eyes off the Lord and started looking at the waves, and the waves looked pretty convincing. Peter was in up to his knees by then, and said inwardly, "This is reality." Before long he was in hip deep. Did the waves pose a threat to the Lord? Not at all. Do the waves pose a threat to us? We're talking about all the waves – all the problems in life, whether it is the flu, cancer, car troubles or the church burning down. Do these waves pose a problem to the Lord? Do they pose a *real* problem to us? Why? Who are we? Who does Paul tell us we are? Who is the new man?

"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (I Corinthians 15:46-47).

Again, the verse **does not** say, "He is *like* the Lord from heaven," or, "He is *just as good as* the Lord from heaven;" He says, "The second man **is** the Lord from heaven." That is who we have put on when we have put on Christ. Now, if the waves don't pose a threat to Him, really – we are talking reality, the way God sees things – then they do not pose a real threat to us either. Only if we are looking through the eyes of the flesh will we have a "real" problem. But if we are looking through the eyes of the second man [Jesus Christ], we are looking through the eyes of the Lord from heaven. Waves do not pose a threat to Him and from that position, they do not pose a threat to us either.

The waves were so convincing that they actually could have killed Peter. He could have drowned. But they were not a *real* threat to him, because the reality was Christ standing on the water. He was the one who made the waves; He had the power of life and

death. Those waves could not do anything over which Christ did not have ultimate power. So those waves could not do anything to Peter if the Lord did not authorize it. We too are surrounded by waves, and the Christ who made the waves says, "Look at me."

"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

PRAYER

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-19).

Now there is a heartfelt prayer! Let's look now at the reality with which Paul dealt. Was it physical? Do you see one physical request here? Did Paul ask for one thing for their flesh? Paul told the Colossians in 3:2-3, "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God." Compare this with the "things above" being the things "not seen" (the eternal) of II Corinthians 4:18. Paul's desire for the saints concerning the *true* reality was knowledge, wisdom and understanding which brought about spiritual strengthening:

"...rooted and grounded in love that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the ex-

ceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power” (Ephesians 1:15-19).

Again we see Paul’s desire for the church at Ephesus not once included a physical request. He did not pray concerning their flesh. You’ll find similar prayer elsewhere in Paul’s writings, praying for spiritual growth in Colossians 1:9-10.

Paul knew what was **real**. Paul knew what to request and desire. In II Corinthians 12:3-4 Paul says,

“And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Paul was communicated to by the risen, glorified Jesus Christ. He said he heard words that were not lawful to utter. And the message that he received he took to the Gentiles. He knew better than any living mortal what was real, what was important, what to desire in Christ.

In Ephesians 6:12, Paul tells us that, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood.” Now, is flesh and blood physical? Yes it is. In Acts 9:29 we read,

“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.”

In other passages Paul talks about being imprisoned, stoned, beaten with rods and scourged. It *looks* like Paul was wrestling against a whole pile of flesh and blood, but that wasn’t the true fight; that wasn’t the *actual* fight. In Ephesians 6:12 we’re told that “**... we wrestle ... against principalities ... powers ... spiritual wickedness in high places ...**”

Paul tells us about our armour in Ephesians 6:13-18. In 2 Corinthians 10:4 we find that “*the weapons of our warfare are not carnal ...*” What does that tell you about our warfare? It’s not carnal either. We’re not wrestling against things that we can see. The sword (our offensive weapon), is the Word of God – *it is the living Word of God.*

You have your offensive weapon and defensive weapons, and prayer is a resource to sustain you. The complement of armour that God gives us is not physical. As for the battle we are fighting, is it real? Oh, be sure that the battle **is** real. Is it physical? Paul says it is a real battle, but he didn’t address the battle as though it was in the flesh, or against flesh. He says, “*we wrestle*

not against flesh and blood;” he said that after being stoned and beaten, but again he said that is not the fight. He says we’re wrestling against principalities and powers.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

What does God **guarantee** He’ll keep by His Peace? Two things: our **hearts** and **minds**. He did not say He was going to keep our bodies, and He did not say He was going to give us everything that we ask. What Paul said was to make your desires known unto God, “**and the peace of God ... shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**” This is a spiritual truth; *this* is a spiritual blessing in heavenly places that we’re told about in Ephesians 1:3!

However, there is no *physical* guarantee there. A lot of times we read between the lines and say, “But God says He will provide all our needs, and I need this (because my eyes and my flesh tell me I need it, so therefore I need it).” When Paul wrote, “*My God shall supply all your need*” in Philippians 4:19, he was not lying, nor was he bragging. He knew he was going to die soon; He knew that God was going to allow him to die, and he knew that he didn’t need his physical life saved or preserved, because he had what he needed, which was the new man, Christ Jesus! And it is **in Him** that we have our life, and being (Acts 17:28; Colossians 3:3-4)!

Paul tells us throughout his epistles what to pray for and what our requests and desires should be. He did not say, “Come up with anything and take it to God.” He *did* say, “Let your requests be made known unto God.” And the idea he presents time and time again is, “Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.” Don’t be asking for chewing gum when the Lord has given us a gold mine.

Paul says in Philippians 4:13, “I can do all things ...” Here comes the trick question again, “Could he *really* do all things?” He sure could! Paul said, “I can do all things **through Christ which strengtheneth me.**” But *not* in the flesh. When we look at physical circumstances we say, “Well, what about ...” For instance, Epaphroditus was near unto death. If, as Paul said, he could do all things, how come he almost lost him? If Paul could do all things, why couldn’t he remove the “thorn” from his own flesh, about which he besought the Lord three times? *Physically*, Paul could *not* do “all things.”

In God’s sight Paul could do all things, all *real* things,

because he had all real things. Study Romans 8 and see how many times “all things” appear. Then compare the “all things” in the last half of Romans 8 with Philippians and other places. When you see “all things”, look for the “all things” in Romans that Paul talks about: “predestination, calling, justification, sanctification, and glorification.” Those “all things” are all *real things*. Look at it in this light and see if it is not clearer when he says, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us **all things**?” (Romans 8:32).

Epaphroditus, and the thorn in Paul’s flesh were beyond Paul’s realm of deliverance; they were beyond Paul’s control. But he wasn’t lying when he said, “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,” (Philippians 4:13). And Paul also meant it when he said, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory...” (Philippians 4:19). What’s in His “riches in glory”? II Corinthians 4:18 tells us what’s *not* in His riches in glory, and that’s something **temporary**. He says the things *seen* are *temporal* (temporary), and the things *not seen* are **eternal**. God has given us spiritual blessings in heavenly places (things not seen).

So we know temporary things such as health, jobs, cars, houses, riches and such things are *not* included in His **riches in glory**. So why go to the **eternal riches in glory** to get something *temporary*? Even though Paul was about to lose his life, he could still say, “**God shall supply all your need...**” (Philippians 4:11). Paul had learned, “In whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” Paul was not bragging. Will Rogers use to say, “it ain’t bragging if you can do it.” Paul could do it. Paul was in the new man. It really didn’t matter to him where he was, or in what circumstances he found himself. The temporal (temporary) situations of this earthly life were not the reality with which he was concerned, because the **true reality** was not here on this earth, but in his true home in heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Likewise, if we are living in the new man, we can do it too. It’s not that tough. We say though, “Oh! Look around: I have a car bill, a house bill, and the kids need braces, my child is sick and my mother-in-law has come to spend the summer with us.” That’s nothing! You can do that standing on your head. You may lose a loved one; I know that is tough; I too have lost loved ones. I was writing to a friend the other day who lost his dad and I said, “Looking at what these verses say, we could do this whole tour of duty with no problem at all.” I said, “It is okay to comfort each other once in a while, but keep your nose in the **Book** and you will always see what is **real**. If you insist on looking at the waves, you are going to get swamped.

If you keep your nose in the **Book**, that **Book** will tell you what **reality** is more than anything else.”

In my Bible, at the end of Philippians, I have written, “The epistle of Philippians contains the most precious truth of the Christian life, we live above physical conditions, we are in Christ and live simply to bring glory to Him by life or death, ‘... to die is gain ...’ We can be content in any state, for we live above our state. Our citizenship is in heaven. Whatever good or bad we have to deal with here, Christ says ‘look at me; I’m all that matters’. We have the peace of God to keep our hearts and minds. We don’t need a physical guarantee.”

In I Thessalonians 5:18, Paul says, “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Remember that Paul did not say *for everything* give thanks, he said *in everything* give thanks. No matter what happens, in every situation give thanks. For what are you to give thanks? Everything in Romans 8 – your predestination, calling, justification, sanctification and your glorification. Now why should we give thanks *in all situations*?

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin” (Romans 7:24-25).

Jesus Christ – His deliverance, His justification, His sanctification, His glorification, calling and predestination – all in Christ. That is *what* Paul is thankful for – the “all things in Christ” in Romans 8. In the absolutely wretched condition that he found himself, Paul’s blessed hope was really the brightest spot on the horizon.

“For I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Timothy 4:6-8).

CONCLUSION

Going back to what the world says (“*Christians have to face reality*”), Christians in the largest sense of the word *are* facing reality. Members of the body who are “rightly dividing the word” are facing reality to a much greater degree because they are looking at things the way God sees them, and not the way [those in the carnal world of] the flesh see them. There will be a day when everyone will have to face “reality.” Paul says in Philippians 2:10-11, “Every knee should

Why Paul Gloried in the Cross

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Galatians 6:12-18

In our text we have the final words of the great epistle to the Galatians. This epistle is a companion to the book of Romans. It is an epistle of FREEDOM, it is an epistle of the CROSS.

The cross to Paul was not some wooden object. It was a doctrine concerning an historic event! The cross was central to Paul's message and he gloried in it.

Why is the Cross so important to Paul? Because it is the power of God (I Corinthians 1:18). Paul also realized that this power could be made ineffective when veiled by tradition and religion (I Corinthians 1:17). Why would someone want to veil it? Because it is offensive (Galatians 5:11; 6:12) and therefore has many enemies (Philippians 3:18).

A look at why Paul gloried in the Cross:

I. Because the Cross Stands Between the Believer and His SINS!

(continued from page previous page)

bow ... every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord ..." Though not every tongue that confesses or every knee that bows will be saved, because there are going to be those that accept it by **proof**. Paul says hope that is seen is not hope (Romans 8:24). Faith is the **evidence** of things **not seen** (Hebrews 11:1).

If you can see it you do not have to [have faith to] believe it. The only way you can know Christ is by believing Him without seeing Him. So there are going to be those who bow the knee and confess, and do it because they have to, because they have seen it. Why would the nations mourn when they see Christ coming in the clouds (Matthew 24:30)? When He comes in His second coming, He is coming in righteous judgment and will make war. The nations are in trouble, that is why they are going to mourn. But they are going to confess that He is Christ because they are not going to have any choice.

We can trust Christ by **faith** now, or we can acknowledge Him *then* by **sight**. The one precludes the other. Faith precludes sight and sight precludes faith. So if we are going to walk by sight, let us do it all the way

The Doctrine: Forgiveness – Colossians 2:13, 14; Galatians 1:4; I Corinthians 15:3; Ephesians 1:7.

II. Because the Cross Stands Between the Believer and His SIN!

The Doctrine: Justification

The cross has dealt not merely with what we have done, but who we are! Not just our deeds, but our nature! II Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:26; 5:9

III. Because the Cross Stands Between the Believer and His SINNING!

Doctrine: Identification (or Union)

The believer's daily victory is in the cross! Romans 6:1, 2, 6, 12, 13; Galatians 2:20; 6:14. ■

down the line with no compromise, not trying to [mix the one] with the other. Let us not say we need a **little** proof, or we need some convincing evidence. **Reality is how God sees things.** God says, "This is the way I see things. This is it! This is the way things are! **You are dead** and your life is hid with Christ in God!" Compare the **physical** – what you see – with that which is in the **Word**. Then draw a conclusion. Is the physical real?

Now the thing to do – if this is new and you have just learned from it – is to go tell someone that doesn't know, because I did not know this until somebody showed me. And he did not know until somebody showed him. It's no good to sit on it. That is why Paul said,

"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth (the things we can see with our own eyes), but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (I Corinthians 2:13).

Don't compare *physical* things with *spiritual* things: it won't work. They don't match; the differences are infinite. Compare spiritual things (the **real** things!) with **spiritual**! ■