Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 62

The Ignored Words of Our Apostle:

"Let your women keep silence …"

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

> *"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant … Let all things be done decently and in order"* (I Corinthians 14:34-40).

"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (I Timothy 2:12-15).

Shame and Intimidation

The subject which we shall look at is one that has weighed upon the conscience of this author for many years. How easy it seems for us to brush these passages aside. And why do we seem to so consistently brush them aside? Could it be because we are so mindful of reputation and acceptation before the world? Could it be that we are ashamed and intimidated not to believe the *clear* teaching of Scripture? Would we not be much more comfortable following the culture of our own day? After all, with a century or more of modern, "open-minded progress" for the "liberation" of women, shall we dare to follow these outdated words of our apostle?

The Clear Words of Scripture

Paul makes it very clear,

> *"Let your women keep silence"*
> *"It is not permitted unto them to speak"*
> *"Let the woman learn in silence"*
> *"I suffer not a woman to teach … but to be in silence"*

(continued on page 667)

The Ignored Words of Our Apostle:
"Let Your Women Keep Silence ..." 689
Dogmatism 694
Denominational Pollution 695
The Complement of Grace: Peace 696
Freedom from Letterness 697
The Details of Life 698
My Early Experiences 699
Mystery of this Dispensation 699
Christendom Is Not Christianity 699
Conformable unto His Death 700
As a Lighthouse on a Storm-Tossed Sea 700

Dear Saints,

Delay of the BSN

It has been quite sometime since our last mailing of the BSN. This has not been for the lack of material or desire. This past year has been an extremely busy one with family and business life. Our press has also been in need of repair, contributing to it being over a year since we have issued a BSN. This mailing is being produced on a copier. We hope to have the press operational soon.

A Family Wedding

Our biggest family event last year was the marriage of our daughter, Susannah. It was truly a blessed time for us. We are thankful for the wonderful man who came into her life! We all love him dearly and are glad that our family has expanded with a new son! Our daughter now has a new identity, Mrs. Justin Hawes. What a joy!

A Wonderful New Walk in Life

As most of you know, my personal faith has led me to withdraw from religious organization (including the one of my own making). Many have viewed this action as isolationism; but the issue is not that of "cutting myself off from the rest of the body." It is simply standing free, "without the camp," complete in Him.

The body of Christ is everywhere, and no matter what position or choice we make in this life, we will appear to be (and in practical effect) "cut off" from some portion of the body.

For example, when I came to understand "grace truths," it had an effect upon my religious affiliation. Now, many "Baptists" are a part of the body of Christ. And my actions could have been viewed as "cutting myself off from the rest of the body."

The reason that this is viewed so is that we often think of "the body" in terms of "our own group." To the "Baptist," they are "the body." And to not associate with their sectarian organizations and gatherings, is in effect (in their sight) to be "cutting oneself off from the rest of the body."

(continued on page 700)

Bible Student's Notebook™

ISSN: 1936-9360

No. 62 – March, 2004

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."

SUBSCRIPTION

U.S.: 6 months (12 issues) - $24^{00}; 1 year (24 issues) - $42^{00}; 2 years (48 issues) - $72^{00}; 3 years (72 issues) - $90^{00};
Foreign: 1 year (24 issues) - $60^{00};

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.

The Bible Student's Notebook™

bsn@studyshelf.com
www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

PO Box 265
Windber, PA 15963
Office: (800) 784-6010

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor
Andre Sneidar – Managing Editor

Visit our online bookstore at: www.StudyShelf.com
Copyright © 1989-2007 Pilkington & Sons

(recompiled and edited)

The Corinthian Ignorance

In the above passage written to the Corinthians, Paul states *"But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant …"*

The root word for "ignorant" is "ignore." The issue at Corinth was not that they were unaware of these clear truths. The issue is that they had chosen to *ignore* them! When individuals choose to ignore the clear teachings of Paul the Apostle they cannot be helped. They are to be left in ignorance – "let him be ignorant."

The Issue of Decency and Order

Paul goes on in that Corinthians passage to say, *"Let all things be done decently and in order."* It is indecent for women to take on a verbal role in the Body of Christ. When they do so they are out of order.

The I Timothy Passage

Paul takes us back to the garden to consider these issues. Adam listened to his wife instead of instructing her. There was indecency and disorder in the garden which resulted in the fall. In the I Timothy passage Paul reveals that the woman is:

- To learn in silence
- To be in all submission
- Not to teach
- Not to exercise authority over the man[1]

Attempts to Neutralize the Instruction

Some will attempt to argue that Paul's statements are somehow not valid – that they are not the instructions of God. A number of means are resorted to, in attempting to disregard these passages.

They have invented accusations against Paul, that he was a male chauvinist – that he had unresolved personal issues regarding women (arguments like this are attacks upon the very issue of inspiration!).

Others will protest that Paul was dealing with a rare and unusual problem at Corinth, or that he was only speaking of the customs of his own day. Nevertheless, it is time to put aside such foolish reasoning. We must reinstate the plain meaning of the words of these passages. Paul said in the very context of his teaching on this very subject, *"If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."*

Therefore, regardless of what others may say – Paul's verbal prohibition upon women is not his own idea, but the *"commandments of the Lord!"* If anyone has a problem with these issues they will have to take them up with their Creator.

Paul did not make his pleas regarding the *silence* of women based upon personal or cultural issues. Neither did he make them based on some intellectual deficiency or worth in the woman. Rather, he made these divine declarations based upon the clear principles of Scripture:

1. Order of Creation (I Timothy 2:12-13) – Man was created first.
2. Source of Creation (I Corinthians 11:7-10) – Woman was made from the man.
3. Purpose of Creation (I Corinthians 11:9) – Woman was created for the man.

Proliferation of Women Teachers

In our day we have a proliferation of women teachers, preachers, pastors, authors, etc. Has church history ever seen such a surge of vocal women? No, hardly!

This silence issue also, obviously, extends to the area of leadership. One will note that the passages

1. This passage also has an interesting statement, *"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."* Regarding this passage, J.B. Hurley has written, "…Women in general will be saved or kept safe from wrongly seizing men's roles by embracing a woman's role. … He [Paul] is speaking generally of a woman's role when he speaks of childbirth, using a typical part to represent the typical whole." (J.B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*, Zondervan, pp. 222-223)

regarding bishops, elders, and deacons will clearly reflect that they were designed to be male leadership, as it would be hard to have a muted leadership.

Bishops (I Timothy 3)

*"… If **a man** desire the office of a bishop"* (:1)
*"A bishop must be … **the husband** of one wife"* (:2)
*"A bishop must be … apt **to teach**"* (:2)
*"One that ruleth well **his own house**"* (:4)
*"Having **his children** in subjection with all gravity"* (:4)

Deacons (I Timothy 3)

*"**Likewise** must the deacons be …"* (:8)
*"Even so must **their wives** be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things"* (:11)
*"Let the deacons be **the husbands** of one wife"* (:12)

Some will point to Israel's history, in an attempt to find examples of godly women exercising leadership roles. They do so in an attempt negate the teachings of our Apostle; but one must realize that these examples of female leadership are signs of God's curse upon Israel, not His blessing.

> *"As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths"* (Isaiah 3:12).

Behave Thyself

Paul concludes these truths written to Timothy with,

> *"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and the ground of the truth"* (:14-15).

Women attempting to function as bishops and deacons are MISBEHAVING in the house of God!

Aren't we people of "the Book"? Or are we simply people who are controlled by our own imaginations, desires, and culture?

A Shocking Conclusion

Shall we be so bold as to suggest a shocking conclusion to these prohibitions?

The prohibition of women teaching even extends to a woman teaching other women the Scriptures themselves!

Now, the great passage that is often offered to support women teaching women is found in Titus 2:3-5:

> *"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."*

Now it is clear that this passage says that the older women may teach the younger women. But what is the *subject matter* and the *method* of this teaching?

The Subject Area

The subject matter of this teaching is clear. Here is what the older women were to teach the younger women:

- To be sober,
- To love their husbands,
- To love their children,
- To be discreet,
- [To be] Chaste,
- [To be] keepers at home,
- [To be] Good,
- [To be] obedient to their own husbands

Doesn't it seem odd that this passage would be used as support for women teaching other women Bible doctrines? Who has authorized the expansion of the subject area?

Women are forbidden *"to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."* Some will suppose that because no men are present in a "woman's Bible study group" that no one would be usurping authority over the man. Yet is this really true? Does a woman who attempts to teach another man's wife or daughter not usurp his authority in their lives, whether or not he is present? Would this not be equally disorderly and indecent? Maybe even more so, since the wife or daughter's authority is not present to judge the teaching? Paul said concerning wives, *"if they will* ***learn any thing****, let them* ***ask their husbands at home****…"*

The Teaching Method

The teaching method is also clear, *"that they be* ***in behaviour*** *as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine …"* The older women's method of teaching is clearly, by the context, their manner of life! They teach the younger women by *example*! Doesn't it seem odd that this passage would be used as support for women teaching other women in:

- Classrooms
- Seminars
- Conferences
- Retreats, etc.?

Every *movement* that is pawned off as "godly" and "biblical" must have a proof text. The *women's teaching movement* (of women teaching women Bible doctrine) is no different. They attempt to hang their hat on Titus 2:3-5; but is this the intent of the passage? Did the *women's teaching movement* spring out of a genuine desire to fulfill this passage, or is it simply the closest support that could be rallied for their "godly" and "biblical" agenda?

God has already given women an ordained teacher. It is their fathers or husbands.

What God Greatly Values In Women

Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, spoke of the important role of the woman. He encouraged them to wear *"the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price"* (I Peter 3:4). This "meek and quiet spirit" is what God values in women. It is of tremendous value to Him. It is of "*great* price." This is *the* divine viewpoint, which the Satanic policy of evil is always attempting to supplant.

What Lies at the Root

What lies at the root of all of this is not the actual conduct of the dear women themselves; rather the ultimate failure lays squarely with us men. Husbands and fathers have abdicated our God-given role and responsibility. We have pulled away from our divine calling. We have left a very large gap which the women have attempted to fill (many with good and sincere intentions to honor and serve the Lord). There is a massive void resulting from our failure to lead and teach our wives (Ephesians 5:26) and children (Ephesians 6:4). By the shirking of our solemn responsibilities we have abandoned the women to attempt to meet their own spiritual needs by themselves, among themselves.

The rise in women teachers within the Body of Christ is truly an indictment against the men. It is a further mark of the great apostasy that has firmly entrenched our age. Remember that just as with Israel, female leadership is a sign of rebellion, oppression, error, and destruction (*c.f.* Isaiah 3:12).

Brethren, God has called us to take leave of the pitiful condition in which we find ourselves. Let us shake off the apathy that cripples us from being the real men that our wives and children desperately need. Let us work toward being freed from our emasculation. Then this in turn can provide our wives the freedom they desperately need to fulfill their feminine roles. ■

Dogmatism

by – Alan Burns

In the progress of the seeker after truth, three stages, at least, may be discerned. First comes the knowledge of ignorance. Then the recognition that truth may be, and it is, known at least in part. Lastly comes the knowledge that we can never, at least on earth, know all the truth. Nor is the first stage or condition of the truth-seeker merely temporary, for the knowledge of our ignorance will enlarge and grow as the consciousness of our knowledge increases.

Dogmatism has its genesis in that unhappy attitude of mind which mistakes partial for completed truth, and the dim light of dawn for the radiant glory of the midday sun. Half-truths are errors. The missing, or unknown half, may contain a necessary corrective against a misuse of the known half. The truth of the believer's heavenly standing in Christ by itself might develop a form of Antinomianism. The truth concerning the believer's responsibility as to his earthly walk by itself would produce legalism. We need both and we need them together.

In the realm of science there are two things between which we must draw a necessary distinction – the fact and its interpretation. Between biblical facts and theological theories we must draw an equally broad distinction. In the facts of both nature and Scripture we may dogmatize. A truth in either of these spheres can never become either more or less true, for facts are unchangeable verities. Our interpretation of the laws and phenomena of both are however but possibly true, and are ever subject to alteration and revision. When we dogmatize our interpretations we virtually elevate our theories to the same rank as facts, and obliterate the necessary distinction between the two. The dogma of fact, self-evident, obvious and unquestionable, needs no proof. The dogma of theory, flimsy and ethereal, in "proof" of its dogmatic claims must needs point to the opinions and ideas of the dogmatists who fathered it.

What our God has *said* is the form and substance of true dogma. What men think God *meant* is the foundation of those evil dogmas which have damned theology through the ages. When God explains in one part of Scripture an obscure saying in another part, faith will accept God's explanation as being as much a fact as it is that fire burns or water drowns. Between God's interpretations and man's there is however, an infinite difference, the former being the interpretation of the One Who knows, and the latter being the interpretation of the one who hazards a guess. When the chance opinions of men are authoritative and dogmatic, it means that merely human utterance is elevated to the rank of the divine.

There is in Scripture an obvious "framework" of truth. The facts of the Word are so presented, and the interpretations of these facts are so clear and unmistakable, that no room is left for disputation. There is, however, a large area of the Word, the relations or connections of which are not so obvious, and passages the meaning of which may appear to be ambiguous, or open to more than one interpretation. In such cases faith does not dare to dogmatize, for [thinking] *"above that which is written"* is the abomination of true Christian simplicity [*c.f.* I Corinthians 4:6].

A creed may represent either an assemblage of divine facts, or else of human interpretations and explanations of these facts. If a creed be of the former class, merely assembling together truths indisputable and self-evident, we should still remember that, no matter how Biblical it may be in *substance*, it is still unbiblical in *form*, God having chosen to present His truth in anything but creeds. The creed which embodies the opinions of a past age, the guesses of a bye-gone generation, in general reveals its unbiblical substance by its use of unbiblical expressions and terms. The manufacture of new phrases and the coinage of new terms to express what may be in the end nothing more than theological conceits is the hall-

mark of false dogmatism.

Modern Romanism and modern Protestantism have this in common that both alike are Creedal rather than Biblical, and are dogmatic as to their own particular interpretations of Biblical facts, rather than the facts themselves in all their splendid sufficiencies. Their creedal attempts can only be illustrated by one who, in order to beautify and enhance the value of a large nugget of precious gold, covers the shining metal with dirty clay. As long as a creed is written, and subscribed to, as being but a temporary expression of partial truth, subject to future correction, alteration, and revision, as clearer light is received, then it may remain comparatively harmless; but when the ideas of an age with a limited amount of information are made the fixed, unalterable standards for an age which has more, then the creeds become so many barriers and hindrances in the pathway of truth. These molds of the church's mentality have too often shown themselves to be, in bitter experience, the tombs of its spirituality. Earnestly do we pray for a resurrection of the precious truths which have been interred in the graveyards of Creedom. It will be borne in mind, of course, that we are speaking of the creeds only so far as interpretations are the subject matter of their dogmatism. Facts, in themselves, must ever be the most dogmatic things in the universe; but the interpretation of each and every fact within the bounds of creation must ever be tentative at best, for even in relation to the (at present) best known fact we cannot be positive that we have all that may be known concerning it, and the little we do know must therefore be held subject to the influence of that truth of which we at present are in ignorance.

However evil the dogma is that rests on the prestige of centuries, it is nothing compared with the dogmas of recent origin. The dogmas of Rome have at least the strength of years behind them, but the dogmas of the sects of yesterday should be shamed by the very callowness of their youth. The local pope in the village assembly, with the decretals of his predecessors of a decade reposing on his bookshelf, is but an amateur in the ways of Catholicism. The germ of Popery lies hidden in strange places. It may be found in the assemblies of such as confuse the opinions of Luther on divine facts with the facts themselves, or the interpretations of Darby with the truths which that beloved one sought to explain. The Reformation is not half completed when it merely exchanges one Pope for many, and the Revival is not truly successful which destroys one man-made creed to replace it by another in unwritten form … ■

Concordant Publishing Concern

Denominational Pollution

by – Frank Viola

The modern denominational system has made division in the Body of Christ acceptable … In a word, the modern denominational morass has polluted the Christian landscape. It has turned the "one Body" into a tragically divided, tradition-chocked entity. Advocates of denominationalism believe that this system is helpful. To their minds, the different denominations represent the different parts of the Body of Christ.

But the denominational system is foreign to the New Testament! It is incompatible with Christian oneness. It is based on human divisions that are Biblically unjustifiable (I Corinthians 1-3). In effect, denominationalism stems from a fractured vision of the Body of Christ …

Denominationalism has fragmented the Body of Christ by religious partisanship. It has alienated the family of God. It has disintegrated the fabric of our spiritual brotherhood into an endless morass of religious parties. And it has spawned thousands of warring clans out of the one family of Christ. ■

Who Is Your Covering?

The Complement of Grace: Peace

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

If we would look at much of mainline Christianity, we might be led to believe that confrontation, conflict, and contention are what God has called us to. But in fact God has called us unto peace!

> *"… But God hath called us to peace"* (I Corinthians 7:15).

"Grace and peace" are what this dispensation is all about!

> *"Grace to you and peace"* (Romans 1:7).
> *"Grace be unto you, and peace"* (I Corinthians 1:3).
> *"Grace be to you and peace"* (II Corinthians 1:2).
> *"Grace be to you and peace"* (Galatians 1:3).
> *"Grace be to you, and peace"* (Ephesians 1:2).
> *"Grace be unto you, and peace"* (Philippians 1:2).
> *"Grace be unto you, and peace"* (Colossians 1:2).
> *"Grace be unto you, and peace"* (I Thessalonians 1:1).
> *"Grace unto you, and peace"* (II Thessalonians 1:2).
> *"Grace, mercy, and peace"* (I Timothy 1:2).
> *"Grace, mercy, and peace"* (II Timothy 1:2).
> *"Grace, mercy, and peace"* (Titus 1:4).
> *"Grace to you, and peace"* (Philemon 1:3).

After all, God is a God of peace!

> *"… The God of peace …"* (Romans 15:33).
> *"… The God of peace …"* (Romans 16:20).
> *"… The very God of peace …"* (I Thessalonians 5:23).

God is the author of peace!

> *"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace,"* (I Corinthians 14:33).

Our peace comes from Him!

> *"Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means"* (II Thessalonians 3:16).

In fact, we have peace with God Himself!

> *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1).

He made this peace through the cross-work of Calvary!

> *"… Having made peace through the blood of His cross"* (Colossians 1:20).

In fact, He Himself *is* our peace!

> *"For He is our peace"* (Ephesians 2:14).

Peace is what spiritual mindedness is about!

> "*… To be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (Romans 8:6).

Peace is what we are to pursue!

> *"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another"* (Romans 14:19).

As we exercise faith God fills us with peace!

> *"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing"* (Romans 15:13).

God wants us to live in peace!

> *"… Live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you"* (II Corinthians 13:11).

Peace is the Spirit's fruit in our lives!

> *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*" (Galatians 5:22-23).

The peace of God keeps our hearts and minds!

> *"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:7).

We are to let God's peace rule our hearts!

> *"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts …"* (Colossians 3:15).

We are to be at peace with one another!

> *"And be at peace among yourselves"* (I Thessalonians 5:13).

Peace is what we are to follow after!

> *"… follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace …"* (II Timothy 2:22). ■

Freedom from Letterness

by – C.S. Lovett

All things were lawful for Paul … Putting the letter of the law behind him Paul declared, *"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus…"* (Colossians 3:17). As far as he was concerned, the believer, being released from wherein he was held, was delivered from the Law (Romans 7:6). Paul's chief care was that he did not stumble others in the use of his freedom (I Corinthians 8:13). Apart from stumbling others, however, Paul could do anything and say anything he pleased for the glory of Christ. Here we have a man who truly moved according to **God's operating principles**, since he was motivated by love rather than the letter of the law. …

Paul felt free to set aside the old covenant of "THOU SHALT NOT" in favor of, "**WHATSOEVER** ye do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3:23). The old "ministration of death," as he called the letter of the law, was all right as a "tutor" to guide man's early steps. But since the fuller revelation had come … the old legalistic approach was to be abandoned in favor of the new order of Christian freedom (Galatians 3:25). The "glorious liberty of the sons of God" can be employed only when life is governed by **principles** rather than **CONFORMITY TO RULES** (Colossians 2:20-23). …

While the "chapter and verse" approach is fine during the period of usefulness, it is overruled by the adult concept of living by divine principles. Such a way of life … is the very ground of freedom and maturity. It is the heart of Paul's thinking when he declares the sons of God liberated from the legal bondage of the seventh chapter of Romans, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death,"* he says (Romans 8:2). The freedom he mentions is obtainable only by invoking a higher law or principle. …

The killing power of this deadly way of living [legalism] is manifest on the faces of those Christians who are constantly striving to keep rules. They are not happy and their lives show it. Far from enjoying the peace of Christ, they are miserable and their misery reaches out to depress those about them. Many are seriously disturbed to the point of mental and emotional breakdowns, largely because they realize the discrepancies in their own lives. …

Instead of being bound to biblical rules, he [the mature believer] is released to live by biblical principles. He is free to do anything he pleases as long as it does not injure others and is done as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:17). The mature believer need not be ashamed of anything he can ask God to bless, regardless of rules to the contrary. Paul must have been thrilled to teach, "Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22). It can be taken without argument that the supreme principle of Christian living is the Law of love, for it God's own chief motive. All other principles flow from this one. …

It is a **revelation, not a code.** The purpose of the Written Word is to acquaint men with the Living Word. When they have gained this marvelous insight, they no longer serve the **written details**, but follow the **Living Person**. There is a difference. …

The principle approach is a freedom from **letterness**, but not a freedom from the Word of God. The Bible remains the supreme authority over the Christian's life for it is the **only** revelation of the heart and will of God. ...

The principle approach is not extra-biblical, it is **deep-centered biblicism** and represents the finest expression of a Bible-controlled life. For one to reach the higher ground of Christian living demands that he have a **Bible-saturated** life. … There is no other way … because the Bible is **GOD'S ONLY REVELATION OF CHRIST.**

Christians err when they apply the LETTER OF EITHER TESTAMENT against one another as a standard or measure of a personal righteousness. Since righteousness is by faith, the correct way to judge another person is to behold his faith. Only God can do that. … At best, human judgements are wide of the mark, for only God knows the real intent of the heart. … ■

The Compassionate Side of Divorce
pp 77, 88-89, 90-93, 95-96

The Details of Life

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Corinthians 10:31).

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:17-24).

Spirituality, by the design of God, manifests itself in the normal details of life. It is the living out of the details of our life to the honor of the Lord.

We are often led to confuse spirituality with the exciting, unusual, exhilarating, moving, touching, powerful, extraordinary, and amazing events of life; but worship, service, and ministry are to be found in the basic, even "mundane" things of life, such as providing for our families, washing dishes, changing diapers, changing oil, etc., even in our rest. God rested (Genesis 2:2)! Jesus Christ took leisure (Mark 6:31).

Religious individuals divide the world into two parts: the sacred and the secular. To them it is the difference between the "spiritual" and the "physical." But the distinction between these two is not so much actions as it is the heart and the spirit in which they are done.

Spirituality involves living out the details of life with purpose (*I.e.,* "intention"), to the honor and glory of God, not just mindless activities (Romans 12:1-2).

Faithfulness in the small things of life is vitally important (Luke 16:10).

The religious system attempts to instill in us the drive to "minister" in its own domain. The idea is that we get the other "stuff" out of the way (the "carnal"), so that we can do the really important "things" (the "spiritual").

Instead of spirituality, this is really a system of extreme bondage.

For example, a husband and father, on top of his responsibilities (which are great), is expected to "do the work of the ministry" taking much (if not all) of his valuable "free" time at nights and on weekends for supposed "spiritual life" which is centered in endless religious make-work. Then on top of all this religious busy-ness he is supposed to be the spiritual leader of his home – to personally study and teach his family. When is he to accomplish this? What about spending time resting, and continuing to build bonds with his wife, and playing with the children? Are these "carnal" activities?

The same is true of a wife and mother. The bulk of her work for husband and family is seen as "trivial" and "carnal," instead of "godly" and "spiritual;" but these, too, can be done in the spirit of worship and glory to God.

Sometimes we can hear statements like, "Funny how life gets in the way of living." Yet it is in the details of life that we are able to bring the most glory to God. Spirituality manifests itself in the normal details of life. It is the living out of the details of our life to the honor of the Lord. ■

My Early Experiences

by – Otis Q.Sellers

It is a practice in many evangelical churches and movements to urge a new convert to get busy in "the Lord's service" just as soon as he makes his initial confession of faith in Jesus Christ. They think it best to make a "Martha" out of every Christian, forgetting that it was Mary who chose the better part, namely, to sit at the feet of Christ and hear His word (Luke 10:38-42).

This happened in my experience. Everyone urged me to serve. No one urged me to study. I earnestly desired to serve the Lord, but I was not interested in the "make work" activities offered by the local church. I launched out, and had not known the Lord many months before I was busily engaged in preaching in street meetings, mission halls, and small churches. Inasmuch as I went from place to place, such work did not require much knowledge or many messages. The half-dozen sermons that I had developed on as many subjects soon became very familiar to me. I was able to give them with all the assurance of an experienced veteran. I had no background of Biblical knowledge, but by stringing together the few things that I did know, condemning the things that I knew to be wrong, commending the things that I knew to be right, adding to all this some anecdotes and illustrations, I was able to satisfy that class of people who have no thirst for knowledge, but who do like to hear a lively message.

This group of non-progressive Christians was predominant at that time. They still dominate the religious world today. It is this group that the time-serving minister must keep in mind as he prepares his message and performs his service. They gave organized religion the character that it displays today. The hireling shepherd feels that it is best to go along with them. Therefore, he does not permit his message to rise above the level of their superficial knowledge. Neither does he say anything that might disturb them or cause them any spiritual exercise. Their childish beliefs must never be challenged.

As I look back upon my first year of Christian experience, I am both amazed and amused at how little one can know and yet satisfy the average audience that has gathered for a religious service. And it was during this first year that I discovered how sudden and violent the reaction would be when a speaker said something that did not fit into well worn patterns of thought. ■

The Study of Human Destiny, pp. 7-8, 1955

Mystery of this Dispensation

by – J. Eustace Mills

"… The dispensation of God … even the mystery …" (Colossians 1:25-26).

The Mystery is a dispensation … Other dispensations have had their mysteries, but this dispensation was itself altogether and entirely a mystery until it was revealed …

All the Scriptures are the Word of God and are of equal authority, irrespective of the writer by whom they were given or those for whom they were given; it is therefore important to give heed to all the Scripture without esteeming any part above another. There is, however, a difference between the Scriptures in the way in which they concern us directly; all the Word of God was spoken by God, but all cannot be said to be "that which was spoken **unto you** by God." That particular revelation was made to us through Paul, and is "the dispensation of God which is given to me for you." ■

All Truth, 1934, pp. 51, 54, 127

Christendom Is Not Christianity

by – T.W. Carron

From the gospel seed there has grown up a vast religious system which bears the Christian name but is, in character, no different from the world – a system, indeed, which has become one of the features of the world and which has harbored, and still harbors, all kinds of evil – a system which Satan has used to destroy men's souls and which ambitious men have used to glorify themselves instead of God. ■

The Christian Testimony Through The Ages p. 8

Conformable Unto His Death

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 2:10).

In His death He was:

Humble – Philippians 2:8
Silent – Isaiah 53:7
Forgiving – Luke 23:34
Self-Sacrificing – Ephesians 5:23
Non-resistant – Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 5:39

As a Lighthouse on the Storm Tossed Sea

So It Goes For Those Who Stand
For Scriptural Correctness

The lighthouse lashes,
not back at the sea;
By its sterling example, then,
neither should we;
The act itself, is utter futility.

Bob Cope
Ephesians 6:13-14

(continued from page 690)

So it is in the sect of "Grace." Many in the "Grace Movement" are a part of the body of Christ, as well as the "Baptists." To "Grace Believers," they view themselves as "the body." And to not associate with their sectarian organizations and gatherings is, in effect (in their sight), to be "cutting oneself off from the body."

It has been said to me, "The grace group may have a lot to learn yet, and may have a lot of excess religious baggage to jettison, but they are not likely to learn these things from those who having nothing to do with them." Frankly, this line of thinking would have left me active in the "Baptist" sect. I believe that in some respects the "Baptists" may have more light than many of the other major sects. And granted, many "Grace Believers," as a whole, may have more light than many "Baptists." But this is not reason enough to attach ourselves to some manmade sect. To do so only limits us, and in practice denies who we are "in Christ."

We are the Outsiders!

I believe clearly and simply that we *are* the church (God's called *out* ones.) God has called us *outside* of sects – manmade religious organizations and gatherings. We are God's *outsiders*!

God's final instruction to us through Paul (II Timothy) is to: "shun" (2:16), "depart" (2:9), "purge" (2:21), "flee" (2:22), "avoid" (2:23) and "turn away" (3:15) from the religious system.

God has called us to be satisfied with who and what He has *already* made us – the church, and that we are to be content with our completeness "in Christ." To do otherwise is to be "bewitched" – to not obey the truth. We do not obey the truth when we (the church) go to, or support, manmade sects that claim to be "the church." This is a denial of who we really are! It is the denial of the truth.

These choices of mine were not rash, nor were they easy. But I firmly believe that they represent who we are "in Christ" And I have found, for me personally, that this understanding brings tremendous personal freedom in mind and manners!

Your fellow,

Clyde

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.