



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 71

Things that Are Above

by – J.R. Miller

Paul reminds us that those who believe on Christ should live a *risen life*. He says,

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth ...” (Colossians 3:1).

We live on the earth at present. We walk on earth's streets. We live in material houses, built of stones, bricks, or wood. We eat earth's fruits, gathering our food from earth's fields, orchards and gardens. We wear clothes woven of earthly fabrics. We adorn our homes with works of art that man's hands make. We engage in the business of earth. We find our happiness in the things of this life.

But there will be a life after this. We call it heaven. We cannot see it. There is never a rift in the sky through which we can get even a glimpse of it. We have in the Scriptures hints of its beauty, its happiness, its blessedness. We know it is a world without sorrow, without sin, without death. Paul's teaching is that the Christian, while living on the earth, ought to begin to live this heavenly life.

Here we are in our earthly state. After this will come the heavenly condition. *“Those things which are above”* belong to this higher, spiritual life. But the Christian is exhorted to seek these higher things while living in this lower world. We belong to heaven, although we are not yet living in heaven. ... But now, while we are here on earth ... we are to seek those things which are above, where Christ is.

Paul presents the same truth in another form when he says,

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

We are in this world, but we do not belong here. We are only strangers, pilgrims. We travel abroad. We visit cities, looking upon beautiful things, charmed by what we see, but we are only tourists. Something tugs at our hearts continually – it is home. So while we still live in this world we are citizens of heaven. Christ is our King (I Timothy 1:17). We owe him our allegiance, our obedience. We are to seek those things which are above, where Christ is.

Nothing that is unloving is found there. God is love, and only love can live where God is. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a little earthly vision of some things that are above. It tells how the inhabitants live together.

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity,

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Letters to the Editor

"I am studying the Bible especially the verses that support 'Salvation for All.' What a great subject. We as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have brought Him down to our level of thinking. His Word says, '*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord*' (Isaiah 55:8). A very good article." **FL**

"I was again thrilled to read the two newest **BSN's** [#69 & #70]. I will be studying along as you teach on the issue of hell. I haven't come to any definite conclusions as of yet but your articles have given me the liberty and courage, so to speak, to thoroughly study it out ... Thank you for your courage to come out with your belief on this subject. It may help many others come out as well.

"I like the way you ended your answer to the question about the sins of the 'silly women.' You said that this was your current understanding of the passage. I appreciate your heart in this. It tells me you're willing to accept the fact that you could be wrong or that there is more for you to learn on the issue. I only wish more preachers thought this way. I have heard preachers say that preaching is an authoritative presentation of the Word of God. But I have a problem with this. I don't believe there is such a thing as authoritative preaching, only the Word of God itself is authoritative, not a preacher's commentary on it. A preacher can preach with conviction but not authoritatively. This is where the dogma comes in. All of a sudden, we begin to build those walls with that 'authoritative' preaching to exclude those who do not accept it. Oh how I loved the article Denominational Pollution. I think that was the name of it. That's exactly where I'm at in my thinking. **What absolutely liberating truths!** We can be free from being under the thumb of an 'authoritative' preacher and at liberty to study without fear of being labeled or the need to label others." – **IL**

(continued on page 769)

Bible Student's Notebook™

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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 (1 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 (1 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; 1 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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(recompiled and edited)

but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

Love is one of the things that are above where Christ is ... which we, as Christians, should always seek in our present life.

In saying that we should do the things of the heavenly life in this earthly life, we are not to infer that the common work of this world is unworthy. We use the words "secular" and "spiritual" sometimes in a way that disparages what we call secular. We talk about the secular affairs of a good man, or of a church, as if they were not sacred, at least as if they were of a lower order than certain other kinds of work which we call "spiritual." We need to guard ourselves carefully in making such distinctions, lest we do dishonor to men or women who do as holy and as worshipful service in their common, daily task-work, as they could do if their lives were devoted to "spiritual service."

The Scripture says not a word against what we call secular business. Jesus did not ask that his disciples should be taken out of the world – he asked rather that they should stay in the world, and that they should be kept from the world's evil. It is as much a duty to earn one's daily bread as it is to pray.

The holiest duties of earth are oftentimes found in

places which seem unheavenly. It is the heart that makes any service sacred or reverent. One may be a bootblack,¹ and please Christ better, get greater blessing, be a better citizen of heaven, than another who is a "minister of the gospel," busy with insistent duties. We must never forget that the Son of God came to earth and spent thirty years in what we would thoughtlessly call secular work. While he wrought at his carpenter's bench, his heart was in the holy of holies. He was in communion with the Father all the while he was toiling with the axe, hammer and saw. Let no one call the carpenter work of Jesus unholy – it was pleasing to His Father.

When we seek to do the things that are above, where Christ is, most of us find the bulk of our occupation in common tasks and duties. Tomorrow we shall have to rise early and go to our business, and there will be no dishonor, no irreverence in our most diligent devotion to these tasks and occupations.

It may seem an impossible life to which this message calls us, but no divine command ever calls one to an impossibility. ... Seek the things that are above where Christ is, and your life will grow here into the beginnings of heavenliness as the days pass. ■

The Wider Life (1908)

1. Somebody who cleans shoes: especially formerly, a person who cleans people's shoes in the street." *Encarta World English Dictionary*.

I Find Rest

by – G. Campbell Morgan

"And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Colossians 1:20).

If by that Cross all things in the heavens are to be reconciled, and infinite peace is to follow, I dare trust it, notwithstanding all my sin and all my weakness. By the way of that Cross I am reconciled to God, and through it I find rest, infinite, eternal, undying. At last my rest shall be rest with the

WHOLE CREATION, for the cosmic order will be restored through the mystery of God's suffering as revealed in the Cross.

The Cross and the Ages to Come
"The Presbyterian", June 1932

The Center of the Book of Romans

by – W.H. Griffith Thomas

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:18-19).

As mankind's connection with Adam involved him in certain death, through sin, so his relation to Christ insures to him *life without fail*. Thus these verses give us the logical center of the epistle. They are the very central point to which everything that precedes converges, and out of which everything that follows will flow.

The great ideas of sin, death and judgment are here shown to be involved in the connection of the human race with Adam, but over against this we have the blessed fact of a union with Christ, and in this union, righteousness and life. This double headship of mankind in Adam and Christ shows the significance of the work of redemption for *the entire race*.

Up to the present point the Apostle has been dealing with *sins*, as they are expressed in human life but now he proceeds to deal with *sin*, the principle from which all expressions proceed. He thus goes to the root of the trouble -- *sin*, and shows the disease and its remedy. Although he has clearly proved our justification from *sins*, there still remains the question of the old nature, and now he is about to show how we obtain deliverance from *SIN* as well as from *sins*.

He ranges mankind under two heads -- Adam

and Christ. There are two men, two acts, and two results. In this profound teaching we have the spiritual and theological illustrations of the great modern principle of solidarity. The latter solidarity far surpasses the former in the quality of the obedience of Christ as compared with Adam, and in the effects of the work of Christ for justification and life. It will be seen that the purpose of the section is not to *teach* sin, but assuming it as a fact, to *show* how divine grace *overcomes it in "ALL"* (Romans 5:18) ...

If *the "many"* were involved in sin and death through the agency of the one man Adam, "*much more*" may we believe that *the "many"* will be involved in righteousness and life through the agency of the One Man, Christ Jesus ...

Adam's one offense brought judgment to all men to their condemnation. None escape this condemnation to death. "*For as in Adam all die, EVEN SO,*" Christ's one act of righteousness brings the free gift unto all men to their justification of life. Not one will be left out. "*In Christ shall all be made alive.*" (I Corinthians 15:22). ■

The Presbyterian
June 1932

All Things Are of God

by – Arthur P. Adams

"And all things are of God ..." (II Corinthians 5:18).

There is no statement in the Bible, that was made by an apostle, that is more remarkable and even startling than this statement. When you think of it seriously, it seems as though Paul was very unguarded and careless in his language. We are apt to think that he ought to have modified and limited it in some way, such as for instance, all good things are of God.

But no, Paul makes the sweeping, unqualified statement, *"All things are of (i.e., out of) God."* Furthermore, so important did Paul consider this truth that he repeats it over and over again. The direct statement is made no less than six times in the writings of the apostle:

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Romans 11:36).

"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him" (I Corinthians 8:6).

"For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God" (I Corinthians 11:12).

"And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18).

"In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11).

"For it became Him, for Whom are all things, and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10).

Now was the apostle careless and a little too bold in these utterances, or did he mean just what he said, and are they true, taken full strength? I say, without any hesitation, yes, to the two latter questions. The more we learn (the more revelation) of God's works and ways the more we shall understand that in a sense absolutely *"all things are of God."* ■

(continued from page 766)

"Your articles in [the] BSN are real eye openers."
– **FL**

"I never thought I would be faced with a reason to say this: I am grieved to learn of a belief/teaching that you hold. Specifically, I refer to a couple of subjects you touched on in Issue #69 of the **BSN** – hell and where people go when they die." – **NC**

"Got your latest **BSN** [#68]. Loved it and will send our subscription in shortly. Take care brother and

keep on keeping on." **NC**

"Clyde, Quit! Before you hurt somebody." – **OH**

"Please extend my subscription to your **BSN**. Always enjoy reading it and checking out the verses." **CA**

"Your articles are very up-lifting and thought provoking." **AZ**

"Your materials help answer many questions. Keep up the good work!" **MO**

Proving the Will of God

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

In this passage Paul lays before us the means whereby we may "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." He presents two simple principles: present (:1) and renew (:2).

God's will for our lives does not involve the mindless following of the world's course. Instead our lives will be "reasonable" (i.e., well thought out, with purpose). The world's social, cultural, political, economic, and religious courses will constantly pressure us to conform. Paul exhorts us not to give sway to this conformity ("and be not conformed to this world").

The world's course will ultimately produce nothing but vanity and emptiness. Following its course will make us little more than herded cattle. God's will and life will transform ("be ye transformed") our deadness and dryness to real vibrant life ("a living

sacrifice"). The Lord Jesus Himself spoke of His purpose to bring such dynamic life to believers.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

The Lord's way is exceedingly simple. We present ourselves to the life of God. We give way to His life already in us. Then we continue renewing our mind as to the divine priorities, values and life. We live life in the divine viewpoint, yielding to His estimate of what is truly important and valuable in life.

The result is a more abundant life—a transformation that allows us to know and live the "good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." ■

What Keeps Us from Being Qualified to Judge Others?

by – Charles R. Swindoll

"Therefore judge nothing before the time" (I Corinthians 4:5).

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" (Romans 14:4).

"Let us not therefore judge one another any more" (Romans 14:13).

Freeing others means we never assume a position we're not qualified to fill. This, in one sentence, is enough to stop any person from judging another. We're not qualified. We lack full knowledge. How often we have jumped to wrong conclusions, made judgmental statements, only to find out later how off base we were ... then wished we could have cut our

tongues out.

What keeps us from being qualified to judge?

- ◆ We do not know all the facts.
- ◆ We are unable to read motives.
- ◆ We find it impossible to be totally objective.
- ◆ We lack "the big picture."
- ◆ We live with blind spots.
- ◆ We are prejudiced and have blurred perspectives.
- ◆ Most of all, we ourselves are imperfect and inconsistent. ■

The Grace Awakening
1990, page 164

Reconciliation of the World

This Is the Gospel!

by – William R. Newell

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19).

The failure or refusal to discern the Pauline Gospel as a separate and new revelation and not a "development from Judaism," accounts for two-thirds of the confusion in many people's minds today as regards just what the Gospel is. Paul's Gospel will suffer no admixture with works on the one hand or religious pretensions and performances on the other. It is as simple and clear as the sunlight from heaven. The end of *man* is where God *begins* in Romans 3, at what might be called the opening of the Pauline Revelation. Most unsaved people today believe in their hearts that the reason they are not saved is because of something they have not yet done, some step that remains for them to take before God will accept them. But this is *absolutely untrue*. When Christ said, *"It is finished,"* He meant that He had, then and there, paid the debt for the *whole* human race. *"He gave Himself a ransom for all"* (I Timothy 2:6).

Now, Paul, in his wonderful revelation declares that God hath reconciled the world to Himself; that *"God was in Christ [at the cross] reconciling the world unto Himself"* (II Corinthians 5:19). Men do not know this, but they conceive that something stands between them and God, before God will accept or forgive them. If you tell a man that God is demanding no good works of him whatsoever, no religious observance or church ordinances, that God is not asking him to undertake any duties at all, but that God invites him to believe a glad message that his sins have already been dealt with at the Cross, and that God expects him to believe it – if you tell an unsaved man such a story as this, he is astonished and overwhelmed – yet this is the Gospel! ■

Paul's Gospel

God's Property

by – Marvin L. Fieldhouse

Immediately upon graduating from Prairie Bible Institute in 1950, I left Canada as a missionary to Japan. Finding out soon that my Bible training had geared me to submission to the will of men and loyalty to the religious machine rather than to submission the will of God and loyalty to His revealed word, I broke caste. On this plane, where I touched God in a brand new dimension, I did not have to depend upon men to find God's will for me. My nerves of faith in God were no longer short circuited by domineering leaders. For the first time in my life I felt at perfect rest, knowing that now I was

God's property, no longer the tool of any man or group of men.

For the past thirteen years I have been in God's wilderness. During this time I have been far enough away from the various Protestant branding corrals to elude their many different brands.

The Modern Menace of Protestantism
Vantage Press 1964
Back Cover



Your source for rare and hard-to-find Bible study materials for the serious minded, hungry-hearted students of Scripture.

Over the years we have been often asked to recommend books. The requests come from believers who longed for material with substance. Study Shelf™ is a collection of books which are, in our opinion, the very best in print. Many of these books are “unknown” to the members of the Body of Christ at large, and most are not available at your local “Christian” bookstore.

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