



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume IV
Issue 78

Paul's Unique Message

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25).

According to this verse, the revelation committed to Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, can be divided into two basic areas. The first of these areas he calls "my gospel."

*"... according to **my** gospel ..."*

This special gospel committed specifically and singularly to Paul (thus, "my gospel") stands in contrast to the law. It is this good news that God will one day gloriously use as the standard to judge the world (Romans 2:16). This gospel, also known as "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), is information concerning the all-encompassing accomplishments of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*"...Christ died **for** our sins..."*

This good news can be clearly seen in the first recorded message of Paul in the book of Acts:

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

Note that this gospel is contrasted with the law of Moses.

Paul calls the second part of his message the "revelation of the mystery."

"... and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery ..."

This special "revelation" concerning Jesus Christ was also committed specifically and singularly to Paul and stands in contrast to prophecy. God's prophetic purpose has to do with the reestablishment of His domain on the earth through the instrumentality of the nation Israel. It also has to do with the benefits that Israel receives in conjunction with this purpose.

The earth is currently under rebellion and hostile domain: the reign of the Gentiles (i.e., Nations)!

The prophetic purpose has been:

"Spoken ... since the world began" (Acts 3:21).

God's mystery purpose, never before revealed until Paul, has to do with the reestablishment of

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Letters to the Editor

"Goodies" Responses

"Clyde, I really appreciate the goodies! #102 was particularly good to me... It is always good to keep hearing those truths about who we really are, and how and why as well... it helps to keep us humble, and to keep Christ as our focus. I appreciate you, and your faithfulness to His Word." – **VA**

"Your daily email goodies are making me aware of authors whose names I didn't even know." – **GA**

BSN Responses

"I'm rejoicing in the liberty you have found in Christ to seek truth apart from denominational or organizational thinking. I am learning to do the same. It seems like a veil has been taken away. The scales have fallen off my eyes. I'm beginning to see the denominational thinking in grace circles so clearly now..."

"Much that happens with 'missions' and other 'ministries' today is sheer BUSINESS, plain and simple. Worse, it's a subtle form of PRIESTCRAFT. And it disgusts me." – **OH**

"I'm so glad you have now found the liberty to discover truths apart from close-minded, sectarian notions. Thank you for helping me find this liberty through your **BSN**, your Web articles, and the books. You are an encouragement to me!" – **IL**

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This weekly publication (52 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 "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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

Bible Student's Notebook™

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

bsn@studyshelf.com

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

André Sneidar – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

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(recompiled and edited)

His dominion in the *heavenly places* through the instrumentality of the Church, the Body of Christ. It also has to do with the benefits that the Body of Christ receives in conjunction with this purpose.

The *heavenly places*,¹ as well as the earthly places, are currently in rebellion and under hostile domain: *the principalities, powers and mighty*.² One day God will overthrow the rebellion of the earth through the instrumentality of Israel.³ He will also overthrow the rebellion of the heavens through the instrumentality of the Church, which is His Body.

On the other hand, the *mystery* purpose has been:

“... Kept secret since the world began ...”

(Romans 16:25).

Thus, we see these two purposes *must* stand in contrast to each other. One has been “spoken since the world began,” while the other has been “kept secret since the world began.” Things that

1. These *heavenly places* are literal geographical locations in the heavenly sphere. There are *stories* and *troops* (Amos 9:6) located in the heavens that must be brought into harmony with God’s eternal purpose, that His Son be exalted and glorified in the earth *and the heaven!*
2. Ephesians 3:10; 6:12; Colossians 1:16; 2:15
3. We mention here God’s Israel. The “Israel of God” (Galatians 6:16) is different from the current state known as “Israel,” the latter being the Israel of the United Nations.

are different are not the same!

“*My gospel*” and “*the revelation of the mystery*,” the two basic features of Paul’s special revelation and message are seen in I Timothy 2:4:

“Who will have all men to be saved [my gospel], and to come unto the knowledge of the truth [revelation of the mystery].”

Paul’s “*my gospel*” and “*the revelation of the mystery*” are found *exclusively* in His epistles: Romans through Philemon. Because these epistles reveal God’s present purpose of Grace, this is message that will provide stability to the life of the believer.

“Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to ...” (Romans 16:25).

Just how does Paul reveal that God will establish the believer? He says, “*according to...*” According refers to the standard by which the believer will be established! What does Paul go on to say that standard is?

“... according to [1] my gospel, and [2] the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25). ■

Paul, Cost and Found

by – William R. Newell

The thirteen epistles of Paul (Romans to Philemon) form a distinct body of truth; and this realm of truth is about us, the Church, the Body of Christ, as no other Scriptures are. Thus Paul is the Father’s special messenger to us.

The teaching that the choice of Matthias in Acts 1 was a blunder on Peter’s part has arisen from failure to recognize the character of Paul’s calling and work. Failure to realize this is to miss

the vital core of Paul’s whole teaching. What a terrible loss! For when the Church lost this it had left no defense against Judaism and its law on the one hand, and worldliness on the other. When we consider Paul’s teaching we soon see its special character; but it is plain, even before a study of his doctrine, that his apostleship was wholly distinct from and independent of that of the Twelve.

(see LOST AND FOUND, page 832)

The Torch of His Testimony

The Importance of II Timothy

by – John W. Kennedy

Eternity alone will reveal the full extent of God's working through companies of faithful believers, the memory of whose testimony and very existence have been obliterated by the prejudice of an organized and carnal Christianity.

The whole subject of the church may appear fraught with complexities, and the term "church" itself is used in so many ways that the inconclusiveness of its modern use often adds to the confusion. Yet Scripture is not confused. The perplexity which the subject arouses, arises not nearly so much in a failure to understand what the Bible says, as in a failure to apply what the Bible says to the general Church of Christendom. If we could but set the whole anomalous development of Christendom aside and begin with the Word of God alone and a mind to obey it, is it to be supposed that our problem would be just the same? "Of course not," would be the answer, "but that is just what we cannot do, set the whole anomalous development of Christendom aside. We must accept the situation as it exists, and begin there." Is that not the crux of the whole matter? Granted the chaotic fact of organized Christianity cannot be ignored, but in our seeking the mind of Christ, is that really where we must begin, in a prime occupation with what has been produced by an alliance of the ingenuity of man and perverted or limited truth? Should we not begin with the Word of God itself? Surely if the history of the church teaches us anything at all, it teaches us that the testimony that has been honoured of God, has been the testimony established on His Word.

It is precisely here that the failure of so much Christian thought lies today. The great bulk of Christian service in these days is conditioned by a largely unquestioned acceptance of organized Christianity as "the church." What then is to be our attitude to it, since it can be neither accepted nor ignored? In this the Scriptures do not leave us without an answer. No situation is foreign to the Word of God, and before Paul the apostle laid down his life for his faith the declension had already set in which still characterizes the Christian scene. It is dealing with

this very question that Paul wrote his last letter, the second epistle to Timothy, a young servant of God who was, no doubt, as perplexed by the prevailing confusion of his time as many people of God are today. The second epistle of Paul to Timothy is of immense significance for the present age.

Paul's message is succinctly summed up in four verses, II Timothy 2:19-22. First of all, he says,

"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness" (19).

All around may be declension and confusion, but the Lord knows His own people, and His own people know Him.

Paul now turns to the scene of confusion, the structure of professing Christendom. He likens it to a great house containing vessels of value and vessels that are worthless (20). Here it is, the mixture that is called the Church. Paul almost implies that such a mixture is inevitable, but is it to be accepted because of that? *"If a man therefore purge himself from these,"* he goes on to explain, *"he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the master's use, prepared unto every good work" (21).* From whomsoever or whatever it be interpreted that a man should *"purge himself,"* this verse leaves the child of God standing solely in his relationship to the Lord outside any "Church" or organization. He is back precisely at the place where he was spiritually regenerated, knowing only that he is alive in Christ, and has to rediscover his relationship in the divine family. He stands where alone he is free and usable.

What, finally, is his responsibility in such a situation? *"Follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart,"* says the apostle (22). From the ground of our individual relationship with Christ we have moved on to the

ground of the church. The separated company of the church will be characterized by four things: righteousness, faith, love, peace. A mind applied to know Christ is of vital importance for spiritual maturity, but only if it is directed by a heart already related to Him.

Righteousness is the obvious outcome of regeneration; where there is the nature of Christ there will also be the character of Christ. Faith is the attitude of complete dependence upon God and subservience to Him which alone allows the Spirit to work. Love is the outflow of the Spirit's life within us to one another. Peace is the satisfaction of knowing the Lord in the midst. These are the simple elements of the church from which the people and purposes of God can grow to maturity. They are the elements of life, life which is reproductive, but to be reproductive it must remain free. The organization of Christianity has again and again, down through the centuries, led to barrenness. It has been when the life of the Spirit has burst the constricting bands of denominational organizations that the church has been revealed in its primitive power and authority.

The testimony of the church is positive, not merely reactionary. Doubtless, an element of reaction remains, inasmuch as the righteousness of Christ rightly reacts against the ungodliness of the world, but the separated church of II Timothy 2:22 is pre-eminently a testimony to the truth, not a testimony against error. It is a testimony to the truth that all who are regenerated of the Spirit into the family of Christ are one, and must grow and witness together in the fellowship of the church where the Lord dwells in their midst.

The true church is the scene of a continual, spiritual struggle for its own existence. "*Hold fast the form [pattern] of sound words, which thou hast heard of me,*" Paul exhorts Timothy (II Timothy 1:13). If we do not hold firmly on to the fellowship of the church, it will slip from our grasp. It is of all things most vehemently assailed. It is tempted to compromise with organized Christianity. It is tempted to organize itself in order to conserve what it has gained. It is tempted to sectarianism by limiting its growth to a certain emphasis of Christian truth. When it succumbs to any of these temptations, declension follows, for progress has been limited, and when it has reached the end of its possible progress, it must fade out as a spiritual power. This is the picture that history so graphically portrays, the picture of spiritual power

followed by declension, but from every scene of declension God calls out His remnant. The church, therefore, knows no organizational continuance.

The church based on the sure ground of Scripture faces a most subtle peril: the peril not of willingly accepting a denominational or sectarian position, but of allowing itself to be pushed into it. "Exclusivism," among those who are truly children of God, is an odious word. The church is separate from worldly and ecclesiastical organizations not to be exclusive, but to be inclusive, for it is only outside the camp of denominationalism and sectarianism that a welcome for all who are regenerate can be maintained whatever their own religious background. What are more exclusive than the great systems of organized Christianity? Witness, for example, the feverish concern of modern ecumenicalism for "unity," and the difficulties of agreeing on a basis of inter-communion simply because it is "against the rules" in so many denominations. In other words, denominationalism is basically exclusive. It is so because it is based upon limitation, the acceptance of one aspect of divine truth, the acceptance of a particular rule or form, the acceptance of one man's interpretation of Scripture.

The church of the Scriptures is no mere theory. It is a fact now, as it was then. The principles of the unchanging Word of God, having been demonstrated and tested for almost two thousand years, have proved themselves applicable to every age and every circumstance. The church has continued and will continue, not in outward show and ostentation, but wherever the Lord has found a people willing to gather round Him in submission and obedience. It is a church that is indissolubly one, bound by ties of the Spirit. Amid the bitter conflicts and tragedies of so-called "Church" history, the life of the spiritual movement of the church has flowed on through the ages. The splendid unity of a heavenly race, living a heavenly life passed down from spiritual generation to spiritual generation has never been broken. They are pilgrims and strangers still upon the earth, bearing the reproach of Christ outside the camp, pressing "*toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*" They gather round Christ their Head, owning His Word their guide, bearing the torch of the testimony.

The Torch of the Testimony
Chapter 19 – edited and abridged
(1965)

The Valuable Woman

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOME PART XXXIV

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband” (Proverbs 12:4).

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10).

Sadly, many a wife is intimidated by the religious view of the “Virtuous, Proverbs 31 Woman.” Any woman who understands and accepts God’s plan and purpose in creation can naturally live her design as a virtuous woman.

The Hebrew word¹ for *virtuous* is translated as some twenty different words. Notably, for our study here, are two meaningful translations: *wealth*² and *riches*.³ These two words clearly speak of *value*.

Obviously then, the primary ideas conveyed by the expression “*virtuous woman*” is to impress that she is indeed a “*valuable woman*,” or a “*woman of great worth*,” as indeed the passage clearly teaches:

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price [value] is far above rubies”
(Proverbs 31:10).

A wife is, in fact, *invaluable* to her husband. She is of inestimable worth to him. Thus we can understand how J.N. Darby translated our texts:

“A woman of worth is a crown to her husband” (Proverbs 12:4).

“Who can find a woman of worth? for her price is far above rubies” (Proverbs 31:10).

Just what is it that makes a woman so valuable? The design of God does! God made the woman naturally valuable. She is the fulfillment of God’s grand design for man. She was made to be the “*help meet*” of man.

Any woman who understands and accepts God’s natural design for her as a woman, as a created “*help meet*,” is a “*woman of worth*,” a *very valuable*, a *virtuous woman*! What a contrast she is to the woman who has blindly abandoned that grand design of God.

“... Even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature” (Romans 1:26).

HER HUSBAND’S CROWN

“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband” (Proverbs 12:4).

How apt for Solomon to refer to the valuable woman as “*a crown to her husband*.” The husband has been given dominion, and she is
(see **VALUABLE**, page 832)

1. *Chayil*, Strong’s Concordance Hebrew #2428.

2. Genesis 34:29; Deuteronomy 8:17,18; Ruth 2:1; II Kings 15:20; Job 31:25; Psalm 49:6,10; Proverbs 13:22; Zechariah 14:14.

3. Job 20:15; Psalm 62:10; 73:12; Isaiah 8:4; 10:14; 30:6; 61:6; Ezekiel 26:12; 28:4,5.

The Saving Life of Christ!

by – Ian Thomas

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10).

This is the divine genius that saves a man from the futility of self-effort. It relieves the Christian of the burden of trying to pull himself up by his own bootstraps! If it were not for this divine provision, the call to Christ would be a source of utter frustration, presenting the sorry spectacle of a sincere idealist, constantly thwarted by his own inadequacy.

If you will but trust Christ, not only for the death He died in order to redeem you, but also for the life that He lives and waits to live through you, the very next step you take will be a step taken in the very energy and power of God Himself.

You will have become *totally dependent* upon the life of Christ within you, and never before will you have been so *independent*, so *emancipated* from the pressure of your circumstances, so *released* at last from that self-distrust which has made you at one moment an arrogant, loud mouthed braggart, and the next moment the victim of your own self-pity – and, either way, always in bondage to the fear of other men's opinions.

How much then can Jesus Christ do through you and through me? Everything! He is limited only by the measure of our availability to all that He makes available to us, for “*in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him*” (Colossians 2:9-10). What then is the faith that releases divine action? How may you be saved by His life, as you have already claimed to be redeemed by His death? This is the critical question of Christian experience, and the answer is simple: “*The just shall live by faith*” (Romans 1:17).

Faith in all its sheer simplicity! Faith that takes God precisely at His Word! Faith that simply says, “*Thank You!*”

If you are to know the fullness of life in Christ, you are to appropriate the efficacy of *what He is* as you have already appropriated the efficacy of *what He*

has done. Relate everything, moment by moment as it arises, to the adequacy of *what He is in you*, and assume that His adequacy will be operative; and on this basis in I Thessalonians 5:16 you are exhorted to “*rejoice evermore!*”

Can any situation possibly arise, in any circumstances, for which He is not adequate? Any pressure, promise, problem, responsibility, or temptation for which the Lord Jesus Himself is not adequate? If He be truly God, there cannot be a single one! “*And declared [to be] the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*” (Romans 1:4) - and of this, His resurrection life, we are made partakers!

If there is any situation from which you are not prepared to step back, in recognition of the total adequacy of Christ who is in you, then you are out of the will of God. You are asserting by your action and your attitude that He has nothing to give you for that situation, which you do not have in yourself.

You are called upon by God to *walk* by faith, to *walk* in the Spirit, resting the whole weight of your personality upon the living Christ who is in you; and as by faith you walk in the Spirit, so God declares you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. You will be liberated, emancipated, set free from the down-drag of that inbred wickedness, which Christ alone can overcome. You will be made more than conqueror through “*Christ, Who is our life*” (Colossians 3:4a).

Have you learned to step out of every situation and relate it wholly to *what He is in you*, and by faith say “*Thank You!*”

Ian Thomas
The Saving Life of Christ

VALUABLE (continued from page 826)

his crown in carrying it out.

“He that is blessed with a good wife is as happy as if he were upon the throne, for she is no less than a *crown* to him.”

– Matthew Henry

Speaking of Solomon, look at what else he wrote in his great Song:

“*Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart*” (Song of Solomon 3:11).

When did the king become crowned? “*In the day of his espousals!*” It was “*the day of the gladness of his heart.*”

HER HUSBAND’S GREATEST JEWEL

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for **her price is far above rubies**” (Proverbs 31:10).

LOST AND FOUND (continued from page 827)

Israel was, and in God’s gracious purpose is yet to be, His *earthly* people. That is, their calling is to represent God on the earth, as the chief nation of the earth, dwelling in a special country, in an earthly order of things, with earthly hopes, rewards, etc. Yet the *Church, the Body of Christ*, into which, in the Father’s wondrous grace, we have been called, is *heavenly*. The Church has nothing to do with the earth, except to witness in the name of the Lord, and then to pass on into glory, into heaven, its eternal Home.

We will never be able to understand Scripture until we see sharply and clearly the distinction between *Israel*, the chosen earthly nation, and the *Church, the Body of Christ*. Paul is

“She is invaluable; her price is far above rubies – no quantity of precious stones can be equal to her worth.” – Adam Clark

Not only is a *valuable woman* a crown to her husband, but her value is “**far above**” that of rubies! Who could possibly measure her worth? She is the design of God. She is His marvelous handiwork, His living masterpiece.

A wife need not be anxious by the religious system’s view of the “*Virtuous, Proverbs 31 Woman*.” Any woman who simply understands and accepts God’s plan and purpose in creation can naturally live His design for her as a *valuable woman*. This is God’s work!

This should all be such an encouragement to the wife. She does not need to struggle to be who God has already *made* her. God has prepared her with all that is needed for her to be a *valuable woman*. She only needs to be – be who she *already* is. This is her divine calling and placement.

the Apostle of the *latter*, and as such, he is the Apostle of a *totally new thing*. For Israel is constantly before us in the Old Testament and in the Gospels.

At first thought these distinctions will not seem important; but then we remember that the right understanding of our exact relation as the Church is absolutely necessary. If we are to apprehend and enter into our full rights, privileges and responsibilities as Christians, their most careful study will be seen to be imperative.

William R. Newell (1868–1956)
Paul, Lost and Found