



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume IV
Issue 82

Paul the Tentmaker

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Paul, our apostle (Romans 11:13) and pattern (I Timothy 1:16), made his living as a tentmaker (Acts 18:3). He conducted his life and ministry outside of the religious system. He taught the divine value and purpose of work.

Many believe that to *really* serve God, one must be religiously “employed,” but the truth of the matter is that every believer is called to “full time” ministry (I Corinthians 10:31; II Corinthians 5:18) in the context of their individual daily lives.

“Tentmaking” will find its own unique form in how we make a living. We may be a construction worker, or a computer technician. We may farm, or do electrical work. Perhaps we are a physician, salesman or teacher. It matters little in the eternal perspective of things what the details of our “tentmaking” involves. The important thing is that we are “tentmaking.”

No matter what the circumstances of life are around us, regardless of what earthly occupation we may use to supply our needs and those of others, we each have a divine vocation to which we have been called. Yet it is not “tentmaking” that defines us or our lives. Paul was not ... “*Paul, the tentmaker.*” No, he was defined by heaven in light of his

divine calling and vocation; he was ... “*Paul, the apostle.*”

We live our lives for the Lord, serving Him, and we do so in the context of “tentmaking.” More often than not, this context can have the appearance of a monotonous, daily routine; but the very Life of God running its full course in our day-by-day circumstances will make our lives anything but monotonous and routine.

We must not confuse what we do to make a living with the purpose of our lives. Our occupations are just the contexts in which we carry out our divine calling. The circumstances of our earthly labors are the backdrop of God’s working in our lives.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

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Note Regarding *BSN* Issue #80

For those who are interested, the article *If God Could Save Everyone, Would He?* which ran in *BSN* #80, is available as a handy 36-page booklet, for only \$2.⁹⁵ (Item #4113). Call 1-800-784-6010 to order.

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Readers' Responses

"Thank you for helping me grow in Christ." – **NY**

"Keep those *Daily Emails Goodies* coming and the *BSN*." – **IL**

"How very disappointed I am in this issue of *BSN* (#80). It is so contrary to God's Written Word, that according to this article, it appears that the Lord died in vain. How so upsetting to read this, how so very wrong this article is. Please cancel my subscription and please send me a refund" – **PA**

"Thanks, as always, for the encouragement." – **IL**

"Thank you for the *BSN* and for presenting the controversial topic of universal reconciliation. When reading through Romans and Colossians on my own I have had similar suspicions that 'all' really means 'all,' though I had

no idea the word forever means aeon in Greek.

"I have struggled with free will salvation because it portrays a God out of control of his own universe, but I subscribed to this view mostly because at least everyone had a chance (if they had heard the Word, if they 'got it,' if they were not too proud, if, if if...). I knew there were verses that supported God's election of a select few, but I couldn't reconcile this with a God who would create in order to condemn. One view limits God's power, and the other view limits God's love.

"Reading the explanations of universal reconciliation presented in the *BSN* and elsewhere, I literally feel a tide of excitement and hope rise up within me. A God who CAN and WILL save the world? A God whose purpose is to reconcile all through the death of Jesus Christ? A God whose purposes cannot be thwarted? Now that is exciting! God is back to being good AND powerful. And frankly, that is the kind of God rebellious people need." – **CA**

"I've always appreciated your spirit of questioning doctrine in your quest in 'proving all things'... Thank you all for the wonderful hospitality and the fellowship. I have been thoroughly refreshed. The only thing lacking was the time. Please tell everyone there that we enjoyed their company and look forward to meeting again." – **VA**

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.

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(recompiled and edited)

Love Is of God:

Love's Source

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (I John 4:7).

"Love is of God." God is the Creator of the universe and all love comes from Him. He is its only source.

Love can be natural or supernatural, both of which are divine because they spring forth from God.

Take natural love. Our Father is the God of nature. Love which is associated with nature, of that which is natural, has its source in Him – He is its Originator.

For example, one may love a particular season of the year best – the freshness of spring, the warmth of summer, the colors of autumn, or the crispness of winter. Or, perhaps one loves all of them in their splendid variety. Whatever one's preference, they are all crafted by God.

Then there are the rich colors of creation. Look about us throughout the year – what variety! God well could have painted our world with black, white and gray. We would not have known the difference; but such is not the nature of the God of nature.

Men find their inspirations to paint their canvases rich with His colors. They borrow from His vast spectrum to paint their own little worlds – their cars, their houses, their clothes. What is your favorite color, the one that you love the best?

There are also flowers that we love, and trees, and animals. Some love the daffodil best, or the tulip, or the rose. Some love the dogwood, or the weeping willow tree. There are cat lovers, dog lovers, and horse lovers. All are the splendid designs of His hands.

Including, of course, food – look at the culinary variety that our Creator has supplied! We each have the foods that we love. On and on we could go throughout the vast array of God's nature, with each of us uniquely designed with distinct appreciations of particular expressions of His handiwork.

These all are the simplest forms of love; and yet even these are rooted in Him, for, *"Love is of God."*

There would not be any appreciation of these things without Him. Whether men are conscious of this or not, it does not change the source. Those who know God can choose to live in the enjoyment of the simplest of these loves as worship to Him. After all, Paul describes our Father as,

"The living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Timothy 6:7).

Our Father is good and gracious, desiring that we richly enjoy His creation! With this understanding, we have the freedom to worship God in the love of our favorite aspects of His diverse creative bounty.

Thus Paul wrote,

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

Yet there is more to the natural side of love – there is a much higher plane. There is also the love of family – of mother, of father, of wife or husband, of children, of brothers and sisters, of grandparents. This is a grander love. Oh, for ►

the love of family! How precious it can be! These are natural bonds of love, designed by God, for, “*Love is of God.*”

We also worship God here, in the love of our family.

All of these are the natural loves that find their root and source in Him.

Then there is that supernatural love – love that goes far beyond nature, or that of a natural design. This love comes directly from the life of God Himself to the heart of the believer. Indeed, this is the specific love of which John the apostle wrote in our text. Here he speaks directly of God’s own love – a love that transcends that which is natural.

Natural love comes as a result of the natural creation. It is a wonderful bounty from God that can be freely enjoyed and a part of our worship of God; but supernatural love comes as a result of the new creation. It is *above* and *beyond* mere natural love.

“The Love of God”

The Love of God is greater far
Than tongue or pen can ever tell
It goes beyond the highest star
And reaches to the lowest hell
The guilty pair, bowed down with care
God gave His Son to win
His erring child He reconciled
And pardoned from his sin.

Could we with ink the ocean fill
And were the skies of parchment made
Were every stalk on earth a quill
And every man a scribe by trade
To write the Love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Oh Love of God, How rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forever more endure
The saint’s and angel’s song.

– Frederick M. Lehman (1917) ■

God Is Good

by – Thomas Talbott

Against the many religious doctrines that appeal to and cultivate our fear, I shall urge upon my reader this simple proposition: Contrary to what we might fear, the Creator and Father of our souls – the Lord of hosts and King of kings – is good.

... But the history of organized religion, at least in the Western tradition, is a record of our human resistance to the proclamation that God is love, that His

love extends to everyone, and that it is in no way conditioned upon human obedience or human faithfulness ...

We shall find in the end, “perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (I John 4:18).

The Inescapable Love of God
Pages 1, 37, 39

Redeemed Souls ...

Freed from Fear

by – C.H. Spurgeon

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee" (Isaiah 43:1).

I was lamenting this morning my unfitness for my work, and especially for the warfare to which I am called. A sense of heaviness came over me, but relief came very speedily, for which I thank the Lord. Indeed, I was greatly burdened, but the Lord comforted me. The first verse read exactly met my case. It is in,

"But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and He that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not" (Isaiah 43:1).

I said to myself, "I am what God created me, and I am what He formed me, and therefore I must, after all, be the right man for the place wherein He has put me."

We may not blame our Creator, nor suspect that He has missed His mark in forming an instrument for His work. Thus new comfort comes to us. Not only do the operations of grace in the spiritual world yield us consolation, but we are even comforted by what the Lord has done in creation. We are told to cease from our fears; and we do so, since we perceive that it is the Lord that made us, and not we ourselves, and He will justify His own creating skill by accomplishing through us the purposes of His love. Pray, I beseech you, for me, the weakest of my Lord's servants, that I may be equal to the overwhelming task imposed upon me.

The next sentence of the chapter is usually most comforting to my soul, although on this one occasion the first sentence was a specially reviving cordial to me. The verse goes on to say,

"Fear not: for I have redeemed thee."

Let us think for a few minutes of the wonderful depth of consolation which lies in this fact. We have been redeemed by the Lord Himself, and this

is a grand reason why we should never again be subject to fear. Oh, that the logic of this fact could be turned into practice, so that we henceforth rejoiced, or at least felt the peace of God!

We are at times troubled by a sense of our personal *insignificance*. It seems too much to hope that God's infinite mind should enter into our lowly affairs. Though David said, *"I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me"* (Psalm 40:17) we are not always quite prepared to say the same. We make our sorrows great under the vain idea that they are too small for the Lord to notice. I believe that our greatest miseries spring from those little worries which we hesitate to bring to our heavenly Father. Our gracious God puts an end to all such thoughts as these by saying *"Fear not for I have redeemed thee."* You are not of such small account as you suppose. The Lord would never be wasteful of His sacred expenditure.

He bought you with a price, and therefore He sets great value upon you. Listen to what the Lord says:

"Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honourable [honored], and I have loved thee" (Isaiah 43:4).

It is amazing that the Lord should think so much of us as to give the Lord Jesus Christ for us. *"What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"* Yet God's mind is filled with thoughts of love towards man.

We sing truly,

*"So near, so very near to God,
Nearer we cannot be,
For in the person of His Son
We are as near as He."*

(see *FREED*, next page)

FREED (continued from previous page)

We are liable to fret a little when we think of our *changeableness*. If you are at all like me, you are very far from being always alike; I am sometimes lifted up to the very heavens, and then I go down to the deeps; I am at one time bright with joy and confidence, and at another time dark as midnight with doubts and fears.

Even Elijah, who was so brave, had his fainting fits. Our experience is as an April day, when shower and sunshine take their turns. Amid our mournful changes we rejoice to hear the Lord's own voice, saying, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.*"

The price is paid, the ransom accepted. This is done, and can never be undone. Jesus says, "*I have redeemed thee.*" Change of feeling within does not alter the fact that the believer has been bought with a price, and made the Lord's own by the precious blood of Jesus. The Lord God has already done so much for us that our salvation is sure in Christ Jesus. Will He begin to build, and fail to finish? It is impossible. If He has redeemed us, He has, in that act, given us the pledge of all things.

See how the gifts of God are bound to this redemption.

"I have redeemed thee, I have called thee"
(Isaiah 43:1).

SONSHIP (continued from page 868)

HE hath commenced (Philippians 1:6). He started this thing – I did not; He undertook this thing. Before ever I had a being, He had undertaken to carry through His perfect work in anyone who would trust Him. That was all undertaken far before ever I saw the light of day, so that I did not start this – it did not commence with me. My one thing to do is to trust Him – trust *Him!*

There are "off" times, and I am not sure that the Lord does not allow us to have such times lest we should begin to build again upon works. He takes us right off that basis and throws us upon Himself, where

Thus Paul confirms this,

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified"
(Romans 8:29-30).

Here is a chain in which each link is joined to all the rest, so that it cannot be separated. There is no going back on the part of God, and consequently His redemption will redeem, and in redeeming it will secure us all things. Then Paul continues,

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:31).

We have been bought with too great a price for our Redeemer to let us slip. Therefore, let us march on with confidence. Oh, how my weary heart prizes redeeming love! If it were not for this, I would lay me down, and die. Friends forsake me, foes surround me, I am filled with contempt, and tortured with the subtlety which I cannot baffle; but the Lord hath said, "*Fear not: for I have redeemed thee.*" ■

Till He Come (1896)

there is no alternative but to trust Him.

I find I have these "off" times, but as I definitely trust the Lord, and say, "Lord, this is Your responsibility, and I know this will not last; and I am trusting you in the meanwhile." It does come back, and in greater fulness and greater blessedness.

Trust Him. "*I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*" (Galatians 2:20); He has the whole matter in hand. Positive faith in Him is the secret of everything in the will of God. ■

A Witness and a Testimony (January 1940)

God's Wrath

by – John R. Gavazzoni

What is translated as “wrath” in conventional translations cannot – as commonly believed – be an essential change of disposition on God’s part toward man. God has only one disposition, one inclination, one divine posture in His relationship with man, that of unconditional love coming to us in unearned grace. He is determined to fully give Himself to us unreservedly. When one sees this, we become His bond slave, bound by such love.

The primary Greek work translated as “wrath”¹ is “orge,” from which we get our English word, “orgy,” and it’s various forms. The word itself and it’s root conveys aroused passion, excitement, a reaching after and overlaps in meaning with “thumos,” translated also as “wrath.” Ed Browne, translates “orge” as (God’s) “intrinsic fervor.” I like that. I think Ed has captured the essential meaning. For me, it suggests ravishing love.

Since God is love, then wrath necessarily is a form of love, for nothing could proceed out from the nature of God that is inconsistent with the love that He IS. The conclusion is just too obvious once one has been delivered from the dark,

1. James Strong: Greek #3709 “Desire”, “Excitement of the mind”.
W.E. Vine: “Originally any natural impulse or desire, or disposition.”
E.W. Bullinger: “The mind, the spirit that is breathed out, an intense passion of the mind.”
J.H. Thayer: “To teem, denoting an internal motion, especially that of plants and fruits swelling with juice.”

SPECIAL (continued from page 868)

all men, specially of those that believe” – I Timothy 4:10).

This special salvation is so, “*that in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus*” (Ephesians 2:7). For this we have been chosen “*before the foundation of the world*” (Ephesians 1:4), by

demonic imagination that fuels eternal torment dogma; namely, that God, when faced with the ontological contrarianism that seeks to impose on us a false identity, with us being overcome by a false persona, His love is aroused to reclaim us, to lay claim with divine jealousy to that which belongs to Him. With intrinsic fervor He reaches out to possess that which is His, and we are His by creation and by redemption ...

What is commonly called “*the wrath of God,*” is that quality of love that will not let us go, and will not let us miss the glory of His love. It’s an awesome, passionate, jealous, intense, possessive love, that when heated up fills us with awe. Initially it can be terribly frightening to be the object of such fervor.

I think of the old song about Casey waltzing with the strawberry blond. “His brain was so loaded it nearly exploded, the poor girl would shake with alarm ...”

Whenever we are not participating in the faith of Christ, when we are not ongoingly believing in Christ, sharing His restful trust in the Father’s perfect love, His intrinsic fervor abides on us. He becomes, out from the depths of His love, a consuming fire, utterly radical in His pursuit of us, even to the cross. ■

The Cup of God’s Wrath (2006)

Him “*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began*” (II Timothy 1:9). ■

Adapted from

The Consequences of the Cross

Unsearchable Riches (2006)

Volume XCVII, Number 3, Page 123-124

The Spirit of Sonship and Our “Off” Times

by – T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)

By what means does God reach His end in His people? What is God’s means of achieving His purpose? It is by the Spirit of sonship [i.e., “*the spirit of adoption*”] through the Cross. There is no hope of reaching God’s end, or even taking the first step in that direction, without the Spirit of sonship.

First there must be faith’s cry, “*Father*”! There must be that relationship brought about by the Spirit. Then the Spirit of sonship, once He is within, must proceed fully to form Christ in us. Thus Paul the Apostle says, “*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you*” (Galatians 4:19). It is not a case of my struggling toward God’s end. Oh, that we had faith here! If you really have faith on this particular point, you will have the secret of a profound rest.

You know, we have our “off” times spiritually – “off” times in the prayer life when it seems impossible to pray; “off” times in many other ways spiritually. No matter how we struggle, we can make nothing of it. What are we going to do?

Through the Spirit Christ is in me, and everything is with Him – not with me. It is not what I can do, not what I cannot do, nor how I am today; all is with Him. Today, maybe, I am not conscious of His indwelling, but on the contrary very conscious of other things that are not Christ. Well, that is my state; but He is faithful, He is true. He has given me certain assurance – about perfecting unto the day of Christ a good work which

(see **SONSHIP**, next page 866)

The Salvation of All and Our Special Salvation

by – James R. Coram

All will eventually be saved because the Lord Jesus Christ tasted “*death for every man*” (Hebrews 2:9). The consequences of Christ’s death for our sins are as follows: “*If one died for all, then were all dead*” (II Corinthians 5:14); and “*he that is dead is freed from sin*” (Romans 6:7). “*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). As the chosen of God, to whom faith has graciously been granted, we are “*now justified by His blood*” and, “*we shall be saved from wrath through Him.*” (Romans 5:9).

Since God “*will have all men to be saved*” (I Timothy 2:4), “*is the Saviour of all men*” (I Timothy 4:10), is working “*all things after the counsel of His own will*” (Ephesians 1:11), it being the case that the Lord Jesus Christ “*gave Himself a ransom for all*” (I Timothy 2:6), therefore, all mankind will eventually be saved, it being explicitly affirmed that “*as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive ... The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ... that God may be all in all*” (I Corinthians 15:22, 26, 28).

We who are presently saved are saved because we “*are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28). We have been ordained (“*And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed*” – Acts 13:48) and appointed (“*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*” – I Thessalonians 5:9) to God’s special salvation (for He “*is the Saviour of*

(see **SPECIAL**, page 867)