



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 104

The Glorious Presentation of the Saints

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

After the resurrection, the members of Christ's Body will make their appointed appearance before the "Judgment Seat of Christ." This is what old-timers often referred to as the "Bema." This is because "bema" is the Greek word used to translate the words "judgment seat" in the following verses.

*"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the **judgment seat** [bema] of Christ" (Romans 14:10).*

*"For we must all appear before the **judgment seat** [bema] of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Corinthians 5:10).*

The Meaning of Bema

The Greek word *bema* is a very interesting one. It conveys the simple meaning of "rostrum"¹ or "high platform."² A word of such simple meaning can often have a broad range of uses. Such is the case with *bema*. It was used in a variety of different meanings, such as a throne, or a platform for public speaking.

Not Punitive Judgment

Paul's usage of the word does not convey the idea of "judgment" in a courtroom sense of the word. It is not about the passing of a sentence of condemnation. It is not about punitive legal proceedings.

Not the Movie of Your Life

Sadly many believers have an understanding of the Bema as a time of condemnation. They have the mistaken idea that each individual will stand before the Lord and the rest of the Body of Christ – all at one time – for the purpose of viewing a motion picture review of their lives – for all to see; that the Lord will place on pause the frames of their lives that are "bad" – issuing forth rebuke, correction, condemnation, and judgment.

Sin Question Forever Settled

We must however remember that the question of sin and its judgment have been forever settled on the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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1. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.*
2. *The New Testament Greek-English Dictionary, Complete Biblical Library.*

THE LATEST WORD ...

How to Be Free From Sin While Smoking a Cigarette: *The book for people with weaknesses* (#3810) by Martin Zender. This book is written for those who know what they're supposed to do but sometimes don't do it. It's written for those who think that their own particular weakness keeps God from completely liking them. It's written for those who just can't shake a bad habit. This book is written for the wretched souls who totter between their passion life and their desire for God, not realizing that in order to have a desire for God they must also be dogged by at least one detestable/wonderful passion that keeps them humble and needing Him. 102 pp. PB \$10.²⁵

The Soul and the Unseen & The Gehenna of Fire (#2350) by James Coram. A short study of "soul," "sheol," "hades," and "gehenna." 23 pp. BK \$4.²⁵

Reply to R.A. Torrey's "The Exact Truth Regarding an Eternal Hell" (#3125) by A.E. Knoch. This is a reprint of Knoch's 1922 reply to Torrey's published sermon, "The Exact Truth Regarding an Eternal Hell." Also includes a chart, *Christ of the Eonian Times: From Beginning to Consummation*. 24 pp. BK \$3.²⁵

Christ's Prophetic Teaching: In Relation to the Divine Order of His Words and Works (#4227) by E.W. Bullinger. There have been many books written on the prophetic discourses of our Lord Jesus in the Gospels. However, Bullinger, with his distinctive and different insight, has approached these verses in a very different way. The Lord's ministry was divided into four great periods, in each of which He was occupied with a particular subject. His ministry was occupied with four great subjects, and these were: (1) The Kingdom of Heaven: Its Character and Requirements; (2) Christ's Person; (3) Christ's Sufferings; (4) Christ's Second Advent. This work considers the prophetic teaching in relation to each one of these subjects and concludes with a section on the testimony of the Church. 44 pp. PB \$9.²⁵

Paul versus Peter, or Remarks on Galatians 1 & 2 (#3374) by William R. Newell. This work shows the distinguishing difference between the gospels preached by Peter and Paul. 76 pp. PB \$9.²⁵

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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 (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "Movement," "Organization," "Mission," or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all "saints."

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PATRIARCHS

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

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“In Whom [Jesus Christ] we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

*“In Whom we have redemption through His blood, even **the forgiveness of sins**” (Colossians 1:14).*

Indeed *all* of our sins – past, present, and future; all of them in their entirety – have been fully and completely forgiven.

*“... Having forgiven you **all trespasses**” (Colossians 2:13).*

Even the saints under the Old Covenant could rejoice that their transgressions were as far removed “*as the east is from the west*” (Psalm 103:12), never to be remembered again (Jeremiah 31:34).

Testimony of Other Bible Students

Consider what other diligent students of the Scriptures have written regarding our standing before God in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Arthur Pridham (1869):

“A saint will never again come into judgment on account of his natural or inherited iniquity, for he is already dead judicially with Christ, and is no longer known or dealt with on the footing of his natural responsibility ... His guilt has been obliterated by the blood of his Redeemer, and he is freely and justly pardoned for his Savior’s sake. Because Christ is risen from the dead, he is no longer in his sins. He is justified by faith, and is presented in the name and on the merits of the Just One before God ... Into judgment, therefore, on his own account he cannot come.”³

Samuel L. Hoyt (1980):

“Scripture teaches that Christ’s death was all-sufficient, completely satisfying God’s

wrath toward sin in the believer. The question of sin in regard to God’s justice has been forever satisfied in the mind of God by the all-sufficient sacrifice of His Son. The penalty for the believer’s sins has been fully paid for by Christ, the believer’s substitute. The Christian has been in court, condemned, sentenced, and executed in his substitute, Jesus Christ. God cannot exact payment for sins twice since payment has been fully and forever paid. The believer is seen by the Father as clothed in the righteousness of Christ. God can therefore find no cause for accusing the Christian judicially any more than He can find cause for accusing Jesus Christ. Therefore, at the judgment seat of Christ forensic punishment will not be meted out for the believer’s sins ...

“Scripture teaches that for the believer God’s justice has already been fully and forever satisfied at the Cross in relation to the believer’s sins. If God were to punish the believer judicially for his sins for which Christ has already rendered payment, He would be requiring two payments for sin and would therefore be unjust. Such a concept (punishment for sin) erroneously disparages the all-sufficiency of Christ’s death on the cross.”⁴

Lewis Sperry Chafer (1947):

“It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the judgment is unrelated to the problem of sin, that it is more for the bestowing of rewards than the rejection of failure.”⁵

“With reference to sin, Scripture teaches that the child of God under grace shall not come into judgment (John 3:18; 5:24; 6:37; Romans 5:1; 8:1; I Corinthians 11:32); in his standing before God, and on the ground that the penalty for all sin – past, present, and future (Colossians 2:13) – has been borne by Christ as the perfect Substitute, the believer is not only placed beyond condemnation, but being in Christ is accepted in the perfection of Christ (I Corinthians 1:30; Ephesians 1:6;

3. Arthur Pridham, *Notes and Reflections on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 1868, page 141.

4. Samuel L. Hoyt, *The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective*, Bibliotheca Sacra, January-March, 1980.

5. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 406.

Colossians 2:10; Hebrews 10:14) and loved of God as Christ is loved (John 17:23).”⁶

The Reward Seat of Christ

Instead of being a proceeding of punitive judgment related to sin, Paul’s usage of “*bema*” is in the context of the *winning of a race*. It is about the honor and recognition of having *won the prize*. It is the presentation platform where the participants are officially awarded the *gold, silver, and bronze* (i.e., “*gold, silver, precious stones*” I Corinthians 3:12).

Historical Background

“The *bema* in New Testament times was a raised platform at the Olympic Games, where the chief of the games stood and placed awards (*stephanos*) around the neck of all the winners!”⁷

“The word translated ‘*judgment seat*’ (*bema*) is another instance of Paul’s intimate knowledge of the Olympic games (c.f. I Corinthians 9:24-27). The *bema* was a stand on which the judges stood to observe and evaluate the actions of the contestants. If any athlete broke a rule ... he missed the prize (victor’s wreath – *stephanos*) regardless of the place he finished in the race or contest. Likewise, when an event was completed, the contestants stood before the *bema* to hear the judges’ announcement of the results, and to receive such reward as might properly be theirs.”⁸

“In the Grecian games in Athens, the old arena contained a raised platform on which the president or umpire of the arena sat. From here he rewarded all the contestants; and here he would reward all winners. It was called the ‘*Bema*’ or ‘*Reward Seat*.’ It was never used as a judicial bench.”⁹

Saints On Display

At the “*Judgment Seat of Christ*” (“*bema*”), the

6. *Major Bible Themes*, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Zondervan, page 282.

7. T.R. Jones, III, *Bible Food for Hungry Christians: Basic Interpretation of New Testament Greek*.

8. Clarence E. Mason, Jr., *A Study of Pauline Motives: As Revealed in 2 Corinthians 4:16-6:4a*, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 111, no. 443 (July 1954): pages 220-21.

9. L. Sale-Harrison, *Judgment Seat of Christ*, 1938, page 8.

saints will be *presented* on display along with their works for award. This **presentation** before God is the context of Paul’s statement in Colossians 1:21,

“*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.*”

The key here is the word “*present*.” This is Strong’s Greek Lexicon #3936 (*paristemi*), which is defined as “to exhibit.” It is also translated “*present*” in the following verses:

“*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present [paristemi] you as a chaste virgin to Christ*” (II Corinthians 11:2).

“*That He might present [paristemi] it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish*” (Ephesians 5:27).

It is translated as “*stand before*” in Romans 14:10; and “*shew*” in II Timothy 2:15, both which are passages regarding the *Bema*:

“*But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before [paristemi] the judgment seat of Christ*” (Romans 14:10).

“*Study to shew [paristemi] thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*” (II Timothy 2:15).

Presented As Who We Really Are

The simple fact is that we are already “*holy and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight.*” This is our identity in Jesus Christ. He will present us to Himself “*a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*”

At the *Bema* this is simply being manifested. We are being presented in our reality – “to **present**

you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight."

The PRESENTATION at the "Judgment Seat of Christ" is the effectual result of our "reigning in life" – operating in our identity in Christ.

*"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall **reign in life by one, Jesus Christ**"* (Romans 5:17).

What God is now accomplishing in each of our individual lives is the outworking of the fullness of life of Christ in our daily walk – "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (II Corinthians 4:10-11).

Make no mistake about it: the *Bema* will be a glorious day of rejoicing for all believers. The gracious fire of God's undiminished love will consume all that is Adamic from our earthly pilgrimage here. The dross and corruption will be eternally purged away. Thankfully, the "wood, hay, stubble" (I Corinthians 3:12) will be removed, leaving only that which is real and of lasting value – our life and identity in the Lord Jesus Christ, and what it produced in our lives.

Anxiety and Fear Concerning That Day

"The Judgment Seat of Christ" hangs over the heads of many believers as some tribunal of an angry deity. Religious tyranny has snared them in an oppressive mind-set. They live under the shadow of some future inquisition – an examinational and penalizing horror, the thoughts of which leave their hearts in the bondage of anxiety and fear.

This should not be the case! We are to be anxious about nothing, as perfect love casts out fear.

"Be careful for nothing" (Philippians 4:6).

Apprehension, dread, nervousness, and anxiety are not to be a part of our lives. They especially are not to characterize our relationship with God. These are things from which God has provided deliverance. This includes worry over our apparent

inadequacies, shortcoming, and failures – yes, and even our sins – for even they are forever superabounded by the inexhaustible grace of God.

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Romans 5:20).

"Perfect love casteth out fear"

Hear these words! Hear them in their fullness:

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love" (I John 4:18).

There is no fear in love. The perfect love of God casts it out.

Dear "beloved of God" (Romans 1:7), is your heart tormented by thoughts of "the Judgment Seat of Christ?" Have no more of it! It does not come from your Father, for His love for you is perfect, and "perfect love casteth out fear." Paul wrote it this way,

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7).

Testimony of Other Bible Students

Again let us hear from other students of the Scriptures, this time as they write concerning the glorious nature of Christ's *Bema*.

J. Dwight Pentecost (1958):

"Thus, associated with this word [*bema*] are the ideas of prominence, dignity, authority, honor, and reward rather than the idea of justice and judgment ... To bring the believer into judgment concerning the sin question ... is to deny the efficacy of the death of Christ and nullify the promise of God that 'their sins and iniquities will I remember no more' (Hebrews 10:17)."¹⁰

10. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Zondervan Publishing House, pages 219-226.

Samuel L. Hoyt (1980):

"The expression '*the judgment seat of Christ*' in the English Bible has tended to cause some to draw the wrong conclusion about the nature and purpose of this evaluation. A common misconception which arises from this English translation is that God will mete out a just retribution for sins in the believer's life, and some measure of retributive punishment for sins will result ...

"Paul was picturing the believer as a competitor in a spiritual contest. As the victorious Grecian athlete appeared before the Bema to receive his perishable award, so the Christian will appear before Christ's Bema to receive his imperishable award. The judge at the Bema bestowed rewards to the victors. *He did not whip the loser* ...

"Some Bible teachers view the judgment seat as a place of intense sorrow, a place of terror, and a place where Christ displays all the believer's sins before the entire resurrected and raptured church. Some go even further by stating that Christians must experience some sort of suffering for their sins at the time of this examination"¹¹

L.D. Cunningham (1984):

"Certainly the Judgment Seat of Christ is not a place of condemnation, for Romans 8:1 states, '*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus ...*' The Judgment Seat of Christ is, rather, a moment of inspection and an opportunity for reward ... Every young Greek in the days of Paul had a special understanding of the bema. It was the seat of reward on which the umpire of the games sat, and from which he crowned the winners of events. What honor and dignity came from that place!"¹²

God's Glorious Purging Fire

"For we must all appear before the judgment

11. Samuel L. Hoyt, *The Judgment Seat of Christ in Theological Perspective*, Bibliotheca Sacra, January-March, 1980.

12. L.D. Cunningham, *Youth With A Mission*.

*seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, **whether it be good or bad***" (II Corinthians 5:10).

*"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be **revealed by fire**; and **the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is**. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.**"* (I Corinthians 3:11-15).

Now we need to understand that the building work represented by our lives are not physical **gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble**; and neither is the fire testing it physical. This is simply figurative speech. It speaks to us in illustrative ways that we can understand. The point is not that there will be this prolonged process of purging at the Bema. Instead it is that this purging has taken place in the resurrection. This day marks the purging that has been accomplished, celebrating that finished work of God.

Building Materials

"The apostle has affirmed that there are two classes of building materials which the '*labourers together with God*' may use in building the edifice upon the foundation already laid. The gold, silver, costly stones are indestructible materials. These are the work of God ... On the other hand, the wood, hay, and stubble are destructible materials. These are the work of men which man has produced by his own effort. The apostle is revealing the fact that the examination at the bema of Christ is to determine that which was done by God through the individual and that which the individual did in his own strength ..."¹³

13. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Zondervan Publishing House, pages 219-226.

Bad Things

Just what is the “*bad*” of this passage? Interestingly enough this is not the normal word for “*bad*.” Here Paul uses a Greek work that has as its meaning “worthless.”¹⁴ E.W. Bullinger defines it as “useless,” stating that “it expresses the lack of those qualities which constitute a person or thing what it claims to be.” R.C. Trench (1807-1886) wrote that the word in this passage means “good-for-nothingness, the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth from it ... This notion of worthlessness ...”¹⁵

In other words, what we learn from this is that the word “*bad*” here represents those things that are contrary to who we really are in Christ.

J. Dwight Pentecost wrote: “Thus the judgment [of the Bema] is not to determine what is ethically good or evil, but rather that which is acceptable and that which is worthless. It is not the Lord’s purpose here to chasten His child for his sins, but to reward his service for those things done in the name of the Lord.”¹⁶

A Glorious Day

The plain fact of the matter is that the *Bema* (“*The Judgment Seat of Christ*”) is a day to be looked forward to! It is the revelation of the life and work of God in us. Regardless of how things may *appear* to our earthly eyes, we **are** “*His workmanship*,” (Ephesians 2:10). Lay hold on this amazing truth!

We did not make ourselves. We are not self-made men. We are God-made men. We are not the fruit of our own labors. We are His creation. It is all about Him.

“He hath done all things well” (Mark 7:37)!

“... He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus

14. *kakos*, Strong’s Greek Lexicon #2556,

15. Charles Chenevix Trench, *Synonyms of The New Testament*, 1851.

16. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Zondervan Publishing House, pages 219-226.

Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Remember that this is the very thing of which Paul was so confident:

*“Being **confident** of **this very thing** ... THAT He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”*

Bask in these truths!

Purging of the Dross

*There is coming a wonderful day in the future, a day of the presentation of the saints at Christ’s **Bema**.* Although the “good and bad” shall be revealed that day, the “*bad*” – as in the due process of gold and silver’s refinement – will surface to the top. That day will forever remove all the stains and disgraces of the “*former things*,” leaving only the “*good*” of “*gold, silver, precious stones*.”

On that day there will be “*loss*” of the “*bad*.” What a most gracious act, for it will be a gloriously positive loss. It will remove all that we wish to forget. Just as God in His forgiveness remembers them no more, so “*the former things are passed away*.”

God’s Masterpieces

It is then that our Father will *present* us on open display as His masterpieces – His new creation – His ultimate showing forth of His grace:

*“That in the ages to come He might **shew** [display, exhibit, illustrate, demonstrate, present] the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:7).

Here is our reason for expectation of this magnificent event: when all is said and done on that day, “*then shall every man have praise of God*” (I Corinthians 4:5).



Hidden Truth, Treasure and Triumph

by – Eugene F. Rueweler

Paul's great Colossian epistle, written from Rome, consists of only four brief chapters. These, with the six chapters of his Ephesian letter, present and unfold the fullness of the truth of this present dispensation. The truths previously presented by Paul, in his other letters, are brought to their full climax in Colossians and Ephesians.

In the first three chapters of Colossians the little word "*hid*" is used once in each chapter. Verse 26 of chapter one says "*Even the mystery which hath been **hid** from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints.*"

In the next chapter, in 2:3 we read, "*In Whom [Christ] are **hid** all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*" Finally, 3:3 declares "*For ye are dead, and your life is **hid** with Christ in God.*"

The word *manifest*, which seems to be just the opposite of *hid*, is used in the context of two of the three quotations above. That which Paul declares that was hidden is now made manifest. The fourth chapter of Colossians tells us how this is done. So we have a simple outline of this rich epistle.

First we are told of the hidden truth, the "*Mystery*" which fills up or completes the Word of God, doctrinally. This truth Paul could say "*now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles.*"

By revelation from Jesus Christ, this truth was made known to Paul, and through him made known to all who would hear. In the fourth chapter he asked for the prayers of the believers,

"*that God would open ... a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.*" In the last chapter of Ephesians (6:19) he repeated this prayer request in these words, "*that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.*" Without a doubt the truth of the Mystery, which is the Church the Body of Christ, is the Mystery or secret of Christ and of the Gospel. This is the truth that was *hid* but is now revealed, and through us it must be proclaimed as we "*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time*" (Colossians 4:5).

It would appear to be very evident that the "*mystery of Christ*" and the "*mystery of the gospel*" are one and the same thing – the *truth* of the Church as the Body of Christ which had been *HID* until made manifest through Paul.

According to 2:3 all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge have been *hid* in Jesus Christ. These *treasures* also are to be made manifest by the believer as we read in Colossians 3:16, "*Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

As we proclaim the TRUTH may we also display the TREASURES of our wonderful Savior. Finally, in chapter 3 our Lord reveals the TRIUMPH of the believer when Christ is manifested. "*For ye are dead, and your life is **hid** with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear [be manifested] then shall ye also appear [be manifested] with Him in glory.*"

(continued next page)

Two Great Mysteries

by – Eugene Rueweler

The Lord slowly unwraps His great secret package, from the Garden of Eden to the gardens of Gethsemane and Calvary – from the first promise of the Seed of the woman to Christ crucified and risen. He reveals many things about the package and its contents in the Old Testament but finally the package is opened by the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of God's Great Secret, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord had another wonderful secret package which He presented to the Apostle Paul. This package contained the wonderful truths of the Church which is the Body of Christ. In Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the first package is fully opened and revealed. In the inspired writing of Paul the second package is fully opened with the revelation of the dispensation of the Mystery.

The Word of God tells us of the “*mystery of God*” and the “*mystery of Christ*.” These are our two packages of wisdom and truth. The “*mystery of God*” is *CHRIST* while the “*mystery of Christ*” is the Church, His Body. The first was a prophesied mystery, the second was a hidden mystery until committed to Paul ...

*“Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the **mystery** (secret) **of Christ**, for which I am also in bonds”* (Colossians 4:3). According to

Ephesians 3:1-6 Paul was in bonds because he was preaching the truth of the One Body, proclaiming that Gentiles were joint heirs and joint partakers of Christ. Therefore the “*mystery of Christ*” is the church even as the “*mystery of Christ*” is *CHRIST HIMSELF*.

No one can be saved without a knowledge of the *secret of God* because in Christ, and in Christ alone is Life. Unfortunately many Christians know little or nothing of the *secret of Christ*. They do not understand their position in Christ as members of His Body and their blessings in the heavenlies in Christ ...

We share with all believers the glories of the *secret of God* which is Christ. We are thankful for all who proclaim Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul not only preached the Gospel of God which was promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:1-2), but in order for the believer to be established in his faith he said, “*Now to Him that is of power to stablish 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).

Moments of Meditation in Colossians (1970)
Chapter Four

(continued from previous page)

Can we limit this manifestation of Christ to the Rapture, or to His return in Glory? I believe that both are included. As members of His body we shall certainly share in and rejoice in the glory of His coronation as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (I Timothy 6:15).

that “*We have put on the **new man** which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him ... Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.*”

The TRUTH, TREASURE and the TRIUMPH of Christ can also be made manifest when we recognize

Moments of Meditations in Colossians (1970)
Chapter One



Letters to the Editor

I enjoy the **BSN**. I finally found some “truth” material. – **CA**

I would definitely like to renew my **BSN**. Issue #100 was a breakthrough. – **AZ**

There is no other answer [**The Salvation of All**] ... so very plain and simple! What a blessing to know the True Gospel! To KNOW HIM! No wonder Paul preached Christ and Christ ONLY. So beautiful! Words fail to express how wonderful He is! – **ME**

Haven't finished reading the “Trusting” BSN [#102] yet but, as usual, it comes at God's right timing ... Your ministry means more to us than you know. God is faithful to provide for His own and we are thankful He uses you to minister so faithfully to us. – **NC**

... All of my family needs prayers at this difficult time, especially my brother. (Interestingly similar sentence structure to “*God, Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of believers.*”) – **GA**

Dear Beloved, I am a believer in our Jesus Christ. I have been diagnosed by my doctors as terminal, but will finish my life learning more about the Bible and helping others come to know Christ.

Through my sickness I have literally lost everything; right now do not have the funds for anything, but I would love to receive the

Bible Student's Notebook. – **SC**

I can't tell you how much I appreciated your materials. I was brought up and attended Fundamentalist and Pentecostal churches my entire life and the more I grew to love the Lord and learn more about His character the more I questioned eternal torment. I felt incredibly isolated and looked down on by anyone who knew I was searching to find out if it was true or not; like suddenly I'd become one of those horrible liberals (which, by the way, I don't think liberals are horrible!)

I have a really difficult time now and just am not sure where I fit in as far as a church goes. When I hear pastors mention it and use it for altar calls it makes me feel like they are saying something so horrible about my dearest friend. I can't get too upset with them because I didn't question it for years myself; in the back of my mind it didn't seem to fit God's character but I was taught to not question these things but take it on faith ...

Now, I'm trying to sort through how to read my Bible better ... I teach a bible study which is totally unaffiliated with the church but sometimes I feel so unworthy because I'm still pouring through the Scriptures and seeking truth ... I have tried to answer their questions in a way that they search for the answers from God themselves; I try to show them truth but sometimes just don't always have “pat” answers.

There are people who will say, “Then what purpose do we have to evangelize and live for God?” It kind of blows my mind when they say that because how would I not want to tell people about this incredible God of grace who changes my life now. I also wonder if some of them are living for God just out of fear and not love – that's always bondage.

I wonder now how I ever could have believed in a God who would be crueler than Hitler if He tormented with no purpose other than retribution in mind ... It just all seems like “the good news” now instead of just good news for those “select few.”

Thank you so much for helping to get the good news spread. I know there are a lot more of us out there but half of us probably aren't in churches because of it! I can't imagine how difficult it must have been as a pastor, especially depending on what denomination you were affiliated with, to go down this road.

It's very scary at first! But, I'm trusting God to lead me. I know He wants to show me truth. Again, thank you so much! – **PA**

My first response to things is fear. The verse [from **Daily Email Goodies** #575 – Fear Replaced By Love] is the one the Lord uses to show me that if I trust Him, perfect love casts out fear. It's all about trusting, like in the last **BSN** article [Trusting, #102].

Did you ever read Hannah Hurnard's book, *Hinds Feet on High Places*? “Much Afraid” ends up being renamed to “Grace and Glory” after the “Shepherd” takes her on a path of sorrow and suffering.

With that in mind, I'm trying to tame some feral cats. We trapped the mama and got her fixed. We are working on making friends with the kittens. They're about four months old. I go out every night and play with them. They'll play and come within a foot of me. One even licked me once. I so much want to scoop them up and love them but have to wait on them to make a move. So I love them from a distance. My husband said they don't trust me because they don't “know me.” Then he quotes Ephesians ... the verse about Paul's prayer that we KNOW God.

That's why I'm still “Much Afraid.” I don't yet KNOW my Father. If I did, I'd trust Him. As I continue to grow in my understanding of His great love toward me, I WILL trust Him more, and hopefully my responses to life won't always be fear, but peace, KNOWING my life is in the hands of Someone Who loves me.

Just like the kitties, He waits for me to crawl in His lap and purr. :)

Another picture of this is when we trapped the mama, we had to keep her in the trap until the next day. We covered the trap with a towel and had a fan on it so she would be comfortable. Drove her to where a vet donates her time for work on feral cats. Left mama kitty and came back and picked her up later that day. Had to keep her in the trap another day. We released her and she's free now to heal and be healthier with all her shots and no more babies to be had.

Does she know that the hands that trapped her and kept her trapped did it for her own good? Does she know that her temporary “prison” was just that ... temporary? Does she know that all the actions toward her were rooted in a love for her? Does she know that someone lay awake at night, hurting with her, over her confinement? Does she know the great joy her captor's felt when she was released? She just really knows that she's free now and the test is over.

Oh that we could embrace each trial with the above thoughts, KNOWING our God, trusting our God, and that HE KNOWS best. Perfect love casts out fear. :)

I'm not listening to radio's news like I used to. It aggravates my spirit. Seems the Lord is weening me off the world and trying to get me QUIET so I can HEAR HIM and His still small voice! – **NC**

True and False Zeal

Zeal is that pure and heavenly flame,
The fire of Love supplies;
While that which often bears the name,
Is self in a disguise.

True zeal is merciful and mild,
Can pity and forbear;
The false is headstrong, fierce and wild,
And breathes revenge and war.

While zeal for truth the Christian warms,
He knows the worth of peace;
But self contends for names and forms,
Its party to increase.

Dear LORD, the idol self dethrone,
And from our hearts remove;
And let no zeal by us be shown,
But that which springs from Love.

John Newton
(1725-1807)
Author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*

True Love is Forever

These words will never tell it all
How much you mean to me,
And time will never take away
Our precious memories.

This dying earth shall fade away
And soon forgotten be.
Yet love like ours will live right on
throughout eternity.

Love turns the darkest night to day
And cheers the weary mile.
We've walked the rugged hills of life
And sung through tears and smiles.

From the moment that our two lives met
And then joined into one,
The sweetness of loves song flows on
Even though life's day is done.

Then one day up in glory
Amid those scenes so bright,
We'll tell our own love story
Where there will be no night.

Rest well now my sweetheart,
And soon I'll be with you
And from that land we'll never part.
Forever Love is true.

Russell Kerr
(On the passing of a dear wife – 2007).

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