



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 42
Issue 1041

The Primitive Image of God in the Hebrew Scriptures

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Who is the Image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

Key Points:

The Old Testament gave an unrefined and incomplete image of God.....8747
The revelation of God in the Old Testament initially looks a lot like that of pagan deities.....8750

The Scriptures give a gradual, progressive journey to understanding God.....8751
Thus, Christ is the summit of divine revelation.....8751

CHRIST, THE PINNACLE “IMAGE OF GOD”

While Adam was created in “*the image of God*” (Genesis 1:27), it was “*the last Adam*” (I Corinthians 15:45), Christ, Who is the pinnacle Image of God (Colossians 1:15).

It is Christ Who was truly “*Emmanuel*” – “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23; Isaiah 7:14). It is He Who is the Divine Prototype and Generator of the New Creation (II Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:15-18; Ephesians 3:9) and New Humanity (Ephesians 2:15; 4:24). It is He Who is “*leading many sons into glory*” (Hebrews 2:10).

... there is a New Creation: the **primitive** passed by (II Corinthians 5:17, CV).

AN IMPERFECT IMAGE OF GOD

What this means is that the Old Creation and Old Humanity are an imperfect and distorted image of God,¹ as is God's manifestation of Himself² until the arrival

1. Having been divinely subjected to vanity (Romans 8:20-21, CV).
2. Understand that this is God's foreordained, dispensationally limited manifestation of Himself.



of Jesus Christ. Therefore, all that is perceived concerning God in the Hebrew Scriptures (commonly referred to as the “Old Testament”) is, at best, distorted by this *primitive* image.

Throughout the Old Testament we are confronted with what we now understand to be an unrefined and incomplete image of God. It is not until the arrival of Jesus Christ that His *image* is changed, being brought to a truer representation. So, regardless of what we may see and perceive of God in the Hebrew Scripture, Jesus came to provide a far more accurate image of God.

God is the One Who sets all stages, including that of the Old Testament. As with every other aspect of life, Genesis through Malachi is divine theater, whereupon God is setting the stage for a far excelling sequel.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will save all through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3-4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unprophesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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 freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);

- union in His death, burial and resurrection and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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That humanity was deeply steeped in paganism was God's masterful design. It is from this vantage point that God called and separated Abraham. All throughout the Old Testament, to one degree or another, God *acted* His way through humanity's pagan perceptions of deity.

EXAMPLE OF AN EARLY PAGAN IMAGE

By the time Abram shows up on the stage of human history, God had already turned the nations over to heathenism (Romans 1:21-32).³ Out of this scene God calls Abram, who would later have his name changed to Abraham (Genesis 17:5). God called him *out* from his pagan family and nation to be the divine vessel to form a new nation (Israel) to stand in contrast to the rest of the nations.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, "Get yourself out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, unto a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1).

This *getting out* by Abram was a *crossover* journey for him and his descendants, one from paganism to a progressive knowledge and worship of the true God, Who would be known as the "*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*" – "*the God of Israel*," which the rest of the nations were "*without*" (Ephesians 2:12).

This *crossover* gave him the name "*Abram the Hebrew*" (Genesis 14:13). This is the first usage of the

3. For more on this theme, see:

– [World Affairs and National Politics: And the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus](#), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Bible Student's Press, on the [order form](#) under "Clyde Pilkington."

word "*Hebrew*" (עִבְרִי, 'ibrîy, SEC H5680) meaning "to pass on," "he who passed over from beyond" (CB), "one from beyond" (DBD).⁴

Within this context we observe an example of an early pagan representation of God in the offering up of Isaac by Abraham. Such an offering was clearly a pagan ritual. God tested Abraham accordingly (Genesis 22:2), and walked him through that ritual, and out the

4. Concerning the "*Ur of the Chaldees*" from which Abram came out, we learn more historically.

"Ur of the Chaldees, whence Abraham set out upon his journey to Canaan ... was always the center of the worship of the moon-god in Southern Babylonia. (L.W. King.)" — *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*

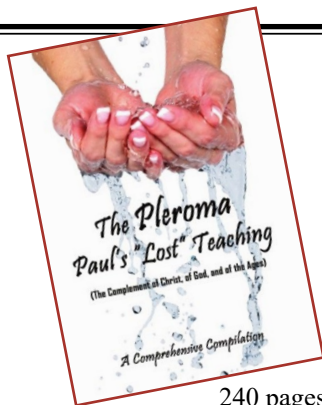
"Ur – that is, 'light,' or 'fire.' Its name probably derived from its being devoted to the rites of fire-worship. Terah [the father of Abraham] and his family were equally infected with that idolatry as the rest of the inhabitants (Joshua 24:2, 15)." — *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary*

"Ur of the Chaldees. This was the land of his [Abraham's] nativity, an idolatrous country. ... His father was Terah, of whom it is said (Joshua 24:2) that he served other gods. ... His departure out of Ur of the Chaldees ... in obedience to the call of God, of which we shall read more, Genesis 12:1, etc." — *Matthew Henry Commentary*

"The oldest king of Ur known to us is Ur-Ba'u (servant of the goddess Ba'u) ... He lived some twenty-eight hundred years B.C., and took part in building the famous temple of the moon-god Sin in Ur itself. The illustration here given represents his cuneiform inscription, written in the Sumerian language, and stamped upon every brick of the temple in Ur. It reads: 'Ur-Ba'u, king of Ur, who built the temple of the moon-god.'"

"Ur was consecrated to the worship of Sin, the Babylonian moon-god. ... The name is Babylonian, and bears witness to its having been founded by a Babylonian king. The same witness is still more decisively borne by the worship paid in it to the Babylonian moon-god and by its ancient temple of Sin. ... (Sayce)." — *Easton's Bible Dictionary*

"Ur of the Chaldees (Genesis 11:28; Genesis 11:31; Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7) for two centuries was the capital, and always was held sacred. ... Eupolemos (in Eusebius, Praep. Ev. 9:17) refers to Ur as "the moon worshipping (kamarine; kamar being Arabic for moon) city." — *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*



240 pages

The Plērōma: Paul's "Lost" Teaching

The Complement of Christ, of God, and of the Ages

(A Comprehensive Compilation)

Ephesians and Colossians are the epistles of divine fullness, and one of the most profound Greek words used by Paul to characterize important aspects of the revelation surrounding the Secret Administration is *plērōma* (πλήρωμα). This groundbreaking work expounds on the pinnacle truths of the *Plērōma*, revealing depths of glory that few have ever contemplated or realized. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

wrote: "Well-nigh lost is the dominating doctrine of the *Plērōma* or fullness." Divine realization of the *Plērōma* will significantly transform one's understanding of God's Word. This is a unique compilation of 22 authors, spanning over 100 years, with 24 chapters and 20 appendices. See [order form](#) under "Compilations."

other side, falling short of the actual sacrifice, saying,

Do not lay your hand on the lad, nor do anything to him ... (Genesis 22:12, MKJV).⁵

The ritual of child sacrifice has been practiced in pagan worship for thousands of years. One prominent example from the Scriptures is the sacrifice of children made to Molech, god of the Ammonites. Yet, under the law of Moses, Israel was prohibited from offering such sacrifices (Leviticus 20:2-5), and later, Yahweh goes so far to say,

They have built high places to Baal on which to burn their children in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, something I have never commanded or mentioned; I never entertained the thought (Jeremiah 19:5, MKJV).

While *relatively* God may have disguised Himself in pagan paradigms, *absolutely* child sacrifice was

5. Of course, this event was established as a contrast, for God later to completely turn it on its head. God reverses the relationship between pagans and their gods. The True God instead offers His own Son for mankind, instead of the other way around.

Along this line, the same is true regarding the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, with the nature of the *approach present* being significant. Calvary turned the tables on the entire concept of sacrifice. As with other sacrifices, the death of Christ was a “gift” (i.e., “present”) – yet, in this case, the gift was not from man to God, but from God to man. For more information, see,

- (Book): [The Undoing of Adam \(and the Approach Present of God\)](#) (see the order from under “Clyde Pilkington”).
- (Video): [The Approach Present](#), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [StudyShelf Videos](#).

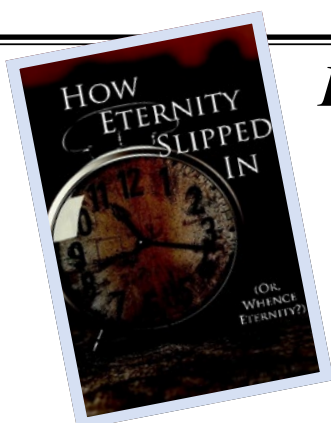
something certainly foreign to His nature of love.

“HERE A LITTLE, THERE A LITTLE”

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures there were only small glimmers of divine light slowly brought about in the context of the primitive understandings of deity. God *played* into the hand of Adam’s false view of alienation: “*I was afraid ... and I hid myself*” (Genesis 3:10). So, the Hebrew Scriptures provide a long steady framework of contrast with a primitive, dare we be so bold to say, pagan view of God.

Therefore, the revelation of God in the Hebrew Scriptures often initially looks a lot like that of pagan deities. This is not unlike the current views that Christianity holds. So, not only is this the Scripture’s own progression of divine revelation – from blurred paganism to the true image of God (Christ) – but it is the common development for all humanity in the relative sense. In a subjective way, this is the course of understanding that is ordinary among individuals even today. Our initial understanding and relationship to God is nearly, if not totally, along pagan concepts. It is from this starting place that God calls us out, on a progressive journey of divine realization to see Him for Who He really is.

God’s predetermined method was that every layer of revelation, ever so gradually and increasingly, superseded the previous, always giving way to an advanced understanding of God:



58 pages

See [order form](#) under “Other Authors.”

How Eternity Slipped In (Or, Whence Eternity?)

by — Alexander Thomson (1889-1966)

The inspired Scriptures never speak of “eternity.” They describe nothing as eternal. They contain no term which in itself bears our time sense of “everlasting.” As eternity is not a subject of revelation, our present object is to discover how and when this unscriptural term gained entrance into theology with most disastrous results. As this is really a historical investigation, it will be necessary to allude to a considerable number of historical events, and to quote from a number of by-gone translators and their versions. It is hoped that such a study, along with an examination of various primitive words dealing with time, will dispel any doubts in the minds of those who do not feel thoroughly assured regarding the use of the word eonian in place of eternal.



for precept must be on precept, precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here a little, there a little (Isaiah 28:10).

With this progressive revelation, every divine testimony supersedes the previous, as Christ declared,

*I have a testimony **greater** than John's (John 5:36, CV).*

THE APEX OF DIVINE REVELATION

If the Old Testament was a true and accurate revelation of God in all of His Divine fullness and glory (rather than the weak and distorted portrayal which man was given), there would have been no need for Christ's future revelations as God's *Plērōma* (or the Mystery revelations of His Body as God's *Plērōma*).

Thus, Christ is the summit of divine revelation: first, upon the Earth during His ministry among Israel; and then from His universal pinnacle "*far above all Heavens*" (Ephesians 4:10).

God, Who at many times and in many ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son ... the express image of His essence (Hebrews 1:1-3, MKJV).

It is Christ alone Who is presently *the express image of God's essence*, or as other translations render it:

the exact expression of His nature (HCSB);

an exact representation of His very being (REB);

the true image of His substance (BBE);

the exact representation of His essence (MLV);

the exact expression of His essence (ALT);

a perfect copy of God's nature (ERV);

the exact expression of God's true nature – His mirror Image! (PT);

the perfect representation of God's own being (CW);

the exact imprint of His very being (RPT);

a perfect model of God's nature (LCE);

the exact image of His person (CFV);

an impress of His substance (DBH);

the Image that bodies out for us the essential being of God (WAY);

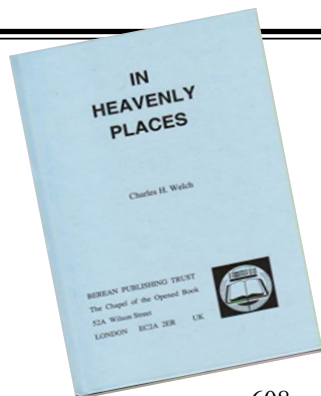
the express image of His substance (SNT);

the representative of His essence (FF).

Since the revelation of God was advancing and increasing through time, it then becomes vital that we read the Scripture *backwards*, as it were, having a realization of the latest revelation, and possessing proper awareness of its former contrast. Therefore, to see God truly for Who He really is, we must read all Scripture through the lens of His true Image (earthly and super-heavenly).⁶

(see [PRIMITIVE](#), last page)

6. More will be appearing on this theme in an upcoming issue of the *Bible Student's Notebook*.



608 pages

In Heavenly Places

Commentary on Ephesians

by — Charles H. Welch (1880-1967)

This is a detailed exposition of "*the Mystery*" or secret purpose that was hidden in God and then revealed through Paul, our apostle, in his epistle to the Ephesians.

See [order form](#) under "Welch."





Bible Student's Primer

(A Reference Resource)

From the Editors of the Bible Student's Notebook

Condescension

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9).

Key Points:

God relates to us in very human ways – in methods that we can understand.....8752

This is how God progressively relates to us.8752

With God, being the Infinite Creator, and we, being His finite creatures, it is impossible to grasp even the most basics of His essence without divine education.

A key way in which this instruction develops is through a revelatory, illustrative means known as “condescension.” By this, God relates to us in very human ways – in methods that we can understand.

This condescension is progressive – from elementary though many medial stages, then from these medial phases to those which are advanced. Thus, as we learn the foundational elements, we then move on, bit-by-bit, to greater and greater divine figures. This principle has been displayed in the past through “many portions and many modes” (Hebrews 1:1, CV).

For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little (Isaiah 28:10).

Condescension, or *Anthropopatheia* as it is also known in Greek, is the figure of speech used in the Scriptures where purely human qualities are attributed to God. E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913), in one of his most monumental works, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*,¹ catalogued in detail over 200 distinct figures, several having 30 or 40 varieties; condescension is one of the more important figures of speech he defines. (He also deals with this in his *Companion Bible* – Appendix 6.)

1. Originally published 1898, reprinted by Bible Student's Press in 2014. Available at [StudyShelf](#), and on the [order form](#) under “Bullinger.”

A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) wrote concerning condescension,

When God is spoken of as if He were human, or were a part of His creation, this is done in His Condescension, so that He may reveal Himself in terms within the range of human perception.
– *Concordant Literal New Testament*, Appendix A: Figures of Speech, page 358

While the word “condescension” sometimes carries the meaning of an arrogant or patronizing behavior towards someone, this is not the sense used here. “Con” is from the Latin root for “with,” and “descend” meaning “to move or go down,” thus literally to “with-descend” or to “go down with.” When God condescends, He comes down with us to speak at our level.

God condescends and speaks in human timeframes, in human terms, and with the human perspectives. This is how He progressively relates to us.

The basics of *condescension* is briefly addressed in the following articles:

- “Back to Basics: God 101” (part 1; page 2344: God Is Not a Man), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [Bible Student's Notebook #250](#);
- “God Regrets,” A.E. Knoch, [Bible Student's Notebook #683](#).

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TOPICS:

Major: *Anthropopatheia*; Condescension; Figures of Speech
Minor: Progressive Revelation



Tidbits of Truth #72

"Tidbits" is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

I suppose that all who do biblical research wish at times that they could set forth fragmentary and unfinished ideas in printed form without people thinking that a final and definitive conclusion has now been chiseled into imperishable granite which shall stand forever as the final word on the subject dealt with. Any such conclusion will be far from correct. — Otis Sellers (1901-1992)

God's Got It!

Surely arrogance produces strife (Proverbs 13:10, CV).

As an evangelical "Christian" it was justified in my mind to be contentious, because getting one's theology right was the difference between heaven or hell.

Now my argumentative attitude has been removed, relaxing in the fact that "God's got it!" and His mercy is for all – regardless of our beliefs.

— Mike Owens

"Jacob have I Loved, but Esau have I Hated"

[To: G.R.] As for Romans 9:13, "As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated'" – "love" and "hate" are contrasting words. They speak of operational *preference* and *rejection* related to individual calling to service.

In the absolute sense, God loves all that He has made – and why wouldn't He, since He carefully planned and is executing all? This universal love is perfect and unlimited. He loves the entire cosmos (Greek: *kosmos*, κόσμος, John 3:16).

Yet in the relative, like Romans 9:13, in the way that God relates to those of His temporal callings, He "loves" and "hates" the characters of His divine theater, depending on the role for which they are playing. For example, although "evil" is abhorrent to God, He is its originator for His grander purpose of

bringing lasting joy and benefit to all of His creation. After all, He is the One Who "*works all things after the counsel of His own will*" (Ephesians 1:11). In the relative stage of human history someone must be His divinely appointed vessel of "*wrath*" (Romans 9:22) and another of His "*mercy*" (:23), one of His "*hate*" and one of His "*love*," yet all of His servants nonetheless eventually have His "*applause*" (I Corinthians 4:5, CV; "*commendation*," ESV).

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Examining Traditionalism

The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him (Proverbs 18:1, ESV)

As this truth from Proverbs states, we need to be cautious about looking at only one side of an issue, even when we are not aware that there is an alternative view.

One important term highlights the reason for studying. The term is *traditionalism*: beliefs that are founded in cultural acceptance. A primary incentive is to identify ideas that we generally accept because of traditionalism and consider the biblical strength – or lack thereof – for those notions.

— Mike Owens

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: [God's Got It!:] Sovereignty; Division ["Jacob have I Loved, but Esau have I Hated":] Jacob; Esau; Love; Hate; Contrast [Examining Traditionalism:] Tradition; Study

PRIMITIVE (*continued from page 8751*)

[**Note:**] For more information associated with this theme, see:

God's Condescension

- “Condescension,” Bible Student's Primer, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., the current issue: [BSN 1041](#);
- “The Greatest Author of All Time,” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 424](#);
- “The Greatest Actor of All Time,” Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 751](#);
- “God Regrets,” A.E. Knoch, [BSN 683](#);
- The “Wrath” of God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 777](#).

God's Contrasting Revelation of Himself: The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures Contrasted

- “Two Different Gods? One of the Old Testament and One of the New?” Reader's Question Box, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 779](#)

Progressive Revelation

- “The Abrogation of the Installments,” Tidbits of Truth, A.E. Knoch, [BSN 854](#);
- Bible Student's Courses, Mark D. Vogt:
 - God Reveals Himself Progressively, [BSN 1013](#);
 - God as He Reveals Himself to the Nation Israel, [BSN 1013](#);
 - God Revealed Himself to the Apostle Paul, [BSN 1020](#);
 - God Revealed Himself through Paul as Priest to the Nations, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 1021](#);
 - God Revealed Himself to Paul for the Secret Administration, Bible Students Courses, [BSN 1025](#);
 - God Revealed Himself as Father, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 1025](#).
- Progressive Revelation, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 720](#);
- Progressive Revelation: Paul's Latter Epistles – The Pinnacle (Editor's Desk), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 643](#);

- Proof of Paul's Progression, Stephen Hill [BSN 529](#).

Christ – Emmanuel

- “Emmanuel: God With Us!” [Bible Student's Notebook 362](#);
- “Emmanuel,” Frank Neil Pohorlak, [Bible Student's Notebook 321](#).

Christ – The Image of God

- The Image of God, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 362](#);
- Participation in Divine Life (Christ the Divine Prototype), Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 176](#);
- The Logos, Bible Basics, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., [BSN 840](#).

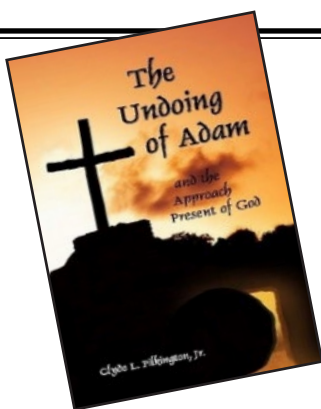
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TOPICS:

Major: Condescension; Christ; Contrast; Emmanuel; God; Image; New Creation; New Humanity Old Testament; Progressive Revelation; Prototype
Minor: Abraham; Paganism

TERMS AS “FUNDAMENTAL” AND “EVANGELICAL” ARE ONLY TOO OFTEN A CLOAK FOR CORRUPT CREEDALISM MASQUERADING AS THE SACRED TRUTH OF THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES.

A.E. KNOCH (1874-1965)



The Undoing of Adam and the Approach Present of God

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Christ is greater than Adam, undoing what Adam did. In fact, Christ's work at Calvary is greater than Adam's fall. All of God's creation will be gloriously saved by the successful work of “*the Savior of the world*” (John 4:42). Salvation is not dependent on us at all; it is all about Christ and His work alone. Paul taught that the exact same “*all*” who are condemned in Adam are the exact same “*all*” who are justified in Christ (Romans 5:18), and that the exact same “*all*” who die in Adam are the exact same

“*all*” who are “*made alive*” in Christ (I Corinthians 15:22). Christianity has an Adam who is greater than Christ; however, it is Christ Who is greater than Adam.

A note concerning the cover: We wanted a cover that would immediately convey the theme of the book's content, choosing to go with a traditional “cross” scene to express the work of Christ at Calvary. Yet Christ did not die on a “cross” but was nailed to a simple “stake.” An explanation is provided in the appendix.

98 pages

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