Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

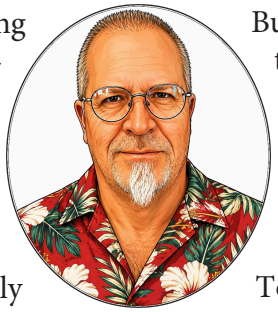
Volume 46
Issue 1134

When an Introvert Discovers the Father's Love

Click here to listen to this article

by — Steve Martin

For a long time, I thought something was wrong with me. I'm an introvert.



I don't dislike people. I enjoy people deeply – just differently.

I don't recharge in crowds. I don't naturally enjoy being put on the spot. And I especially don't enjoy groups that expect something from me.

That became difficult because so much of modern Christianity felt designed for extroverts. Church often seemed built around participation.

Stand and greet. Turn and talk. Join a small group. Share your testimony. Volunteer. Attend the event. Join accountability. Go witnessing. Invite your neighbors. Get more involved.

And if those things didn't energize you, something must be spiritually wrong. You were told that you were isolated. Not surrendered. Bitter. Uncommitted. Rebellious. You must not love people. You must not care enough.

I spent years quietly carrying that feeling. Because I didn't enjoy those things.

Not because I hated God. Not because I didn't care. But because those environments drained me. Church could be exhausting. Not so much the sermons or music.

But moments like: "Everyone stand and greet the people around you." Or, "Break into groups of five and share and pray."

For some people that felt natural. For me it felt like pressure.

Toward the end of our church-going years, if they announced small groups during service, my wife and I would quietly leave.

And I felt guilty. Because I assumed spirituality meant becoming more outgoing.

But eventually I started asking a different question. What if my personality wasn't a problem that God was trying to fix? What if He made me this way?

Then I realized something deeper. The pressure wasn't only social; it was theological, because Christianity often adds urgency to personality.

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Bible Student's Notebook™
Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal
ISSN: 1936-9360
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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 joy (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 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 saints 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).

We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin
We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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If people are headed toward endless torture, then silence feels immoral. If eternal destiny depends on people hearing the message, then staying home feels selfish. If souls hang in the balance, then introversion starts to feel sinful.

So, I pushed myself. Street preaching. Handing out tracts. Revivals. Accountability groups. Programs.

Not because I always wanted to. But because I felt obligated. Because if people were in danger forever, how could I justify being quiet?

Then something changed.

I came to believe that hell was not what I had been taught. And the relief was enormous. Not because I stopped loving people. But because I stopped believing their future depended on my performance.

Then came another realization. God is sovereign. That changed me even more.

If God truly is Father, If He truly loves His creation, If He truly writes the story, then I am not carrying the world.

He is.

People do not ultimately depend on my personality type. God does not need me to become an extrovert in order to accomplish His purposes.

If I'm meant to speak into someone's life, the Father can arrange it. If I'm meant to encourage someone, He can open the door.

If not, I can rest in knowing that He has written their story too. That realization has set me free.

I no longer feel responsible for all of the wrongs in the world. I no longer feel pressure to manufacture spiritual activity. I no longer think that attendance equals maturity. I no longer think that quiet means rebellion. I no longer believe that spirituality must be public. I don't need an accountability partner to guarantee my safety.

My Father is safeguarding me. My wife. My children. My grandchildren. My great-grandchildren.

And everyone else too.

Now, I still love people. I still talk. I still share. But now it comes naturally. Not from fear. Not from pressure. Not from obligation.

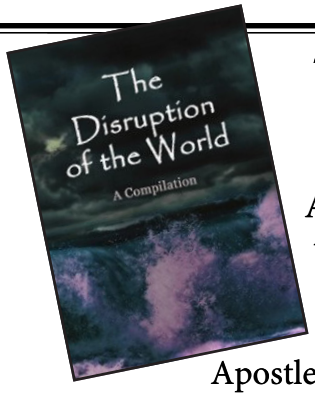
Being an introvert is not a defect. It is simply one of the ways that my Father wrote my story. Quiet. Thoughtful. Observant. Reflective. At rest.

The pressure is gone. The Father is good. The story is written.

And in the end, all will be well.

BSN

Topics:
Major: Expectation; God; Love; Sovereignty
Minor: Bondage; Perception; Religion



The Disruption of the World

A Compilation

A broad study of the crucial, but all-too-often overlooked teaching of Scripture of the events between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2. Sometimes known as "The Gap," The Overthrow," or "The Disruption," this key event in God's ages lays the important foundation for the ministry of Paul, the Apostle. This critical compilation of 13 chapters from 8 authors will be an essential part of a Bible student's library. Authors include: E.W. Bullinger, A.E. Knoch, Edward Clayton, and John Essex. 148 pages. ***Updated Second Edition.***

The Myth of Human Free Will

Bible Student's Courses

Course 1: GOD / Unit 8: The Logos / Lesson 4: The Myth of Human Free Will (Part 1)

by — Mark D. Vogt

[Click here to listen to this article]

All is out of Him (Romans 11:36).

One of the most difficult concepts to share with people is the truth that there is no such thing as "free will." If one were to try to convey this thought to someone, their immediate reaction would be to shrink back in horror and emphatically pronounce the error of that kind of thinking.



They might say something like, "Everyone knows that we have a free will." It is almost as if they were being insulted.

"How could we not have free will? Do you mean that we are just automatons wandering about like we are puppets with God pulling the strings? We all make hundreds of free will decisions every day."

Such would be the typical responses of people.

Before the discussion goes any further there is a necessity to define the terms that are being talked about, because nothing derails an honest attempt to learn and discuss the truth than when those discussing the topic cannot adequately define the terms being discussed.

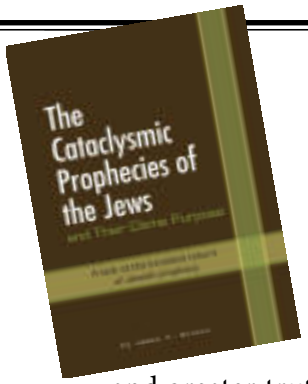
A working definition of free will could be this:

Free will is the ability to make decisions unencumbered by any external or internal influences.

If one were to give this some honest thought, the conclusion would be obvious, and that is that every decision that we make is, in some way or another, impacted by numerous influences within or without, which are beyond our control.

It was never said that individuals don't have a "will"

(vsee BSC, page 9500)



The Cataclysmic Prophecies of the Jews and Their Divine Purpose

by — James T. Burson

A look at the localized nature of Jewish prophecy. Once it is fully established in one's thinking that these regionalized Catastrophic Prophecies are directional not general, local not global, specific in objective and not universally random, new and greater truths will come into beautiful clarity. The old errors will be seen for what they are and the new vision of an intelligent Deity who works all for the best of both great and small, good and evil, will wash over their hearts like a spring rain, following a cold winter, as the Living God has done over a once dying race.

Original 2015 Edition- 403 pages, 6×9 paperback.
Expanded 2021 Scholars' Edition- 442 pages, 8½x11 paperpack.

Handling Life's Disruptions and Disappointments

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Click here to listen to this article

My days, all of them were written in Your book; the days, they were formed when there was not one of them (Psalm 139:16).



We make our plans – and then life goes elsewhere.

But when life does not follow our plans, we know assuredly that they perfectly follow the Placer's plans!

And here is our confidence and strength: the All LOVING God, the All WISE God, and the All SOVEREIGN God wrote our script – all of it – perfectly. Every chapter, every paragraph, every line, every word. There's unsurpassable peace and rest in that.

When I was growing up, I was presented with a threefold concept concerning the will of God. There was,

The Perfect will of God;
The Permissive will of God; and
That which is contrary to the will of God.

I was taught that I always had one of these three choices. I could find and live in God's perfect will – in the very center of it. Or, I could live in a second-rate place – in His permissive will. I could even become rebellious, and choose to do that which was completely against God's will.

These three imagined spheres placed a lot of pressure on me as a young man. I had a heart for God and, of course, wanted to live in the perfect center of God's will. This was my fervent and constant prayer. "Please show me Your perfect will for my life!"

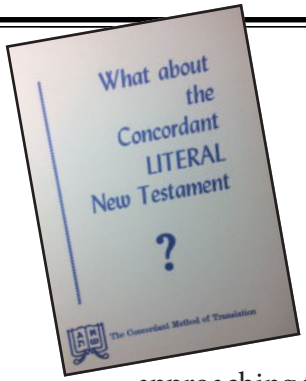
I felt that if God would have just sat down beside me and told me exactly what He wanted me to do, I would certainly have tried to do it, with His "help."

Conversely, of course, religion is well equipped to manipulate adherents of this view to bring them into bondage. The "church" sets the standards for what is the perfect will of God, the permissive will of God, and what is against the will of God.

Yet, what I did not realize at the time was that I was always living the perfect will of God. I couldn't do otherwise. I could only live the script that He had written.

It would take a long time before such understanding would come to me - decades, in fact. But as I would come to see God's sovereignty – absolute sovereignty – I would also come to realize that I had always lived

(see **DISAPPOINTMENTS**, page 9501)



What About the Concordant Literal New Testament?

by — Dr. Frank Neil Pohorlak (1907-1988)

"God's Word is mankind's most precious possession." Thus begins the explanatory introduction to the Concordant Literal New Testament. It will be helpful to use in introducing the Version to others as well as providing a valuable guide for approaching the vast treasures of God's Word. Facsimile. 32 pages, paperback.

Divine Rest

Philippians 4:6, Romans 15:13,
II Corinthians 3:17-18

A poem by — Robert Kosharek

Click here to listen to this article

In God there is rest from effort,
knowing and realizing the ***I Am's.***

I shake my head in joyful amazement,
that God freely redeemed me by grace!

Now I put to rest the flesh,
and all vain efforts of reform.

For it is dead!
Dead men don't sin!
You can't kill a dead man!
Ahh! …

Free from the law of Sin and Death,
alive to the law of the Spirit of Life!
Freed from sin, freed from death!

To live a life of Liberty and Freedom!
Reform replaced by realization –
Abba Father's love and grace for me!

That which the Law could never do,
Oh how Grace draws!
To walk in the spirit!
… to put on the New Man!
… to live a life of Liberty!
The resurrected life in Christ Jesus!

Grace Frees while Law Binds!

Scripture Inspired Meditations

Topics:
Major: Freedom; Grace; Poems; Rest
Minor: New Man; Realization

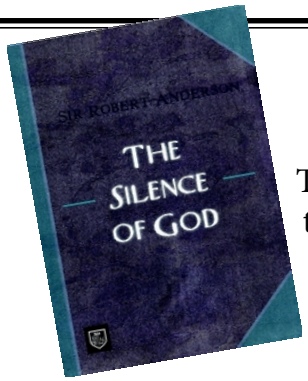
BSC *(continued from page 9498)*

– they do, and they make decisions every day. It is just that those decisions are not made without being affected by all sorts of influences, most of which the individual is not even aware of.

External influences that affect the decisions one makes would include who one's parents are, where they were born, their siblings, race, location of birth, time in history in which they were born and a host of other factors.

Other external influences are things as simple as the weather on a particular day that was planned for a picnic, or an accident forcing a detour from a planned route which would influence one's decision.

A person's attitude, outlook, beliefs and opinions would vary greatly if one was born in Iran for example, as opposed to Canada. Internal influences, while harder to pinpoint, are nevertheless just as powerful factors in making up one's mind when it comes to making decisions (ultimately all influences are internal, because God is the influ- *(see BSC, next page)*



The Silence of God

by — Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918)

This is a true classic, written almost a century ago, giving a thoroughly scriptural answer to the issue of God's silence for nearly 2,000 years. It was written by the former Chief of the Criminal Investigation Department of Scotland Yard. 120 pages, paperback.

Disappointments (*continued from page 9499*)

the will of God. I always would. Always. Without deviation.

After all, it was God Who wrote my life's story. All of it. And it was a perfect story.

Like my good friend Mike Owens says,

> How do you know if you're in God's will? Look around. You're right in the middle of it. *The fact is, wherever you are, you're always smack-dab in the middle of God's will.*

We always live the perfect will of God!

Every day we discover the script *for that day*. Without even trying.

Knowing that God wrote our stories, as our days unfold we are able to say in our hearts, "This is the will of God for me today."

We start our days, our weeks, our months and years, planning. That's our part. But when it is all said and done, moment by moment we discover what He has written.

> *In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps* (Proverbs 16:9, *NIV,* 1984).

So, even in the middle of life's greatest disruptions and disappointments, we can know absolutely that they are *all* God's perfect, wise, loving and sovereign plan. It is this realization that is the true source of lasting joy, peace and rest. We look beyond all circumstances and environments and see Him alone.

And we are encouraged by the weaknesses of Moses of old, for it was,

> *as seeing the Invisible One* – [that] *he endured* (Hebrews 11:27).

I have had, for years now, on my office wall, the beautiful words of Thomas Watson (1620-1686):

> I was going to complain, then I remembered He is the source of all things, even my disappointments.

That is a magnificently grounding perspective. One that shifts us away from a place of worry, anxiety and complaint.

> *Relax and know that I am Elohim* (Psalm 46:10, *CV*). BSN

Topics:
Major: Peace; Rest; Script; Sovereignty
Minor: Religion

BSC (*continued from previous page*)

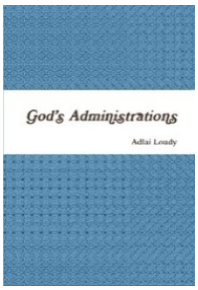
encer, writer, director and producer of your life).

Experiences and one's situation in life, good or bad, while growing up, leave an indelible mark on the psyche of the individual. Such events and the reaction to them can leave a lasting imprint on one's mind. These impressions factor into every "decision" made in our lives, even though they may lessen over time, because new and different influences may push the old ones aside. Not out, just aside.

What one must acknowledge and take to heart for one's peace of mind is the wonderful and glorious truth that God had written the story of our lives before that calamitous event called *"the disruption of the world"* (Genesis 1:1-2). He then proceeded to produce and direct those stories so as to perfectly fulfill His plan and will.

Never fear. Your life is going exactly as it should. He won't "allow" us to "mess it up," because the great God has already determined it all. BSN

Topics:
Major: Bible Student's Courses; Free Will; Sovereignty …
Minor: Peace



God's Administrations

by — Adlai Loudy
(1893-1984)

A look at the administrations of Scripture. 54 pages, facsimile paperback.



I was in a serious car accident travelling at high speed on a Motorway. … Thanks to your teachings I can more fully understand that that accident was not a random event but part of a divinely orchestrated plan. – ***Australia***

Your teaching has been and continues to be a wonderful blessing for me. The Bible Student's Notebook is truly life changing. – ***TN***

["Did God Predestinate Everything that Happens," by Johann Grobler:]I AM REALLY SEEING THAT God operates in everything! It's an eye opener for sure. God is amazing! – ***PA***

Father used your books, *We Call Him Father* and *Afflictions, Trials and Suffering* to bring my wife and me both to a greater and more consistent awareness of His orchestrating ALL things, good AND evil, as part of His ongoing process of molding us into the image of His Son and completing the work He began in us. – ***CO***

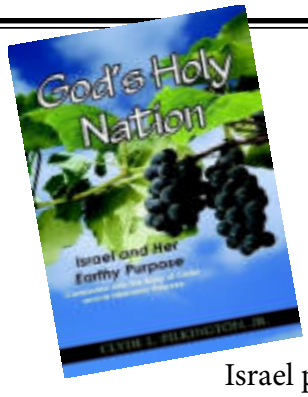
["Beyond Doctrine":] Excellent words dear brother. I would desire all believers to grasp with the heart what you have shared today. – **OH**

Thank you for all you do! – ***Germany***

I have been enjoying the books you have written. You are a helper of my joy. You have been an inspiration to my life, thank you. – ***NY***

Just finished reading *Animals in God's Story*. Superbly written. Clear, easy to understand. Grace was beautifully explained. It's a great blend of Love. It should be on the Best Sellers LIST. … I CRIED A LOT. – ***PA*** BSN

Far too many think that a few special men have exclusive pipelines to the source of truth which ordinary men such as you or I ***do not*** *have.*
– Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)



God's Holy Nation: Israel and Her Earthly Purpose (Contrasted with the Body of Christ and Its Heavenly Purpose)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Israel plays a key role in God's plan of the ages. Though currently she has been set aside, He is by no means done with her.

Today, God is operating His purpose in the ecclesia which is His Body. The Scriptures provide us with the clear, critical distinction between God's earthly nation and Christ's celestial body.

Christendom, however, has diminished Israel's divine significance in an attempt to advance their artificial homogenization of Scripture's grand theme, thus obscuring the glorious evangel of our day "the Good News of the Happy God" committed to the trust of Paul, our Apostle.

This work highlights some of the more prominent distinctions which belong to God's literal, physical, earthly nation. In so doing, it is our desire to allow the reader to see more clearly God's dealings with God's favored nation, so that they may in turn embrace a far greater calling and purpose. 360 pages.