Bible Student's Notebook™
The Herald of His Grace
Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28
Volume XVI
Issue 377

# Awaiting Our Unveiling

## Vanity and Expectation

*by* – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*The premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the first-fruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the Sonship, the deliverance of our body* (Romans 8:19-23, *CV*).

"*Vanity*" is the lot of earthly man. Along with all creation, we have been subjected – against our will – to vanity. Man's life is filled with futility, emptiness, barrenness, purposelessness and aimless frustration, because he has been subjected so by his Creator.

The Greek word translated "*vanity*" here is *mataiotēs,* and is defined by Joseph Thayer[1] as,

> What is devoid of truth and appropriateness; perverseness, depravity, frailty, want [*i.e.,* lack] of vigor.

B.W. Johnson[2] defines it as,

> Seeking without finding.

The richness of this Greek word can be seen in the various ways it is translated in the following versions:

*aimless frustration*[3]
*spoiled*[4]
*frustrated*[5]
*imperfection*[6]
*folly*[7]
*failure and unreality*[8]
*futile*[9]
*weak*[10]
*imperfection*[11]
*dissolution*[12]

So great and complete is creation's subjection to vanity that Solomon penned these words:

*(see* ***Unveiling****, page 3379)*

1. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.*
2. *The People's New Testament.*
3. *An Understandable Version.*
4. *Bible in Worldwide English.*
5. *Goodspeed New Testament.*
6. *Montgomery New Testament.*
7. *The Riverside New Testament.*
8. *Weymouth.*
9. *Moffat New Testament.*
10. *New Life Study New Testament.*
11. *Centenary Translation.*
12. *The Original New Testament.*

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# Bible Student's Notebook™

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

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This free weekly electronic 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 law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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:
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  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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***Unveiling** (continued from front page)*

> *Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities;* ***all is vanity.*** *What profit has a man of all his labor which he takes under the sun?* (Ecclesiastes 1:2-3).

Solomon here describes the state of daily, earthly life *"under the sun"* (a phrase found 29 times in Ecclesiastes). The next few verses go on to describe the seemingly endless cycle of human existence.

> *One generation passes away, and another generation comes: but the earth abides. The sun also arises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to his place where he arose. The wind goes toward the south, and turns about to the north; it whirls about continually, and the wind returns again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; to the place from where the rivers come, there they return again. All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing* (Ecclesiastes 1:4-8).

Solomon sums up man's life and labor, saying that "all is vanity." Yet for those who trust their Heavenly Father, quite another view prevails! Instead of being bound to such emptiness, they rise to heights of divine life. We are *"the sons of God."* This is our approach to life. This is who we are. This is our God-given reality.

Solomon's perspective showed the vanity of the human viewpoint without God. Paul, the apostle, provides us with a perspective "far above all heavens" (Ephesians 4:10). It is from here – from the celestial viewpoint – that we know that "our labor is NOT IN VAIN in the Lord."[13]

## Saved from Vanity

Those of us who know Father as the great Placer and Subjecter, the detailed Planner and Director of our days, have a completely different approach to the entire unfolding of every minute of our day.

We greet each day with the joy and excitement of knowing that *it* is His, and that we are His as well. The vain uncertainties of the "What if …" viewpoint are divinely transformed into the eager anticipation of seeing what God has planned for the day. We are able to awaken to the thrill of knowing that we will be witnesses of the unfolding of His detailed plan and purpose for our day. His presence presses in on our minds. There is a waking up to peace and joy as we know that our life, with all of its daily circumstances, is firmly in His hand and carried out by His capable direction. Our hearts are able to say, "Today we are on the great adventure of faith!"

We close each day with the surety and confidence of knowing that all of the details of this day were the will of God. The vain "What if …" reflections of its happenings are transformed into a place of peace and rest – knowing that the will of God was done, and who could have prevented it? The realization of our divine appointment settles within our hearts and minds. After all, *He* is the Lord of life, the Captain of the ship, the Master of destiny. Daniel the prophet wrote that,

> *God does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can prevent His hand.*[14]

We have the joy of waking up each morning as His *clay* (Romans 9:21).

We have the anticipation of living each day as His *handiwork* (Isaiah 64:8).

We have the rest of laying our heads on our pillow each night as His *achievement* (Ephesians 2:10).

## Confident Expectation

It is because of a confident expectation that we are saved from the vanity of the sons of Adam – living daily in our sonship position in Christ.

We *are* God's sons. Those around us are unaware of this astonishing fact. We did not have a royal motorcade escorting us to our workplace this morning. Those who were in the elevator with us this afternoon were unaware that we co-own the universe. We were not ushered to the front of the checkout line this evening at the grocery store. Our neighbors know nothing of our true identity. Even if we tell them, they would not understand. It is hidden from their eyes.

▶

**13.** I Corinthians 15:58.

**14.** Daniel 4:35.

Those who are irritated and confused, troubled and depressed from the vanity of being a descendant of Adam will be short and irritable with us. In their frustration with the endless cycle of vanity they will often be hurtful, mean and vindictive. None of this is true of who we are. We have a life full of meaning and purpose, joy and peace, because we are descendants of the one true and living God.

We are the people of hope on the planet. We have as our birthright as the sons of God the blessed fruit of His Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-control). However, when we join the descendants of Adam in their misery-ways, we practically deny all that God has made us – the real us. We need to remember to walk through this dark world as the *"children of light."*

> *You were sometimes darkness, but now are you light in the Lord:* ***walk as children of light:*** *for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth* (Ephesians 5:8-9).

> *You are all* ***the children of light,*** *and* ***the children of the day:*** *we are not of the night, nor of darkness* (I Thessalonians 5:5).

We do not walk in the darkness. We walk in the light of all that we have and are in Christ! To murmur and complain is, in all reality, to live as though we do not believe these truths. Walking in this light of who we are is what it means to walk in His Spirit. After teaching us the fruit of the Spirit, Paul says,

> *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit* (Galatians 5:25).

Living the fruit of His Spirit is walking in the Spirit. It is not an *effort – trying* to work up this fruit in our lives. Instead it is *fruit* – the byproduct of *His life* flowing through us. It is His produce.

## Our Earnest Expectation

> *The earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God* (Romans 8:19).

Let us notice some of the particulars of this passage.

- **We are not yet manifest as the sons of God** (*e.g.* I John 3:2).

  The world does not yet know who we are. Our sonship is completely hidden from them at this time.

- **Not only have we been subjected to "vanity," but we have also been subjected to "expectation"** (*e.g.* Romans 8:20).

- **One day we shall be made manifest** (*e.g.* Colossians 3:4).

  In the resurrection, God will reveal to creation who His sons are. This will be a glorious coronation day.

- **Creation awaits our manifestation** (*e.g.* Romans 8:19).

  The whole creation groans and is eagerly awaiting redemption. They do not know about, nor understand this deliverance, but it is to be found in our manifestation. What a glorious day this fulfillment will be for *all* of creation.

Until our manifestation is made, the rest of God's creation does not know who we are. As we walk through the circumstances of our days, they will *not* reflect our true identity. In fact, we shall not be exempt from all of the apparent vanities of this *dark*land. We shall have our share of the *dark*side: suffering, pain, discouragement, difficulties, weariness, pressure and the like. Yet, we are not defined by their details, and although we are beckoned to the contrary on every side, we have a higher life – the *high*life from above, from the *light*land. We are called to walk in this radiant light of who Father has made us.

As we go through the various details of this earthly life, let us not forget who we really are. Let us remember our divine calling and position as God's Own sons. Let that be our day-by-day, moment-by-moment focus. Let us hold forth the Word of life, so that we can see clearly who we are and how we are to walk as honorable sons of God.

Ours is *"the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 3:14).

In the midst of apparent vanity we have the confident expectation of our manifestation. For now, we patiently await our unveiling (Romans 8:25).

■

# Praying for God's Will to Be Done

*by* — Rick Longva

*That we may be leading a mild and quiet life* (I Timothy 2:2).

In I Timothy 2:2 Paul says we may be leading a mild and quiet life, and in :1 he gives us one of the ways to do this:

> *I am entreating, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, pleadings, thanksgivings be made for all mankind.*

He then says in :3,

> *For this is ideal and welcome in the sight of our Savior, God.*

What does Paul say is ideal and welcome in the sight of our Savior, God?

First, believers should pray for all mankind.

Why?

> *… God, Who wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth* (:3-4).

The believer has been given a gift that most of mankind hasn't, and that would include most of what is now called "Christianity." They have been shown what God's will is – that all mankind will be saved and come into a realization of the truth – and we are to pray in accord with God's will.

***Martin Zender Goes to Hell***

*by* — Martin Zender

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The author embarks on a point-by-point refutation of the doctrine of eternal torment. In simple words he tackles all of the critical topics: Jesus' threats to the Israelites, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the lake of fire, the Greek words translated "hell," the Greek word commonly translated "eternal."

Jesus said essentially the same thing:

> *Thus, then, you be praying: "Our Father Who art in the heavens, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, on earth also"* (Matthew 6:9-10).

This wasn't a wishful prayer that Jesus was praying. Rather, He is saying that we are to pray for God's will to be done, because God's will *will* be done on earth as His will is being done in heaven. Our prayers are to be in harmony with God's will, not ours.

Paul tells us what God's will is: that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth.

So, with this knowledge we can live a mild and quiet life and not become frustrated when our prayers go "unanswered" for others who don't believe and remain in unbelief (or when those who call themselves believers don't see this truth), because we (the believer) know God's will. We know that His will is being done in heaven as well as on the earth. We also know that His will to save all mankind and bring them into a realization of the truth will happen, so with this knowledge we should all be praying in accord with God's will.

Yet, for some reason most can't see the truth. Mankind has been so jaded by media, propaganda and religion that it can realize only what it sees at present.

A good example in our time would be the terrorist attacks on 9/11. After those attacks, all you saw were slogans that said, "Pray for America." Absent from every network, televangelist program and church sign was; "Pray for Iraq" or "Pray for Afghanistan," or "Pray for Bin Laden."

The Scriptures teach that we are to pray for our enemies and those who are non-believers, as well as help those who despise and use us. ▶

God now has become the God of North America, Australia, parts of Europe, and countries that don't threaten our lifestyle.

Oh, sure: we send missionaries out to these so-called godless countries to convert the few, but for the most part they remain god-forsaken, or so we are led to believe.

This is God's creation, this is God's world; none of it is without God's presence. Just because we put names on pieces of earth and call it "our" country never gives us exclusive rights to His world. All things are God's. All of us are a part of His creation – whether most believe that or not doesn't negate the facts.

God, and especially His Word, has been used by religion and mankind to commit some of the most heinous crimes ever committed.

The Bible has been mishandled not only to lead mankind into unjust wars, but to bind certain races into slavery and others into religious bondage. It is also being used to put unbelieving mankind into a torture pit at the time of death – all because most don't realize what God's will is.

## Realization

> *On these things meditate* (I Timothy 4:15).

To be in harmony with God's will, you have to have a *realization* of what God's will is. As stated above, God's will is for all mankind to be saved and to come into a realization of the truth.

This realization of the truth isn't only for unbelievers: it applies to believers as well.

As believers we should be praying, as well as searching the Scriptures, so that we will come into a realization of this truth, as that is what Paul says will present us qualified to God.

> *Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth* (II Timothy 2:15).

Here's what Paul told Timothy to do:

> *… Give heed to reading, to entreaty, to teaching. … On these things meditate. In these be, that your progress may be apparent to all. Attend to yourself and to the teaching. Be persisting in them, for in doing this you will save yourself as well as those hearing you* (I Timothy 4:13-16).

Timothy was already saved, and those who were hearing him were probably saved as well; but this has nothing to do with getting saved. My personal thoughts about this portion of Scripture are that it has to do with *realizing* our salvation. We who are believers have yet to come into a realization of our salvation; we haven't yet experienced the true fullness of what being saved really entails – we are being brought into an increasingly greater *realization* of our salvation.

We are still waiting; but, while we wait we should be spending time in the Scriptures – meditating on them, persisting in them – because in doing this we will have a more certain understanding of our salvation and a realization of what God has promised not only to us, but to all mankind as well. With this knowledge from the Scriptures we will be saved from falling into all the false teachings, and we will be certain of what Paul says in the previous verses:

> *Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome; for this are we toiling and being reproached, that we rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching* (:9-10).

Paul knew that this teaching eventually would be covered over by religion. Religion is now the institution that decides who is going to be with God and who isn't.

Ask any Christian this question: "If I don't believe in Jesus in this life time, will I ever believe in Him in the next life?"

I have. The answer is either clouded with the noncommittal "It's up to God," or an emphatic "No."

This is why Paul insisted that Timothy stay in the Scriptures, as that is where this truth can be realized.

Today the Scriptures are the most neglected of all writings amongst Christians. A thirty-five minute sermon on Sunday (no Bible necessary), and some songs, or an hour of listening to a televangelist on Sunday is all that is necessary and you're good to go.

Paul said to Titus,

> *Upholding the faithful Word according to the teaching, that he may be able to entreat with sound teaching as well as expose those who contradict* (Titus 1:9).

The only way Titus could expose those who were teaching falsehood was to stay in the Word. That was the only place where he would find sound teaching and come into a realization of the truth of God's will.

Here's an example of exposing those who contradict. I have a *Nelson Study Bible*. Everyone who worked on it paid their tuition fee, and then went to the seminary of their choice to learn about God. This is how they interpret I Timothy 4:10, which reads;

> *That we rely on the living God, Who is the Savior of all mankind, especially of believers.*

Quote:

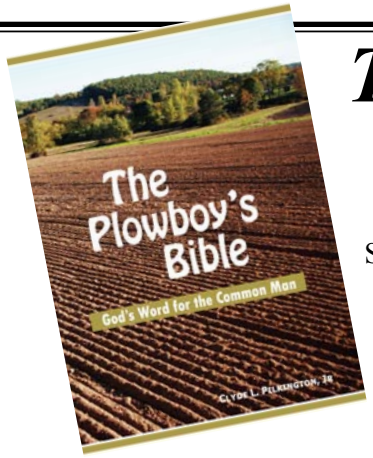
> This verse describes God as the One who gives life, breath, and existence to all. "Especially of those who believe" draws a contrast between God's common grace to all and His special saving grace to those who trust Him as their Savior.

Do you see the falsehood? Where in this verse do you read that God gives life, breath and existence to all? (He does do that, as Paul says in Acts 17:24-25, but not here). It can be twisted to say that when you don't want to believe the truth of the Scripture.

You *do* read that He is the *"Savior of all mankind"*! So why not just take the verse for what it says? He *is* the Savior of all mankind! In order for them to do that they would have to admit that God is more powerful, loving and merciful than their religion suggests, and that Christ actually accomplished what He said He would – draw all mankind to Himself (John 12:32) – because of His ultimate sacrifice

Where in this verse (I Timothy 4:10) do you read about "common grace" and "special saving grace"? You *do* read that He is the Savior of all, *"especially"* of believers.

►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*by* – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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Do you believe that what was done on Calvary was done for you? If you answer "Yes," then you know this truth – you are coming into a realization of your salvation, and you are part of the *"especially"* believers. You have the knowledge of being saved that the unbeliever doesn't yet have – they aren't "especially" believers, they are still in unbelief.

Grace is *special!* Grace is never "common."

As a matter of fact, and a matter of truth, grace always super-exceeds everything (Romans 5:20). Why do theologians lessen it by calling it *common* grace? Because, when you're taught to believe in and teach of a "god" who will not extend his grace to all, you have to twist the true meaning of scriptural words to suit your denominational doctrine.

Grace means "an act that produces happiness, a benefit bestowed on one who deserves the opposite." It is what God extends to the believer now, as Paul says,

> *For in grace, through faith are you saved, and this is not out of you* (Ephesians 2:8).

The same grace that saved you will be extended to all in the oncoming eons. We will see it extended to all as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:7,

> *That in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace to us in Christ Jesus.*

Some of the meanings of the word "display" are, "to unfold, hence to open; to spread wide; to extend."

As stated earlier, we believers are already experiencing and realizing His grace. In the oncoming eons we will see that grace displayed, unfolded, opened, spread wide, and extended to all, and all will come into a realization of Him. That's not *common*, that's *Divine,* and it is in accord with God's character and will.

So pray for God's will to be done – you will be in harmony with the Creator of all, and you will begin to realize why we all are here. For those of you who aren't sure why Christ came, a light will start to flicker where there was once only religious darkness. ■

## Be not deceived!

Nothing is more necessary in these declining days of this dispensation than to warn the saints of the danger of being deceived, not by that which appears evil, but by that which has all the outward evidences of good. Satan is transformed into a messenger of light, and his servants are servants of righteousness (II Corinthians 11:14-15).

A.E. Knoch
*Concordant Commentary*
II Thessalonians 2:9

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