



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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Issue 143

Willingness To Walk Alone With God

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Look unto Abraham ... for I called him alone ...” (Isaiah 51:2).

Abraham was called “the friend of God” (James 2:23). This friendship with God called him to a place of being “alone;” for indeed God had “called him **alone**.”

This is to be the expected lot of those who would walk with God. Man often has an affinity for groups; a longing to be “a part of something.” We all naturally love and value the fellowship and companionship of others; but more often than not God calls His own to walk on a solitary road with Him. Walking with Him requires a willingness to go alone if necessary. We must be willing to forgo the many voices of comfort and encouragement; of appreciation and respect. He calls us away from the noise of all of this into the quiet place of His love.

God called Abraham [then named Abram] to

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee” (Genesis 12:1).

Earlier God had placed an “alone” call to Noah.

“... While the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved ...” (I Peter 3:20).

Noah and his family walked alone with God. Job did not even have the luxury of family, not even his wife.

“Then said his wife unto him, ‘Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die’” (Job 2:9).

We hear Jesus alone in the garden of Gethsemane, asking of His disciples, specifically Peter,

“What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?”
Matthew 26:40

Even Paul, after all his years of loving devotion to others, could say as he stood before his Roman judgment,

“At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me ...” (II Timothy 4:16).

To this he quickly adds,

“Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me ...” (II Timothy 4:17).

This was his testimony. What he lacked from others, while being “alone,” was more than made up for by the Lord. The Lord was his constant friend and companion.

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Letters to the Editor

I must tell you that the article you wrote, *Mutual Ministry of the Saints* [BSN #103] made me cry. This is where my heart is. Your article answered some questions I've had for a long time now. The issue of what ministry is all about is getting clearer to me. What a blessing to realize that the main issue is not to talk about doctrine, but to love one another with it. The religious wall in my mind and life is finally breaking down. – **IL**

I thank you for bringing these to me. Having these quotes means a lot to me [BSN #142]. – **VA**

I enjoy the weekly *BSN*. They have challenged and blessed me. – **GA**

I was surprised to find my mouth speaking on two separate occasions about the possibility of eventual reconciliation of unbelievers to a couple of men who have chosen to walk apart from the Lord – I felt the need to defend His character, His heart ... in my heart. (I walked away in shock at what I had said.) Go figure!

I was reading the new *Searchlight* and on page 10 brother Sadler states that "the false teaching of universalism is once again rearing its ugly head in the church ... [it] teaches that ... He would

never condemn anyone to everlasting fire." Again I found myself perplexed by my immediate reaction – I felt like he had just slapped me without provocation ... What shocked me the most was that he doesn't seem to discern the absolute callousness that he has just attributed to my Father and to the Son of His love. It made me feel empty – sad.

I find that the disparity within the Body, concerning the final state of the unsaved, has – causes – provokes a much deeper/stronger reaction (involuntarily) in my soul/spirit than any controversial teaching concerning the Mystery has ever had. It's like an intrinsic part of my being has risen to the defense of a teaching that my mind has not yet fully accepted. And I just can't explain that.

I know that in reality it's not about the unsaved *i.e.*, the created. It's about the Un-created, my Father, and the majestic splendor of His grace and love. He will not walk by the Lake of Fire and say "be ye warmed and filled." He would jump in and rescue as many as He could – and that would be "all." "All in all." My heart knows it even if my mind does not.

Thank you dear brother for sharing His heart. – **KS**

Bible Student's Notebook

ISSN: 1936-9360
No. 143 – July 2, 2008

This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

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

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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Paul would say in his last letter, while facing death,

"... All they which are in Asia be turned away from me; ... only Luke is with me ... (II Timothy 1:15; 4:11).

These are only a few examples. What did they all have in common? A willingness to walk alone with God; to forgo earthly fellowship and friendship if need be, to honor and follow Him.

Jesus said of the Pharisees,

"For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:43).

By contrast we read of Paul,

"... Not as pleasing men, but God ..." (I Thessalonians 2:4).

"... Do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

"... I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Philippians 3:8).

The writer of the book of Hebrews wrote,

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" Hebrews 13:12-13.

Only a few verses before we read those wonderful words,

"... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5).

The loss of earthly support is offset and outweighed by a deep sense of the love and presence of our Father. ■

In Christ

or, The Believer's Union with His Lord (Part 3 – Accepted in Christ)

by – A.J. Gordon

"... Accepted in the Beloved ..." (Ephesians 1:6).

What we are in Christ is something that is completely detached from all the fluctuations of Christian experience. It neither rises nor falls with the tide of feeling. It knows nothing of degrees. Christ is the standard by which it is gauged, it becomes absolute and without the possibility of change, since Jesus Christ is, *"the same yesterday, and today, and for ever"* (Hebrews 13:8).

Since we are in Him and one with Him, we share His place in the Father's heart, and we may know without a doubt that we are, *"accepted in the Beloved"* (Ephesians 1:6).

What a blessed word is this, *"in the Beloved."* In that voice that came down from heaven, *"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17), we may now hear God's approving sentence upon ourselves, as well as upon our Lord. For being in Christ, the beams of eternal love falling upon Him must fall upon us as included in Him. To be in Him is to be loved of the Father, because it is to be in the very focus of the divine affection.

Is not the occasion of much of our distrust and darkness to be found in the fact that we estimate ourselves by ourselves, according to the measure of a man, instead of according to

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Marred in the Hand of the Potter

by – David E. Knoch

“I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make” (Jeremiah 18:3-4).

Let us consider for a moment the billions of humans which the Potter has made. Is it not staggering to realize we have never looked upon one vessel which was not, in some way, marred? Only one Man has trod this earth Who did not sin, and Who was not condemned by Adam’s death sentence. All the rest are marred. Except for Christ, there is not one vessel that could rightfully occupy a place of honor. All are what the pottery shops refer to as “seconds,” which are usually sold only at a great discount.

While most will agree that all humanity bears the pock marks of sin, very few realize that this situation came about, not by some ancient accident, but as the reasonable result of God’s perfect plan. Some have asked, “But how can imperfection play a part in the plan of a perfect God?” We happily answer,

“In order to display His unfathomable wisdom and transcendent love.”

Marred in the Potter’s hand ... but still in the hand of the Potter! Here is peace for all who will ponder these words! For whatever may be their present condition, each vessel still rests secure in His all-sufficient hands. Without Him all life in this vast universe would vanish. In Him we are living, and moving, and are (Acts 17:28). Only when we realize that all, really ALL is still in the hand of the Potter, can we let nothing worry us (Philippians 4:6); for if, in all these many millenniums, God has not chosen to withdraw His hand from these marred pieces of clay, then we can rest in a future equally secure, never doubting that what He has promised, this He will do!

Unsearchable Riches



Translation Treasures #1

GATES OF HELL

“And I say also unto thee, ‘That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18).

In Biblical times the gates of a city is where courts were held, and public business was transacted. It was the seat of municipal government. *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* states that the “gates of the city” were,

“Places for public deliberation, administration of justice, or of audience for kings and rulers

or ambassadors.”

Thus the phrase “the gates of hell” would have been a figure of speech easily understood by the hearers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One author notes that this phrase could well be translated, “*the dominion of death.*”¹

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
Windber, PA

1. Charles J. Wilhelm, *Biblical Dyslexia*, 2004, page 68.

In the Hand of the Potter

by – William Mealand (1873-1957)

“I went down to the potter’s house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make” (Jeremiah 18:3-4).

The prophet sees a vessel marred in the hand of the potter. Yet, as he gazes, it is made again *“another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make.”* Now, in this pictured incident we see that all throughout the vessel is in the hand of the potter. He is the determining and deciding factor.

So is God, as witness His word to Jeremiah.

“O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel” (18:6).

What sovereignty breathes in these words! God is sovereign. Therefore of Israel He could say:

“This people have I formed for Myself. They shall shew forth My praise” (Isaiah 43:21).

And again in the same chapter:

“I have created him for My glory. I have formed him. Yea, I have made him.” (Isaiah 43:7).

Truly, the hand of the Potter is here – I have created, formed, made – and, for My glory. Marred? Yes, but still in the hand of the Potter, to be eventually for His glory.

Marvelous to relate, that very marring is the occasion for a new and wonderful fashion, the formation of an instrument that is also to be for His glory. Here we are immediately concerned. As participants of the grace glorious we are His achievement. We are in His hand. He is making us, and all the while there is the closeness of Maker

and made. How blessed is the consciousness of the Molder’s far-seeing wisdom, which again and again amazes the mind!

How blessed also is the waiting, and sometimes the withholding of His touch! It is then we perceive the marvels of His ordaining, the wisdom of His disposing, and that in His fashioning all is together-acting-into-good for those who love Him.

But Thou art making me, I thank Thee, Sire.
What Thou hast done and do’st, Thou knowest well;
And I will help Thee: gently in Thy fire
I will lie burning; on Thy potter’s wheel
I will whirl patient, tho’ my head should reel.

Thy grace shall be enough my grief to quell,
And growing beauty shine thro’ suffering dire.
Too tense I must not be to understand,
How should the work the Master goes about
Fit the vague sketch my compasses have planned?

I am His house, where He goes in and out;
He builds me now, and if I cannot see
At any time what He still does with me
’Tis that He makes the house for me too grand.

God would build for us a character far exceeding our earthbound comprehension. He would wean us from the things which too easily engross our attention, lifting us to a closer attachment to Himself.

Yet always, even hourly, we are in His hand. Of that we may be sure; but are we conscious of the great affinity – the closeness of Maker and made?

A tower of strength lies in the thought, an utter rare content.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
And spirit with spirit may meet;
Closer is He than breathing,
And nearer than hands and feet.

What tho' Thy work in me transcends my sense,
Too fine, too high, for me to understand.
I trust entirely. On, Lord, with Thy labor grand!

I have not knowledge, wisdom, insight, thought,
Nor understanding, fit to justify
Thee in Thy work. 'tis all of sovereign grace.

How great a thing it is to realize ourselves as in His Hand! What equipoise and calm! For then, should wayward circumstance, or mood's despair come near, it is to find us still within that hand. As our "*faithful Creator*" His word is confirmed to our hearts in all its fine gradations: "I have made, and I will bear. Even I will carry, and will deliver you."

As in creation He is our Potter, so in redemption. He makes and He remakes. Thus even as He took pleasure in His ancient people, a pleasure He will show yet again, so in those of a later day, whom He designates beforehand, He calls and justifies, and glorifies.

From out of the intrusive chaos God is seeing all that He makes – "it is very good." He takes pleasure in His own work. Its far-reaching issues are to constitute the delight of God's will, and its excellency will be celestially apparent above all

(continued from page 1467)

the measure of Christ? He is the true example of our standing before God.

"... We may have boldness in the day of judgment: because **as He is, so are we in this world**" (I John 4:17).

Jesus Christ not only represents God to us in His own being, "*the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person*" (Hebrews 1:3), but He represents us to God. We see God

earthly showing. The highest intelligences will, through these media, be satisfyingly instructed in the wealth of God's grace, as shown in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For such display are we set. Yet what of our present sense of its dignity? The spirit may rise in exultation at the thought of such glory, but are there not hands, feet and lips for action even now? The spirit of God has something to do with these members of the body.

Hands may not have the cunning of a Bezaleel, but they can be gentle, ministering hands. Our feet, too, may be treading the obscure ruts, yet willing feet for His revealed requests. Our lips – someone once prayed, "Lord, take my lips, and speak through them. Take my mind and think through it. Take my heart and set it on fire."

If only thus we live and pray, what channels we could be! Vessels of honor for and in the Potter's hand – made not only by Him, but for Him.

Made for Thyself, O God!

Made for Thy love, Thy service, Thy delight;
Made to show forth Thy Wisdom, grace, and might;

Made for Thy praise, Whom veiled archangels laud.

Oh, strange and glorious thought, that we may be

A joy to Thee!

Unsearchable Riches

in Christ; God sees us in Christ.

We may without contradiction join the confession of a weak faith and much guilty unbelief with the triumphant confidence, "*If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself*" (II Timothy 2:13).

Abridged from *In Christ*
Boston, 1872

The Quality of the Divine Love

by – Alexander Thomson (1889-1966)

“For God so loved the world ...” (John 3:16).

What is the meaning of “God so loved the world?” Does He really love all humanity ... just as much as He loves us? Or does God merely love the world to the extent that He will leave the great mass of human beings to perish for ever, while He loves us who are saved very much better?

What has made God love us? Is it because we have chosen Him? Most certainly not. ...

Are we not too much given to measuring up the quality of the Divine Love by our human standards? We admit that God’s Love is vast, it must be vast; but do we realize it experimentally?

Has not ample proof been provided that God’s Love is the very opposite of being selfish? He gave up His own Son. Is not that clear proof that His Love is vastly greater than our feeble human love? Is it not ample proof that His Love is perfect? At least it cannot be less than perfect ...

Do we not often talk concerning God’s wonderful Love, when all the time, we do not realize just how extraordinary and powerful and endless it must be?

Here I have a pregnant question to ask you. If the Divine Love is perfect, would it not require it to be endless? Or in other words, if God’s Love ever faded away, how could it be perfect? Is Paul’s description of real Love in I Corinthians 13 of any higher standard than the Divine Love? Verse 8 says that *“Love is never failing.”*

Can it be that God’s Love does not come up to the standard that Paul sets out? For centuries Christendom has blackened God’s character by making out that instead of His Love lasting eternally, as it must, it will vanish in the case of those who do not attain salvation in this life.

Those who talk of “the measureless depths of

His eternal love,” and add that God has made provision for men’s salvation, ought first to ask, “Has God made provision for His own Love being eternal?” before they callously consign the “lost” to endless death or misery. God’s Love for some of the Race cannot be everlasting while for others it is only ephemeral. Yet that has been the Devil’s doctrine through the centuries. One marvels at the entire lack of logic among theologians in connection with the Love of God, ever since Paul passed from the scene. If His Love for the “lost” is not measureless, then we certainly cannot count upon it being measureless or eternal for ourselves ...

There is one verse in the New Testament which always brings a lump to my throat. That is I Timothy 1:16, which tells of Christ Jesus showing forth His “entire long-suffering” (or patience). Paul was astounded to the end of his days that the Lord could go on being so patient with him. Yet could we ever picture to ourselves a Christ who lost patience, at any time, with anyone? I must confess that to me the idea is quite absurd and impossible. It is altogether unthinkable. Just here I must press another point. Is it within the sphere of possibility that the Father could ever lose His patience, or wax irascible? Again we are forced to conclude that this is an utter impossibility. We are obliged to believe that God’s patience is as inexhaustible as is His Love ...

I would humbly submit that those preachers who prate about the measureless depths of God’s eternal love ought to study their own words, with a dictionary in their hands, unless they really know what Divine Love is and must ever be. The Love that “will not let me go” will never let anyone go, eternally. God can afford to wait, and win, but He cannot afford to lose, not even one. It is not His wish that a single one should be eventually lost.

The Differentiator

Vol. 19, April, 1957, No. 2



Reader's Question Box #4

Q: Recently I see Christians change “Jesus” to “Yeshua.” What is your comment about this?

A: We have noticed this also, and wonder if this change is made to gain acceptance of the Lord Jesus among our Jewish friends who might have more respect for a more Hebrew-sounding Savior. While those who make this change may have good intentions, it is not a necessary change.

Names have different renditions in different languages. The English name “Peter” is “Pedro” in Spanish and “Pierre” in French. This principle also appears in Scripture. When Matthew speaks of “Elias” (Matthew 17:3) he is obviously speaking of “Elijah.” “Elias” is the Greek form of the Hebrew name “Elijah,” and Matthew wrote in Greek. We see this again in Hebrews 4:8, where the writer talks about “Jesus” when he is obviously speaking of “Joshua.” “Jesus” is the Greek rendition of the Hebrew name “Joshua.”

In light of our question, it is significant that these New Testament writers did not insist on maintaining the Hebrew rendering of Old Testament names. They were perfectly comfortable using Greek versions of Hebrew names, and since they wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we know that God Himself is comfortable with our use of the Savior’s name in our native tongue. As for acceptance of “Jesus” among Jews, we must remember that Paul was “*the apostle of the Gentiles*,” and beginning with his ministry, the Gentile nations now included Israel, who having lost their “*favoured nation*” status with God, are now considered just another one of the nations. Thus Paul preached “Jesus” to Jews (Acts 13:23, 33) as well as to Gentiles.

Ricky Kurth
Berean Searchlight, February 2006, page 23

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