



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VII
Issue 158

The Audacity of Faith

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Love what Arthur P. Adams (1845-1925), in his work *The Purpose of Trials*, termed “the audacity of faith” – that spiritual courage to believe God regardless of the circumstances – that daring boldness to simply believe God over our emotions, over our senses – that plain audacity to just believe God!

The audacity of faith to believe that my Father spoke the world into existence out of thin air!

“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Hebrews 11:3).

The audacity of faith to believe that my Father calls those things that “aren’t” as though they were!

“... Even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were” (Romans 4:17).

The audacity of faith to believe that my Father uses “nothing” to bring the things that “are” into “nothingness”!

“... God [hath] chosen ... the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are”

(I Corinthians 1:28).

The audacity of faith to believe that what my Father has said about me is true!

The audacity of faith to believe that I am:

- ❖ “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6).
- ❖ “the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:30).
- ❖ “chosen in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4).
- ❖ “complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10).
- ❖ “His workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10).
- ❖ “the righteousness of God in Him” (II Corinthians 5:21).

The audacity of faith to believe that God:

- ❖ “worketh all things after the counsel of His Own will” (Ephesians 1:11). ▶

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- ❖ works in me “*both to will and to do of His good pleasure*” (Philippians 2:13).
- ❖ will perform His work in me “*until the day of Jesus Christ*” (Philippians 1:6).

The audacity of faith to believe that:

- ❖ The trial of my faith is “*much more precious than of gold*” (I Peter 1:7).
- ❖ My affliction works for me “*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*” (II Corinthians 4:17).
- ❖ “*That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8:28).
- ❖ “*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*” (Philippians 4:13).

In the context of Arthur P. Adams’ usage of *the audacity of faith*,

Oh that you and I, friend reader, may be among the few who shall possess that clearness of spiritual insight, and audacity of faith, that shall enable us to “*glory in tribulation,*” to “*take pleasure in infirmities,*” and to “*rejoice*” even, on account of those things that the world would reckon among the worst calamities.

“What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” (Job 2:10).

He is equally the Creator of both, and both shall equally “*work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*” (Romans 8: 28).

The audacity of such faith!



Bible Student’s Notebook

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume VII, No. 158 – October 14, 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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Electronic Version (e-mailed to you)

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Printed Version (mailed to you)

½ Year (26 issues) – \$25; 1 Year (52 issues) – \$50

PATRIARCHS

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

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Select Readings on God's Ecclesia (Part 3)

"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).

THE AGENDA OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The church that belongs to Jesus is not part of anyone's agenda. In fact, people who belong to Him provide the only agenda that ultimately counts. It is the agenda of the Kingdom of God breaking into human history – the central feature in the history of the world. It is the only force that can make an enemy into a friend, a criminal into a saint, a biological father into a real parent. And it makes the most ambitious political agenda we can possibly imagine look trivial by comparison.

Cal Thomas (1942) (with Ed Dobson)
Blinded by Might: Can the Religious Right Save America? (1999), page 97

BE THE CHURCH

"The church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

It is interesting to note that the Bible will always interpret itself. Ephesians 1:22-23 clearly defines what the church is. It is the Body of Christ, the fullness of God that fills all in all! Now that we know what the church is, let us talk about what it is not. It is not:

Any particular denomination ...

A building made with hands ...

Any particular religion ...

A set of rules ...

Something that we go to on Sunday morning or

Wednesday night ...

The church is you! You are the church! ... We have become *SO BUSY* "going to church" that we have lost sight that we are the church, the called out ones! It is time to stop having church and start being the church! We have perfected the art of "having church." We know when to clap, when to sing, when to pray, when to preach, when to cry, when to laugh, and when to go to the altar. We know how to fit it all in within two hours so that we can get to lunch on time. We have put God in our nice "churchy" box with a lid on top and wrapped Him all up with our pretty denominational wrapping paper. We must wake up to the realization that church is not something that we go to. Rather, it is who we are in Christ. You are the church! You are the Body of Christ! You are the fullness of God!

Be the church!

Thomas Kissinger
The Glory of God and the Honor of Kings (Xulon Publishing: 1998)

ACCREDITED MINISTRY

"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings" (II Corinthians 6:4-5).

Truly accredited ministry is through suffering. Accredited ministry represents a tremendous victory, set in a background of great conflict.

A determined effort is made through the age to ►

discredit spiritual ministry, and to do so through the one engaged in that ministry ...

One who counts for the Lord is a joint of supply (Ephesians 4:16) who can be of value to the Lord's people under any circumstance ...

All ministry that is to be accredited will be bound up with suffering. A decision we have to make is as to the object of our ministry. A good many things can be taken into consideration, but there comes a point where all other things have to be arranged on one side, and one thing on the other side – the real spiritual value, without alloy: that which is wholly of God and not at all of man. In the measure in which that is true there will be suffering. To stand utterly for what is spiritual is a costly thing.

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you” (II Corinthians 4:7-12).

But the treasure is in vessels of fragile clay; the vessel is being broken day by day.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)
A Witness and a Testimony (September 1946)

CONFESSING THE ONE BODY

“*There is one body.*” He does not say, “*There was one body,*” “*There shall be one body.*” Here is our authority for believing and confessing this glorious truth, and for our practical testimony against *everything* that denies it. The first step in confessing the unity of the church of God is to step out of the divisions of Christendom ... Is it true that there is but one body? Unquestionably. God says so. Well then, the divisions, the sects and the systems of

Christendom are plainly opposed to the mind and will and Word of God. Truly so. What are we to do? Step out of them ...

It is impossible to yield any practical confession to the unity of the church of God while we stand connected with that which practically denies it. We may hold the theory in the region of our understanding, while we deny the reality in our practical career; but if we desire to confess the truth of the one body, our very first business – our primary duty – is to *stand* in thorough separation from all the sects and schisms of Christendom. ...

Are the divisions of Christendom according to God? Are the many bodies of the professing church in accordance with the “*one body*” of Ephesians 4? Clearly not. Then it is our divinely appointed duty to come out of them ...

C.H. Mackintosh (1820-1896)
Unity: What Is It? and Am I Confessing It?

ELDERS

The existence of an “elder” implies the existence of a junior. The word “elder” is relative, not absolute ... Even among the spiritually immature there are bound to be those who, in comparison with them, are more mature ...

It is the responsibility of every saved man to serve the Lord according to his capacity and in his own sphere.

Watchman Nee (1903-1972)
The Normal Christian Church Life (1962)

STANDING AS AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER

Christian individualism does not mean that the believer stands alone. But it does mean that he knows how to stand alone, and that he will without complaint stand happily alone if he deems it to be a part of the worthy walk of his calling. He does not need to look to the right or to the left to see what someone else is going to do. He has a profound sense of his personal responsibility to God, therefore, he will put Him first and every other consideration must be subservient.

While he earnestly desires fellowship and community with others, he refuses to allow this desire to be the reigning influence of his life. He dislikes isolation and aloneness as much as anyone, yet he will not compromise in order to belong. He cannot yield allegiance to any organization, since all organizations are composed of human beings who err and whose judgments are always less than divine truth ...

There are active believers in Jesus Christ who are members of “churches” and who have found a place of service within its membership. Some of these feel that they have solved the great problem of how an individual can also be a member of a group and secure all the benefits of both ways of life. This is their right as an individual. I neither commend this nor condemn it. A believer’s right to freedom certainly gives him the right to unite with a group. However, a difficulty arises when he begins to think that it is the duty of others to do the same. [I]t needs to be recognized that individualism has ceased when a man’s acceptance by a group is based upon his silence.

Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)
Christian Individualism: A Way of Life for the Active Believer in Jesus Christ (1961)

THE APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH

The same apostle who had exulted in the fact that “*all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 19:10), lived to pen the sad lament, “*This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me*” (II Timothy 1:15). And then, taking a still wider view of the condition of the Church, he indicted the solemn forecast, “*But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived*” [II Timothy 3:13].

Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918)
The Buddha of Christendom (1899), page 37

UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

The unity of the Spirit is a scriptural expression (Ephesians 4), and signifies the unity the Spirit forms in baptizing every believer with Christ’s body. This unity cannot actually be broken, but it may be

practically denied through failing to keep it in the bond of peace. All general outward manifestation of it has long since disappeared, and sects and human systems have taken its place.

A.T. Schofield (1846-1929)
A Dictionary of Some of the More Common Biblical Words and Phrases (1882)

THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

The Church which is Christ’s body (Ephesians 1:23), instead of being one (Ephesians 4:2), is divided and split up into above 1,000 sects and parties. Of course the fact that all believers form one body cannot be destroyed, but the outward expression of this unity by a once united assembly or Church is gone entirely.

A.T. Schofield (1846-1929)
A Dictionary of Some of the More Common Biblical Words and Phrases (1882)

“SECULAR” WORK

The New Testament draws no sacred/secular lines between Christians in “full-time service” and those in other types of work. In fact, the Bible does not contain the phrase “full-time Christian service.” It teaches that all Christians should serve God full time, even though our differing vocations display such service in a variety of forms.

It is true that some Christians are “set apart” for the gospel; but this setting apart does not mean total abstinence from ordinary work. Paul was set apart for the gospel service, yet he frequently supported himself by working at a trade ...

In Scripture God has revealed to us the meaning of work. All work has meaning, whether it be scrubbing a floor or managing a corporation ... It is unthinkable that God’s people should view ordinary work as second-best, as less significant than gospel work.

Our daily work serves as one of God’s major tools for cultivating and nurturing the life of Christ within us. While we may be eager to have our work used in changing the lives of others, God is eager first ►

to change our own lives through work ... Through our work God brings into our lives circumstances which force us to choose between life and death to this self-life ... Our work can, if we allow it and recognize God's hand in it, be used to grind us, smooth us, polish us, and fit us for service of the living God.

Larry Peabody
Secular Work is Full-time Service (1974)

CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

We are not citizens of this world trying to make our way to heaven; we are citizens of heaven trying to make our way through this world. That radical Christian insight can be life-changing. We are not to live so as to earn God's love, inherit heaven, and purchase our salvation. All those are given to us as gifts; gifts brought by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross and handed over to us. We live as God's redeemed, as heirs of heaven, and as citizens of another land: the Kingdom of God ... We live as those who are on a journey home; a home we know will have the lights on and the door open and our Father waiting for us when we arrive. That means in all adversity our worship of God is joyful, our life is hopeful, our future is secure. There is nothing we can lose on earth that can rob us of the treasures God has given us and will give us.

The Landisfarne Magazine

RELIGIOUS DRUNKARDS

When a man thinks he sees two light poles where there is only one, or drives his car back and forth across the center line on the highway, he is usually judged to be drunk – intoxicated with liquor.

What about denominational preachers who think they see two (or more) churches? They tell us that “there is *one*, true, spiritual, **invisible** church, but there are many local **visible** Christian churches.” Part of the time these clergymen profess to walk “in the Spirit,” and part of the time as visible Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterian, “Assemblies of God,” “Christian,” “Church of Christ,” Roman Catholic or Fundamentalists, etc.

“... *They are drunken; but not with wine...*”
(Isaiah 29:9).

“... *Drunk with the wine of her fornication*”
(Revelation 17:2).

If there is only “*one*, true, spiritual church” then, of course, the so-called “visible” churches are *not* “*true*” and they are *not* “*spiritual*.” ... Who but a “drunk” could think He is building any one of these man-made, local “churches?”

If you think sectarian preachers are not drunk with Rome's Babylonish brew, get one to explain Acts 17:24, “*the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.*” He will say he agrees perfectly with that, but he will turn right around and contend that his ... steeple house is “a house of God” or a “sanctuary.” Then, when faced with the clear revelation as to exactly where God does dwell (on earth) today, namely, in the hearts of [the] saved ... (II Corinthians 13:5) the reeling cleric will lunge into that lane as though he were actually driving there.

The cure for those who have become intoxicated on the “aged” liquors of “the mother of harlots” and her *older daughters* – the sole cure of those addicted to “*the wine of her fornication*” – is to go to “*the pure blood of the grape*” (Deuteronomy 32:14). This is the wine that is “*without money and without price*” (Isaiah 55:1). The Lord Jesus Christ is “*the true vine*” (John 15:1) from which this life-giving and life-sustaining “drink” comes. “*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit*” (Ephesians 5:18). The name of this true church is “Christ” (I Corinthians 12:12).

According to God's clear Word there is but one, true spiritual church [today]; but to contend that it is only invisible is either dishonest or inexcusably ignorant. The ... new creation in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) makes us a living member of the one, true spiritual church. “*For by one Spirit are we ALL baptized into **one** body ...*” (I Corinthians 12:13; see also Ephesians 1:22-23).

Maurice Johnson
Religious Drunkards (1940)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Scripture is of Christ (I Corinthians 6:15), of His body (Ephesians 1:23), and of one another (Ephesians 4:25). Anything beyond this is beyond Scripture.

A.T. Schofield (1846-1929)

A Dictionary of Some of the More Common Biblical Words and Phrases (1882)

STRIPPING DOWN TO CHRIST ALONE

“That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death” (Philippians 3:10).

Christianity has become so largely a matter of doctrine and creed; the test of Christian life is very much a matter of subscribing thereto. Christian experience has become largely limited to a matter of being saved, without the great eternal and universal relative factors and issues. Christian service is resolved far too much into a matter of enthusiasm in a great enterprise, apart from an adequate apprehension of what the Lord is really after. The Christian “Church” is very largely reduced to earthly institutions, societies, denominations, buildings, activities and orders; and the spiritual revelation and apprehension of the “*one Body*” and “*one Spirit*” is, for the most part by far, lacking. Christian teaching has very largely become – at best – a matter of giving addresses and preaching sermons with a presentation of “the letter” of the Word – a giving forth of truth as truth, but lacking in “*revelation in the knowledge of Him*” (Ephesians 1:17) – that true inwardness of meaning which reaches the heart and meets the deepest spiritual need of the hungry.

The result of all this is that the impact, upon the world and particularly upon “*the rulers of the darkness of this world*” (Ephesians 6:12), of that which stands for God, is almost nil, or a minus quantity.

There is one, and only one, hope for God’s people: their knowledge of Him ... and the power of His resurrection as a present spiritual reality. Not their

activities, enthusiasms, organizations, enterprises, creeds, “churches,” orthodoxy, etc., but *HIMSELF*.

There needs to be a stripping down to Christ alone. Beloved fellow members of Christ, seek a pure spiritual unveiling of the Lord Jesus as God’s representation of His thought concerning all things; and as He gives you light, will you seek grace to stand for Him with all boldness, and whatever the price? All other questions will answer themselves as you do this.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)

A Witness and a Testimony (August 1930)

FACTIONAL DIVISION

That Scripture views the destruction or impairment of Christian unity as one of the chief disasters and calamities of demonic deception and the satanic introduction of false doctrine into the Church, appears clear from the prevailing New Testament use of the term “heresy.” This word is never employed in its strict modern sense, as meaning “heterodoxy” or “doctrinal aberration,” but consistently denotes a “sect” or “faction.”

Merrill F. Unger (1909-1980)

Biblical Demonology: A Study of Spiritual Forces at Work Today (1952)

BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

If in a given place anyone believes on the Lord, as a matter of course he is a constituent of the church in that place. No subsequent “joining” is required of him. Provided he belongs to the Lord, he already belongs to the church in that locality; and since he **already** belongs to the church, his belonging cannot be made subject to any condition. If before recognizing a believer as a member of the church we insist that he “join” us or that he resign his connection elsewhere, then “our church” is decidedly not one of the churches of God. If we impose any conditions of membership upon a believer in the locality, we are immediately in an unscriptural position ...

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye ... for God hath received him” (Romans 14:1, 3). ►

“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also receive us” (Romans 15:7).

Our receiving anyone is merely our recognition that the Lord has already received him. If he is the Lord’s, he is in the church. If he is not the Lord’s, he is not in the church.

Watchman Nee (1903-1972)
The Normal Christian Church Life (1962)

BEING LIKEMINDED

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus” (Romans 15:4-5).

In receiving the believers, we need to endure the weaknesses of the ones whom we are going to receive ... In receiving the weaker believers, we have to realize that our God is the God of endurance and encouragement who can cause us to endure others’ weaknesses and to be encouraged with what He can do in others by His grace. If we are so encouraged by such a God, we shall be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, not according to anything else. Since there is only one Christ Jesus, if we are all according to Christ, we shall be likeminded with one another. However, if our mind is in accordance with teachings, concepts, gifts, religious practices or any other such thing, we shall be divided.

The only way to be likeminded toward one another is to be according to Christ. To receive the believers according to our teachings, concepts, gifts or religious practices does not need any endurance or encouragement with hope. But to receive all believers according to Christ does need an amount of endurance and encouragement with hope which the very God of endurance and encouragement will supply us if we care for the keeping of unity and the building up of the Body.

Witness Lee (1905-1997)
Life-Study of Romans (1984)

MULTITUDES ARE NOT GOING WITH US

If we respond to the Lord’s call to us today to leave our captivity in the Christian religious system and to give ourselves to Him that He might once again build His church, we should be aware that multitudes are not going with us. Most of the Lord’s people will stay where it is comfortable and where they are accustomed.

John Saunders
The House of God (1988)

OUR PATH POINTED OUT

In II Timothy our path in this day of ruin is pointed out. It is only a feeble remnant at best ... “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Timothy 2:19). It is separating from every invention of man in divine things, by getting back to God’s Word. “If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work” (II Timothy 2:21).

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882)
The True Church, The Body of Christ

THE CHURCH

“... unto the church of the Thessalonians ...”
(I Thessalonians 1:1)

Now isn’t it astounding, he’s writing to this church – but where was their building? Where was their auditorium? Where were their classrooms? Where did they conduct Sunday School? There was no building. And it’s a good time to emphasize the fact that the word *church* biblically has nothing whatever to do with a building ...

The word church ... *ekklesia* – a called out assembly – and the idea was that they were called out of the heathenism of this world system and placed into the Body of Christ. So it was the believers who were the church.

Marvin J. Rosenthal
1 & 2 Thessalonians (audio recording)

