



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VII
Issue 160

Citizenship

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20).

The believer's home is in heaven. It is easy to get caught up in the crosscurrents of gentile politics, for truly *“the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing”* (Psalm 2:1; Acts 4:25).

Paul, the apostle, tells us our true place in the current course of this world when he wrote, *“For our conversation is in heaven.”* Interestingly, the word that Paul used for *“conversation”* in Philippians 3:20 was the Greek word *“politeuma.”* This is the only time that Paul uses this word, that *Strong's Greek Lexicon #4175* defines as *“a community, i.e., citizenship.”* An example of *“politeuma”* being translated according to James Strong's definition can be seen in the following English versions:

“... Our citizenship in the heavens ...”
(Rotherham's Emphasized Bible - 1868)

“... Our citizenship is in the heavens ...”
(Young's Literal Translation - 1898)

“... Our citizenship is in heaven ...” (KJV 2000)

J.C. O'Hair (1876-1958) wrote the following in his work *Ambassadors of Reconciliation*:

The word *“conversation”* here [in Philippians 3:20] could be translated *“citizenship”* or even *“politics”* ... The citizenship and politics of every representative of Christ is in heaven

... The believer is in the world, but not of the world. Unto him has been committed the Word of reconciliation. To him is given the ministry of reconciliation.

Bill (William) Petri also adds his voice to this discussion in his work *Government, War and the Christian* (2008, p. 11):

The word *“conversation”* in Philippians 3:20 is an interesting word. It is the Greek word *“politeuma”* and means *“the commonwealth of citizens.”* It is interesting that in the English language we take our word *politic* from this Greek word.

Others have also shared the meaning of the word *politeuma* and its application to Paul's use to the Body of Christ:

The Greek word for citizenship is *“politeuma.”* *“Politics”* comes from this word! Christians do have a *“political agenda,”* but it is not of *this* world. *“Politeuma”* technically can also be translated another way. It can mean a *townsman*. It is correct to say that citizens of

(see *CITIZENSHIP*, page 1603)

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Dear Saints,

Family greetings in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

From time to time we receive inquiries from our readers regarding how we make our living. We are “tentmakers” after the Pauline pattern.¹ That is, by *choice* we are not professional ministers. Paul did not make his living by the *gospel*: He made a living making tents. In so doing he left the Body of Christ a pattern that matched his teaching,

“And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you”
(I Thessalonians 4:11).

As believers even our livelihood is to be “*as unto the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-24; Titus 2:9-10). Our occupation is earthly, but our vocation is heavenly – a high calling of God (Ephesians 4:1).

Many think that for someone to really serve the Lord they should be religiously “salaried.” Before men’s systems this is honorable and respectable; but not so with God (Luke 16:15). We are not to serve the Lord for salary; we are not to be “hired” or “hirelings;” we are to be ministers of the Lord out of our *own* livelihoods. As William Carey (1761-1834) said, “My business is preaching the gospel, and I cobble shoes to pay my expenses.”

Our family does not make our living through the **BSN**, or **StudyShelf**. These are but a part of our family’s own personal ministry. Like Paul we work to be able to minister. The “fees” involved with the **BSN** subscriptions and Bible study book sales do not even cover the expenses incurred by these ministries. These are subsidized by our family and those of you who co-labor with us.

How then do we make a living? Our main source of supply, meager as it may be, is through the sale of used books. In addition to these, our sons Clyde and Nathan also generate family revenue through computer repair, and website design and hosting.

We do not minister to make a living. We make a living to minister. Our ministries are not our “bread and butter” but our “air and water.”

Our heartfelt thanks to those of you who do, from time to time, minister “*seed to the sower*,” increasing the “*fruits of your righteousness*” (II Corinthians 9:10), which is indeed an “*odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God*” (Philippians 4:18). Thank you for your love and encouragement.

Your fellow,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

1. See our article, *Paul the Tentmaker* in **BSN** #82.

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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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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.

The Bible Student’s Notebook
PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963
Office: (800) 784-6010

bsn@studysshelf.com
www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor
André Sneidar – Managing Editor
Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

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men's governments are townsmen – of particular towns on earth.

Do God's people practice politics? The answer is "Yes" – in a sense! I have an absolutely deep political conviction. Let me say this more clearly, so you can understand. In one sense, Christians are very political in their thinking. Is God a political being? The answer is absolutely, "Yes!" But His politics are not of *this* society. He has His *Own* view of government, His *Own* view of correct and right "politeuma," or politics. His kingdom – His government – "is not of this world," but He *does* have a government.

The word *police* comes from "politeuma." So do *policy* and *poll*. It is not hard to understand how police, policies and polls are connected, in one way or another, to politics. The large American cities of Indianapolis and Minneapolis derive their names from "politeuma." These are large towns with lots of citizens. Minnea(*polis*) means the major city of Minnesota and Indiana(*polis*) means the major city of Indiana. Mystery is often stripped away when words are broken down into their most basic meaning.¹

A Greek city-state was known as a "polis." The original meaning was close to the idea of "town," but eventually was used to describe the ruling political center of a district or territory. In fact *polis* became a rather complex word to encompass the whole idea of government, and was therefore a more extensive word than merely "town" or "city." We get the word politics from this word – the art or science of governing a group of people.

A politician is a person engaged in running the affairs of the *polis*; a policy is a reflection of wisdom in governing the *polis*; and police are those who control and regulate the activities of the *polis*. As you can see, this Greek word is foundational to many of our English words related to governmental matters.

In like fashion the Greek word *polis* was used by the Greeks as a basis for many other Greek words related to governmental functions. A "politarches" was a civil-magistrate (Acts 17:6, 8); a "polites" was a citizen of the state (Acts 21:39); "politeia" was the word used for citizenship (Acts 22:28); and "politeuomai" was a word to describe how people were to conduct themselves as citizens of the state. Then there was the word we are considering here, "politeuma" – a word used to describe the state itself or a commonwealth.²

Thus John Nelson Darby translated Philippians 3:20:

"... Our commonwealth has its existence in the heavens ..." (Darby Translation - 1890).

Paul teaches us that as members of Christ's Body we already have a citizenship, and it is in heaven. Our government is there; our King is there; our politics are there.

We have been called into His Kingdom:

"That ye would walk worthy of God, Who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:12).

We have been delivered from the earthly kingdoms and translated into His:

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13).

He is the **only** Potentate (Ruler),³ the King of kings, and Lord of lords:

"... Our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in His times He shall show, Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (I Timothy 6:14-15).



1. David C. Pack, *Do Christians Vote?*

2. Dan Hayden, *Truth in Grace*.

3. "only Ruler" (Darby Translation, 1890);



Select Readings on Various Topics

(Part 8)

“Till I come, give attendance to reading ...” (I Timothy 4:13).

“The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books ...” (II Timothy 4:13).

THE CONSERVATIVE AND MORAL

As Christians we often gravitate toward, and esteem most highly, those who are the most conservative and moral. Jesus did not. Sinners did not crucify the Lord – Israel’s most moral and upstanding citizens crucified Him.

Rick Joyner (1949-)

There Were Two Trees in the Garden (1986)

GOD GIVES THE INCREASE

I Corinthians 3:6-7 states,

“... I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that plants any thing, neither he that waters; but God that gives the increase ...”

This Scripture gives us insight into the ways of God. It speaks of how we are to minister to people, not getting upset with them when they do not understand what it is that they are being taught. Only God can and will give the increase! This means that it takes the Spirit of God to reveal (unveil) spiritual things to man. You may minister to someone on a certain subject and they will not understand it. Someone else may minister to them on the same subject, and then God will give the increase. Do not be upset with this! Remember ... It takes God to give the increase. God may use you to plant and someone else to water, or he may use someone else to plant and you to water; but only God can give the increase. We must recognize that it takes people quite a long time to grasp spiritual things.

The seed of the Word of God must be planted in the heart of a person, then it must be watered, and then it must have time to grow. Finally, God will

cause that seed to bring forth the fruit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. He uses man to plant and to water, but He is the only one Who can give the increase (to make something come alive, or be quickened in a person’s heart).

Thomas Kissinger

The Glory of God and the Honor of Kings

THE GREAT DANGER

The great danger facing all of us ... is not that we shall make an absolute failure of life, nor that we shall fall into outright viciousness, nor that we shall be terribly unhappy, nor that we shall feel [that] life has no meaning at all – not these things. The danger is that we may fail to perceive life’s greatest meaning, fall short of its highest good, miss its deepest and most abiding happiness, be unable to tender the most needed service, be unconscious of life ablaze with the light of the Presence of God – and be content to have it so – that is the danger: that some day we may wake up and find that always we have been busy with husks and trappings of life and have really missed life itself. For life without God, to one who has known the richness and joy of life with Him, is unthinkable, impossible. That is what one prays one’s friends may be spared – satisfaction with a life that falls short of the best, that has in it no tingle or thrill that comes from a friendship with the Father.

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)

Sermons (1878)

GRACE AND FORGIVENESS

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus

and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11).

I do not know all of the Savior’s reasons for choosing the woman at the well ...

Jesus was able to see potential in the woman at the well that we could never have sensed. What a gracious thing for us that Jesus Christ never thinks about what we have been! He always thinks about what we are going to be. You and I are slaves to time and space and records and reputations and publicity and the past – all that we call the case history. Jesus Christ cares absolutely nothing about anyone’s moral case history.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Faith Beyond Reason, pp 103-104

THE STEPS OF A GOOD MAN

The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord. Trust your Father to guide your steps. When the way is confusing, when the options are many, when you don’t know which direction to turn – trust Him. He is able to keep you from falling.

Enjoy the days of your life. How often we take on too much responsibility for life! Relax. Live as one who understands that your Father has all that you could ever need or want. Don’t be afraid, but believe. Don’t be afraid to move forward with faith, beyond the limits of your own comfort zone. He is Lord of your comfort zone and Lord of those places where you are uncomfortable too.

There is always a tentative impulse within those who step out in faith. Every Red Sea is intimidating, but those who cross over are the ones who take a step into the water’s edge, then continue until they find themselves safely in the Promised Land. Don’t be afraid to take the steps He orders. Go forward boldly with faith in Him.

Your Father is in control. Believe and depend on Him at every step. He will lead you safely home. As you depend on Him, you will learn to trust Him more and more and will learn to enjoy the risks of walking in faith.

As He causes you to know Him more intimately, you will discover that in the presence of His conscious love, all fears and doubts will vanish. Perfect love casts out fear. It isn’t your love, but His that will carry you through your doubts to victory on the other side.

Steve McVey
Grace Walk

DAILY LIFE

We practice daily what we believe; all the rest is just religious talk.

Peter M. Lord
Bless and Be Blessed (2004), p. 131

LIFE: A TRUST FROM GOD

Jesus taught that man’s life is a gracious gift of God. It is, regarded by itself, a thing of beauty and of worth. Received as a trust from God, it should be the object of man’s highest and most reverent esteem. He should be its faithful steward. No man’s life is his own. It belongs, by the right of creatorship, to God. It is a loan for human investment.

Henry Martin Battenhouse
The Bible Unlocked (1928)

ORDERED BY THE LORD

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholds him with His hand” (Psalm 37:23-24).

To the child of God, there is no such thing as an accident. He travels an appointed way. The path he treads was chosen for him when as yet he was not, when as yet he had existence only in the mind of God.

Accidents may indeed appear to befall him and misfortune stalk his way; but these evils will be so in appearance only and will seem evil only ►

because we cannot read the secret script of God's hidden providence and so cannot discover the ends at which He aims ...

The man of true faith may live in the absolute assurance that his steps are ordered by the Lord. For him, misfortune is outside the bounds of possibility.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)

We Travel an Appointed Way, pp. 3-4

PUTTING OUT THE TRUTH AT ALL COSTS

The cutting edge of our message will always produce "*the offence of the cross*" as with Jesus and Paul, and the evangelical world will not receive it, except in some watered-down version. The danger of our attempts to get the message more widely accepted only means that it will be a watered-down element.

There are really two different objectives – one to be occupied solely in presenting out total truth, with no concern as to how it is received, which has been our glorious main thrust these years and has grabbed some while alienating others; but the other objective, not just of putting out the truth at all costs, letting the chips fall where they may, but rather of making it palatable to readers.

Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)

Notes from Norman

BLINDNESS

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in" (Romans 11:25).

Man is trapped in his own blindness, in the circle of his own humanity. Apart from God's mercy, men cannot even "turn to God ..." There is a sense in which *all* men are born blind, and it is *only* by God's mercy through Jesus Christ that this original or "birth" sin is overcome ... Thus the church should always remember that regardless of

how much it may at times seem to have sharpened its language, making ... its message crystal clear *intellectually*, God has "*mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth*" (Romans 9:18) ...

Robert L. Short (1932-)

The Gospel According to Peanuts (1964) pp. 12-13

IMPRECISE VOCABULARY AND THE SIN OF OMISSION

The church is not only guilty of committing its gospel to a decayed and imprecise vocabulary; more importantly, it is also guilty of the sin of omission: often a very crucial part of its message is completely ignored or forgotten. For instance, "*Be of good cheer!*" is a phrase that probably leaves most of us cold nowadays. But this phrase was a byword in the New Testament times, *because* it was invariably accompanied with some specific *reason for* being of "*good cheer*," such as "*Your sins are forgiven*" (Matthew 9:2) or "*I have overcome the world*" (John 16:33). But how can "*Be of good cheer!*" have any comfort or meaning for us today when not only are we not sure what "*Your sins are forgiven*" *means*, but often we are even told that this is the case.

Robert L. Short (1932-)

The Gospel According to Peanuts (1964), p. 10

CURRENT LANGUAGES OF CULTURE

The church's missionaries to its "cultured despisers" need to be as well acquainted with the current languages of culture as the church's missionaries to foreign lands are acquainted with the languages of the areas into which they are sent.

Robert L. Short (1932-)

The Gospel According to Peanuts (1964), p. 13

TRUSTING GOD

Why do we not *trust* God? For the very same reason, I answer, that we do not trust strangers, *because we are not acquainted with Him*. The

great prerequisite to a perfect trust is a perfect acquaintance – a thorough knowledge of the person to be trusted. Everyone will see this truth at once. Furthermore, we must become acquainted with Him for ourselves; no second-hand knowledge will do, however exact and truthful it may be; no mere introduction, or verbal description of His excellences will satisfy us. We must know Him for ourselves.

Arthur P. Adams (1847-1925)
The Spirit of the Word (1885)

IS GOD SUCH AS OURSELVES?

“... Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Ephesians 1:11).

Is it so? – That God is altogether such an one as ourselves? – Whose plans may be upset? – Whose will may be thwarted? – Who may be compelled to change His plan because of some interfering agency or evil power entering in and for the time being, getting the better of Him? ...

Let this point be settled then, that God is supreme; He “*worketh all things*” – absolutely all things, without any exceptions – “*after the counsel of His own will*” (Ephesians 1:11). I exhort the readers to an uncompromising jealousy of this supreme sovereignty of God; ... emulating the example of Job in this respect when he attributed all that came to him, the evil as well as the good, to the Lord, saying, “*Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?*” (Job 2:10) ...

We need not fear to take this position; there is abundance of Scripture to warrant it ... But if we had no other Scripture than this case of Job, it would be sufficient warrant for us to take the position that even evil is entirely under God’s control, and He uses it, as He does the good, for the carrying out of His own gracious plans and purposes.

Arthur P. Adams (1847-1925)
True Basis of Redemption (1885)

HONORING DIVINE PURPOSE

Without argument, most things are at their best when they are fulfilling their purpose and design.

For instance, a piano is made with a specific purpose: to produce music. However, I happen to know that someone once stood on a piano in order to put a fastener of some kind in the ceiling. Some artistic women have used piano tops as family picture galleries. I have seen piano tops that were cluttered filing cabinets or wide library shelves.

There is an intelligent design in the creation of a piano. The manufacturer did not announce: “This is a good piano. It has at least 19 uses!” No, the designer had only one thought in mind: “This piano will have the purpose and potential of sounding forth beautiful music!” ...

Do not miss the application of truth here ... You may have some other idea about the design and purpose for your life, but you are wrong! ... If you do not honor this purpose, your life will degenerate into shallow, selfish, humanistic pursuits.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Men Who Met God, p. 23

BE STILL

“*Be still, and know that I am God ...*” (Psalm 46:10).

Only when we are “still” can we know God, and know that He is God. Only when we stop our incessant worrying, relentless striving and ceaseless chasing about the muck and mire of our circumstances – only then will we *know* He is there in our presence, the calm in the midst of our storm, the anchor in our storm tossed sea, the rest in the turmoil of our struggle, our only peace in the depths of the raging battle within our soul.

André Sneider (1953-)
O God, Where Art Thou? (2006)
(Daily Email Goodies #551)

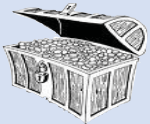


The Bible in 50 Words

God made
Adam bit
Noah arked
Abraham split
Jacob fooled
Joseph ruled
Bush talked
Moses balked
Pharaoh plagued
People walked
Sea divided
Tablets guided
Promise landed
Saul freaked
David peeked

Prophets warned
Jesus born
God walked
Love talked
Anger crucified
Hope died
Love rose
Spirit flamed
Word spread
God remained

"Top of the Morning" – Book of Incredibly Short Stories
Selected by Brian Edwards, Tandem Press, 1997,
p. 41.



Translation Treasures #2

JUSTIFIED FREELY

"Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"
(Romans 3:24).

It is wonderful to know that we sinners are not justified by praying, or paying, or saying, or sighing, or crying, or doing anything. We are justified freely, by the grace of God.

Yet this passage from Romans will mean more to us when we learn how the Word rendered "*freely*" here is translated elsewhere in the Bible. The same expression is found in John 15:25, where our Lord, quoting from Psalms, said, "*They hated me without a cause.*"

Why did men hate Him? He went about doing nothing but good: healing the sick, giving the blind their sight, causing the lame to leap for joy,

preaching good news to the poor and deliverance to those who were bound.

There was no good reason for crying, "*Away with Him!*" and "*Crucify Him!*" They hated Him "*without a cause.*"

In the same way we might ask, "Why should He die for sinners? Why should He pay for their sins? He had done nothing wrong." Ah, it was in love that He deliberately gave Himself into the hands of sinful men, that He, the sinless One, might pay for their sins. He did not die His own death, for death is "*the wages of sin.*" He died our death, paying for our sins. So, as men hated Him "*without cause*" (except their own sinful condition), so Christ has "*justified*" believers "*without a cause*" (except His own divine love).

Cornelius R. Stam (1909-2003)
Two Minutes with the Bible