



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VII
Issue 168

World Reconciliation

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“All things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit [know], that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

What absolutely amazing words from Paul, God’s apostle to the nations! What a divine revelation was committed to his trust. Oh, for the faith to fully believe the disclosure of the divine plan. Oh, for the courage to embrace God’s full accomplishments in the reconciliatory work of the Lord Jesus Christ!

II Corinthians Chapter 5 is a glorious revelation of what God consummated in His Son. It is an exceedingly rich presentation by God’s apostle of grace. Here we learn of the full scope of reconciliation.

WORLDWIDE RECONCILIATION

“Reconciling the world unto Himself” (:19).

What was the revelation given to Paul, about God’s work in Christ? What did he reveal that God actually accomplished in Christ?

Reconciliation!

Hear that word. God procured “reconciliation” through His Son.

Just what is “reconciliation”? It is the restoration

to divine favor.¹ The enmity, division and estrangement of man towards God have been removed by the Father Himself – “reconciling the world unto Himself.”

It was indeed true that,

*“When we were enemies, we were **reconciled to God** by the death of His Son” (Romans 5:10).*

The same word that Paul uses for “reconciliation” (:18-19), is translated in the very next verse in the King James Version as “atonement” (the old English “at-one-ment”):

“We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the

1. Strong’s Greek Lexicon #2643 “katallage,” meaning “restoration to (the divine) favor.”

Noah Webster defines the root of reconciliation (conciliate) as, “to unite.” (American Dictionary of the English Language, 1828)

(see RECONCILIATION, page 1671)

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Dear Family,

A Prairie Home Companion

A few months back I was introduced to the two-hour, live, weekly radio broadcast – *A Prairie Home Companion*. What a lovely show! It is quite the enjoyable variety program that seems it is from another back-era: eclectic music, interviews, monologs, comedic skits, and of course the most endearing host, Garrison Keillor.

A Prairie Home Companion, which began over 30 years ago, is heard on Saturdays by more than 4 million listeners each week over nearly 600 public radio stations, 6:00-8:00 PM (Eastern).

I enjoy the show so much that sometimes when I am doing work that doesn't require much thinking I'll even listen to the archived broadcasts that are available at their website: prairiehome.publicradio.org

Friendship Bread

While Susannah was here with us she brought her Friendship Bread starters with her.

Friendship Bread is not just a recipe – it's a genuine starter bread that is passed around from friend to friend. This delicious sweet bread comes with a way for friends to share countless loaves of bread baked in different kitchens that all began from the same bowl of simple ingredients.

When you've made your own bread, you can give your friends a sample and the starter that actually made it. Then your friends can make their own and pass it along to their friends. This is why the bread is called Friendship Bread.

Years ago, when all our children were young, Friendship Bread was a regular part of our family's kitchen for a time. Now it's back again, at least for a while.

In the day of instant packaging, where does a recipe fit in that takes ten days to make? Maybe it's a throwback to our past – to those days not so very long ago when everything we did took time and where bread that took 10 days to make was not as extraordinary as it seems to us today.

My love to each of you,



Clyde

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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.

Bible Student's Notebook[™]

PO Box 265, Windber, PA 15963

Office: (800) 784-6010

bsn@studyshef.com

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

André Sneidar – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

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RECONCILIATION (continued from page 1669)

atonement [at-one-ment]" (Romans 5:11).²

What a work of reconciliation – atonement – restoration. Nothing stands between the Father and His creation.

For whom did God accomplish this work in Christ?

The World!

*"Reconciling **the world**"* (:19).

*"The reconciling of **the world**"* (Romans 11:15).

*"**Reconcile all things** unto Himself"* (Colossians 1:20).

Reconciliation was not just for a few – it was not just believers who were restored to God – the scope of Christ's atoning work was revealed by Paul to be *worldwide!*

The far-reaching, triumphant cross-work of Jesus Christ was not limited to those who currently believe. He was not partial in His work and accomplishments. He was all-inclusive. Christ did His wonderful work for the whole world.

DIVINE RECONCILIATION

*"Reconciling the world **unto Himself**"* (:19).

*"Reconcile all things **unto Himself**"* (Colossians 1:20).

This reconciliation is not man's work in any sense. Man is not restoring himself to God; man is not coming to God; but God is coming to man, in Christ: *"that God was in Christ, reconciling the world **unto Himself**."*

The world did not reconcile *itself* to God. Instead,

2. Or, as other translations have, *"received the reconciliation"* (American Standard Version, J.N. Darby's Translation, Young's Literal Translation).

it was the Father Who reconciled the world to Himself. He did so without any effort or merit on man's part, for He did the work of reconciliation while the world was still His *"enemy."* He reconciled the world to Himself by the death of His dear Son.

Reconciliation – the restoration to divine favor – is purely a divine work. It does not take place by *any* effort whatsoever on man's part. The Father *"Himself"* did the work through the *at-one-ment* of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The world has now been made at-one with the Father.

NON-IMPUTATION OF SIN

*"**Not imputing** their trespasses unto them"* (:19).

Just what does this worldwide reconciliation involve? It involves the trespasses of the world against Him; and that He is not imputing them. This is an amazing revelation of truth committed to Paul; a revolutionary doctrine in contrast to record-keeping orthodoxy.

Most of Christendom could not even fathom that the believer's sins are not being *"imputed"* (Romans 4:8); let alone that the work of Christ has obtained something on a far grander scale. When Paul says, *"Not imputing their trespasses unto them,"* the *"them"* is a reference to the *"the world."* Paul taught that God was not imputing the world's trespasses!

And just what is *"imputation"*? It is record-keeping. It is the bookkeeping process of accounting, or numbering.³

Paul is telling us that God does not tally man's trespasses against him. He does not record them. He does not keep an account of them. He does ►

3. *Strong's Greek Lexicon* #3049, *"logizomai,"* meaning "to take an inventory." Some of the other ways that it is translated in the *King James Version* are: count, account, number, and reckon.

Noah Webster defines *"impute"* as, "to charge; to attribute; to set to the account of ... we impute crimes, sins, trespasses, faults, blame, &c., to the guilty persons." (*American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828)

not charge them to one's record. This is because,

"Christ died for our sins" (I Corinthians 15:3).

And,

"Because ... if One died for all, then were all dead" (II Corinthians 5:14).⁴

MINISTRY AND WORD OF RECONCILIATION

*"Hath given to us the **ministry of reconciliation** ... Hath committed unto us the **word of reconciliation**" (:18-19).*

What a change of attitude reconciliation is from the religious mindset and worldview.

We, as *first-trusters*,⁵ have the privilege of enjoying

4. Or, as other translations have:

"that One died for all, therefore all died" (The Holy Bible in Modern English, 1903, Ferrar Fenton)

"that if one for all died, then the whole died" (Young's Literal Translation, 1863, Robert Young).

5. *"That we should be to the praise of His glory, who **first trusted in Christ**" (Ephesians 1:12).*

Do not be discouraged as you look around you. What you see is not the end of God's plan and purpose. Granted, the world is filled with sin and unbelief – that *"the whole world lieth in wickedness"* (I John 5:19) – but God is not yet done. Don't judge the final outcome by the current state of things. This is not the finished product of God.

God has not saved us simply to abandon the rest of mankind in eternal torment. We are just the *first-trusters*, the *firstfruits* of Christ's glorious redemptive work. Ultimately God's plan includes *all* of His creation. None will be permanently lost. Divine love never fails to reach its goal.

Those of us who now trust the Lord Jesus Christ are but the beginning of God's glorious work. We are but the *first-trusters* in His glorious design.

In every harvest there is that small portion of the crop that matures early, before the vast majority of the rest. The *firstfruits* are a token of that which is to come – the full harvest.

Under the Old Testament economy the *firstfruits* belonged to God, and were holy unto Him.

In every generation, and in every place, God has had His *firstfruits*; those that come to harvest earlier than the rest. What a blessed privilege to be the *firstfruits* of the Lord, and just as God has brought us to faith, He too will bring the rest of His creation.

What a joy to be in on God's *early* plans! As a part of the *firstfruits* of the harvest we have so much to be thankful for.

this reconciliation, living in the realization of divine favor, that nothing stands between us and the Father.

God has given the *first-trusters* a ministry. We are the Father's *"vessels of mercy"* (Romans 9:23); we are to see all men in their relationship to this all-inclusive reconciliation of God. Our ministry is not institutional, nor organizational; it is simply to share with those around us the Father's love and acceptance of them through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We only entreat them,

*"in Christ's stead, **'Be ye reconciled to God'**" (II Corinthians 5:20).*

We are not encouraging them to "do" anything; but to simply "*be*" what the Father has already made them: "*reconciled to God.*"

That which is committed to us is not the "ministry of condemnation," nor the "ministry of retribution," nor the "ministry of judgment" – rather, it is the "*ministry of reconciliation.*"

Ours is not the "word of wrath," nor the "word of punishment," nor the "word of damnation" – rather, it is the "*word of reconciliation.*"

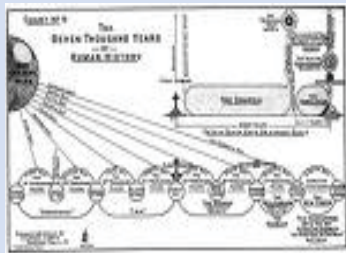
Our very lives – even down to the nature and intent of what proceeds out of our mouths – are to be the embodiment of the Father's reconciliation work in Christ Jesus.

***"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man"** (Colossians 4:6).⁶*

(see RECONCILIATION, page 1676)

We are especially thrilled when we think how our Father has made us co-laborers with Him in His sovereign plan to include all of His creation in His full harvest.

6. Note that Paul does not say "**what** ye ought to answer" – but "**how** ye ought to answer." How? "*always with grace!*" ... "*That it may minister grace unto the hearers*" (Ephesians 4:29).



God's Present Purpose

Select Readings on

Right Division

(Part 2)

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

BOOK OF ACTS: A TEMPORARY AND TRANSITIONAL DISPENSATION

We must recognize the intensely Jewish character of the Pentecostal dispensation.

The Jerusalem Church then was Jewish. Their Bible was the Jewish Scriptures. The Jewish temple was their house of prayer and common meeting-place. Their beliefs and hopes and words and acts all marked them out as Jews.

My contention is that the Acts, as a whole, is the record of a temporary and transitional dispensation in which blessing was again offered to the Jews and again rejected.

Sir Robert Anderson (1841-1918)
The Silence of God, Page 56

THE TWELVE APOSTLES AND PAUL

In comparing the ministry of the twelve apostles with that of the Apostle Paul, we must observe carefully:

1. The twelve were chosen by Christ ON EARTH (Luke 6:13) while Paul was later chosen by Christ IN HEAVEN (Acts 9:3-5; 26:16).

2. Prior to Paul's conversion the twelve had known Christ only ON EARTH (I John 1:1). Even at His ascension to heaven "a cloud received Him OUT OF THEIR SIGHT" (Acts 1:9). But Paul knew Christ only IN HEAVEN, having never seen Him on earth (Acts 26:16; I Corinthians 15:8).

3. The twelve represented their own nation. The

number twelve has no connection with the "one Body" of Christ. As we know, Jacob of old "begat the twelve patriarchs" (Acts 7:8). From these sprang the twelve tribes of Israel. These tribes had twelve princes over them (Numbers 1:16). Even when Israel was ruled by kings there were still to be twelve princes – one over each tribe (I Chronicles 27:22). Thus, as He went forth proclaiming "the gospel of the kingdom" our Lord chose twelve princes for the twelve thrones in the kingdom to come (Matthew 19:28).

On the other hand, Paul, as one apostle, represents the "one Body," the Church of today (Romans 12:5; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4). However, he was both a born Hebrew and a born Roman, so represented believing Jews and Gentiles "reconciled ... unto God in one body by the cross ..." (Ephesians 2:16).

4. The twelve were sent to proclaim Christ's kingdom "at hand" (Matthew 10:7), and later to offer its establishment on earth (Acts 3:19-26). But Paul was sent to proclaim "the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), while the kingdom is held in abeyance.

5. The ministry of the twelve was based on covenant promises (Isaiah 60:1-3; Luke 1:70-79; Acts 3:22-26). Paul's ministry was not based on covenant promises, but wholly on the grace of God through Christ (Romans 3:21-28; 5:20-21; Ephesians 1:6-7; 2:7; etc.).

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

THE “SAND” AND “STAR” SEED OF ABRAHAM

There are some of the redeemed who are going to inherit the earth. Some are going to walk the streets of the New Jerusalem. And some who are seated with Christ, far above all principalities and powers, shall reign with Him in the heavenlies. Some are going to form the kingdom of priests upon the earth. Some will constitute the bride of the Lamb. Some will be the Body of Christ, with Christ as the Head. Some are going to constitute the “sand” seed of Abraham, others the “star” seed. Some have their calling from before the overthrow of the world and reign with Christ in the heavenlies. The apostle Paul tells us that “*the dispensation of God which is given to me for you*” constitutes the glorious fact of “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:25-27).

William B. Hallman
The Uniqueness of Our Calling (1985)

RIGHTLY DIVIDING

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).

The Word of truth, then, has right divisions, and it must be evident that, as one cannot be “*a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*” without observing them, so *any study* of that Word which ignores those divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing. Many Christians freely confess that they find the study of the Bible weary work. More find it so, who are ashamed to make this confession.

C.I. Scofield (1843-1921)
Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth (1885)

A COFFIN FOR THE LAW

God had barely given the Law to Moses when He ordered that it be put in a coffin. That’s right – a coffin. The reason for this is that the Mosaic covenant clearly stipulated:

“Now therefore, IF YE WILL OBEY MY VOICE INDEED, and keep My covenant,

THEN ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine”
(Exodus 19:5).

Israel, of course, did not obey God’s voice indeed, but broke the Law before Moses even got down from Sinai. It was because of this that God, in grace, commanded:

“And they shall make an ark ...” (Exodus 25:10).

This word “ark” is rendered “coffin” in the last verse of Genesis and that is its simple meaning. But why did God order a coffin as the very first article of furniture for the tabernacle? The answer is: To put the Law in. Read it for yourself:

“And thou shalt put into the COFFIN the testimony [the Law] which I shall give thee ... and thou shalt put the MERCY SEAT above upon the coffin ...” (:16, 21).

If God had not put the covenant of the Law in a coffin and met His people from a “mercy seat” none of them ever would have been saved ...

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

THE STEWARDSHIP OF GOD

It is important to understand accurately the meaning of stewardship. The Greek word rendered stewardship, *oikonomia*, is the same word rendered *dispensation* in Ephesians 1:10 and 3:9. According to ancient usage, *oikonomia* denoted a stewardship, a dispensation, or an administration. At the time of Paul, many rich families had stewards whose responsibility was to distribute food and other supplies to members of the household. Our Father has a great family, a divine household. Because our Father has such vast riches, there is the need in His household for many stewards to dispense these riches to His children. This dispensing is the stewardship. Hence, a stewardship is a dispensation.

This dispensation is the stewardship with the dispensing ministry of the ministers of God. This ministry of dispensing is also God’s administration.

Today God administrates by dispensing Himself into us. This stewardship, this dispensation, this administration, is God's economy.

Witness Lee (1905-1997)
Life-study of Colossians, pp. 89-90

THE ONLY CHURCH

"There is One Body" (Ephesians 4:4).

This is, of course, *"the body, the church"* (Colossians 1:18); it is *"the church which is His body"* (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is not an organization that men can join; it is an organism to which God adds all believers ...

The Church which is the Body of Christ is the only church that God is building today ... The body of Christ is made up of all Christians, but only Christians. The Lord adds believers to His church and seals them in that body (Ephesians 4:3). It is a living organism that He is building.

Are you keeping the unity of the Spirit by being identified only as a member of His *"one body"*?

R.B. Shiflet
The Unity of the Spirit, p. 3

THE TIME ELEMENT IN SCRIPTURE

How many Scriptural problems would be solved, how many seeming contradictions explained, if we were more careful to note the time element, emphasized so strongly in the Word of God.

In Romans 5:12 we learn that sin entered the human race by Adam. Then later *"the law entered"* (:20). But still later the Apostle Paul arose to say: ***"But now, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested"*** (Romans 3:21).

Early in man's history blood sacrifices were required for acceptance with God (See Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 11:4), later circumcision and the Law (Genesis 17:14; Exodus 19:5), and still later, repentance and water baptism (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). But not until Paul do we learn of salvation by grace through faith alone, on the basis of Christ's finished, all-sufficient work of redemption.

This is why the Apostle refers in Galatians 3:23 to *"the faith which should afterward be revealed."* This is why he declares that our Lord *"gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,"* and adds: *"whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle"* (I Timothy 2:6-7).

It is only as we recognize the time element in Scripture that we see the difference between *"the kingdom of heaven"* and *"the Body of Christ,"* between *"the gospel of the kingdom"* and *"the gospel of the grace of God,"* between the *"dispensation of law"* and *"the dispensation of the grace of God."*

A comparison of Romans 3:21 and 26 shows how this time element is emphasized in Scripture. After discussing the function of the Law in Verses 19 and 20, the Apostle Paul declares: ***"But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested ..."*** Then, in verse 26 he states that it is God's purpose: *"To declare, I say, at this time His [Christ's] righteousness; that He [God] might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."*

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

WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED AT CALVARY?

If the Bible makes anything clear, it is the fact that the secret of all God's good news to men is centered in Calvary. It was because Christ was to die for sin that God could proclaim good news to sinners down through the ages.

It was not until some time after the crucifixion, however, that *"the preaching of the cross"* was widely proclaimed as a message by Paul in *"the gospel [good news] of the grace of God"* (I Corinthians 1:18; Acts 20:24).

The proclamation of *"the gospel of the grace of God"* was the natural accompaniment to the revelation of the cross as the secret of God's good news to man. In this proclamation of His over-abounding grace to sinners, everything centers in the cross.

According to Paul's epistles *"we have redemption through His [Christ's] blood"* (Ephesians 1:7), we are *"justified by His blood"* (Romans 5:9), *"reconciled* ▶

to God by the death of His Son” (Romans 5:10), “made nigh by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:13), and “made the righteousness of God in Him” because “God hath made Him to be sin for us” (II Corinthians 5:21).

The “covenant” of the Law was abolished by the cross (Colossians 2:14), the curse of the Law was removed by the cross (Galatians 3:13), the “middle wall of partition” was broken down by the cross (Ephesians 2:14-15), and believers in Christ are “reconciled to God in one body by the cross” (Ephesians 2:16). Little wonder Paul calls this message “*the preaching of the cross*”!

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

IS WATER BAPTISM A TESTIMONY?

In a sense, however, the baptism of believers by water in this age is a testimony – a bad testimony. When the Galatian believers submitted to circumcision it was a bad testimony (Galatians 5:2-3). Circumcision, while a part of Peter’s “*gospel of the circumcision*” had no place in “*the gospel of the uncircumcision*” committed to Paul (Galatians 2:7).

And just as circumcision was connected with “*the gospel of the circumcision*” so water baptism was connected with “*the gospel of the kingdom*” (See Matthew 3:2, 6; 10:5-7; c.f. John 1:31; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:36-38; Acts 3:19-21).

We solemnly declare that the present day practice of water baptism is a reflection on the grace of God and a confession of a lack of appreciation of the finished work of Christ, and the believer’s completeness in Him (See Ephesians 1:6; Colossians 2:10).

Furthermore, it betrays a poor understanding of the heavenly character and position of the Church of this age (See Ephesians 2:6; 1:3; Colossians 3:1-3).

Be a Berean. Search the Scriptures and see whether these things are so.

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

RECONCILIATION (continued from page 1672)

ULTIMATE REALIZATION

The world has been *unioned* with the Father. He has removed all enmity, division, and estrangement. Through Christ the world has been brought into the fullness of divine favor.

Not all the world has this knowledge at this time. They are still “*alienated and enemies,*” but this condition exists *ONLY in their minds* (Colossians 1:21).⁷ This is not how things *really* are now. The world only needs to be brought to the realization of their reconciliation, and this *will* come in due course.

The Father has already *made* all men reconciled to Himself. Now, men only need to “*be*” what He has made them – “*reconciled to God.*” In our Father’s own good course of time, all will indeed “*be reconciled to God.*”

Until that time, ours is truly a *good news* ministry; and we are privileged to live in the spirit of divine reconciliation – allowing it to permeate our attitudes, hearts and lives. In the spirit of our Father, we are free to live in personal reconciliation among ourselves and with others.



7. “*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled*”

Interestingly the word that is translated “*reconciled*” here is *Strong’s Greek Lexicon* #604 “*apokatallasso*” which is a compound word from #575 and #2644, meaning “to reconcile fully.”

This is the word that is used in Colossians 1:20:

“*And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*”

By Paul’s use of the word here, we can see that “*all things*” will indeed one day be “*fully reconciled*” unto Him. This “*full reconciliation*” takes place when the *mental alienation* is finally removed in all creation.

“*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:10-11).

