



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VII
Issue 172

Men Make God's Love Too Narrow

The trite old adage, "While there's life there's hope," seemingly has influenced many in their appraisal of God's mercy, causing them to conclude, without scriptural authority, that the moment of death for each individual of the human race marks the full end of opportunity to accept the grace of God through Christ and be blessed thereby.

This is a strange viewpoint, for all Christians are very sure that those who continue in sin and unbelief for as many as seventy-five or more years can be forgiven as readily by God as those who repent at the end of five, or even fewer years of accountable sin. Yet, as some claim, if one happens to die at an early age, God's mercy is immediately withdrawn from such a one, consequently there is no hope of salvation for him.

It has been well said that men make God's love too narrow by false limits of their own. That this is true is revealed by Jesus' statement that we should forgive our enemies not merely seven times, but seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21, 22). When Jesus admonishes us to forgive seventy times seven, we must conclude that this is what He would do, and what His Heavenly Father would do, when occasion demanded. As Christians, we all know of this seventy times seven formula of Divine love and mercy, yet many are ready to cry "heresy" at the least suggestion of what they call a "second chance."

We cannot, of course, judge the motives of those

who hold to and teach views which are contrary to the Scriptures and foreign to the great fundamental attitudes of the Divine character of wisdom, justice, love, and power. It is probably safe to say that in the case of the vast majority they believe certain things because they were taught to believe them by someone in whom they placed their great confidence.

However, if we go back into the Dark Ages, through the pages of church history, and note the development of false and God-dishonoring teachings, it seems apparent that the so-called "church fathers" realized that much could be accomplished in the way of keeping the masses in line with the church by holding over them the whip of fear.

True, the Catholic Church does not teach that all hope ends at death – except for heretics and the willfully incorrigible – but the unhappy prospect of purgatorial suffering after death as a means of finally becoming purified has presented such a terrifying outlook that there have been few who have not been glad to take every precaution

(see **NARROW**, page 1703)

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A Memorial

CLYDE L. PILKINGTON, SR.

January 6, 1911 - February 14, 1996

It is hard to believe that the greatest man that I ever knew has been *asleep in Christ* (I Thessalonians 4:14) for nearly 13 years. Today is his birthday; he would have been 98. This man was my father.



I am not sure, but maybe many children see their fathers as the greatest men they have ever known. One thing is for sure: I truly miss him. He was a faithful and loving husband and father, and I was very privileged to have been his son.

I shall never forget his weak and gentle voice attempting to sing and hum the hymns of yesteryear in his last days. As I looked into his eyes for the last time, I remember him looking straight back into mine. I told him that I loved him so very much and that we would miss him greatly, but that I rejoiced that we will see each other again. A tear came to his eye and he took a few long, delayed, restful sighs and closed his eyes.

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (I Corinthians 15:22).

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our lord Jesus Christ” (I Corinthians 15:55, 57).

It has been my honor and privilege to have my mother live with me the past few years. She was his great love; and he hers. As anyone who knew them knew, they were very close. Even after 13 years she still misses him dearly. Some days are extremely hard for her; but her pain is tempered with the joy of resurrection hope. I appreciate those of you who have expressed your love to her over these years.

“Happy Birthday, dear dad. I love you very much. Rest well. I will see you in the morning!”

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Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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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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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AARP

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“The hoary [gray] head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness” (Proverbs 16:31).

I received my invitation to join AARP by mail this week. I will turn 50 in a few days. I consider reaching 50 to be an honored marker in my life. I have actually been looking forward to my AARP letter to arrive for months. I probably won't join – as I am not really the “joining” type; that's not really the issue in my heart. Although I have no plans on retiring (now or in the future – why should I, as long as I can do what I love to do!), it just seems an appropriate token of this milestone in my life.

I have not dreaded being 50. After all, what is the alternative? In fact I embrace it as part of God's all-wise plan of life – and what a plan it is! My hair is even beginning to have a few strands of gray – for which I am thankful. This is the *prime* of life! I finally seem to have a true grip on life in general, and my Father's life in particular. I am thankful to be turning 50.

In this strange day when youth is valued above age, we must allow our perspective to be adjusted by the sure truth of the Bible. The Scripture places great worth upon age.

We live in a society that seems to devalue old age, while placing importance on youth. It can be seen everywhere – geared to the youth, being young, looking young, restoring youth – but none of this

is God's plan: He has not designed life to work this way. He values old age, and He knows what He is doing. Always.

Do not be tempted to give in to society's idea that just in a man's *prime* – just when he is truly ready to get started – it is time for him to “retire” and go play golf.

Alfred Montapert wrote concerning age:

Too old to be useful?

Don't you believe it!

Only years make men. Rarely do the great men of history distinguish themselves before they are fifty, and between fifty and eighty they do their best work – both as regards to quality and quantity ...

Noah Webster, when between sixty and seventy, performed the Herculean task of his life in the production of his dictionary ...

Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (on his back, on a scaffold) when he was nearly ninety. (Alfred Armand Montapert, *Success Planning Manual* (1967), page 243). ■

NARROW (continued from page 1701)

possible, even to the placing of financial burdens upon themselves and their families, in order to shorten as much as possible their supposedly necessary sojourn in purgatory.

But Protestants did away with purgatory, and lost thereby a fruitful source of revenue for their various church organizations. However, orthodox Protestantism retained the element of *fear* in their viewpoint,

intensifying it tremendously by teaching that there was no provision for the purgation of sins after death – that those who die in sin are forever lost, which to most Protestant churches means eternal torture in a hell of fire and brimstone.

The Everlasting Gospel
(A very old pamphlet, with no author or date given.) ■



Mystery Babylon

Select Readings on the Religious System



(Part 2)

"... Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth" (Revelation 17:5).

THE MAN-MADE LEASH OF AUTHORITY

"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand" (II Corinthians 1:24).

The authority of denominations and sects in the form of tradition frustrates further needed reform and conformity to the Word of God. The authority of man-made institutions is a stubborn thing which resists change ...

We, as the saints of God, find ourselves fenced off institutionally from one another based on various interpretations of men ... The frustration is compounded by the mislabeling of man's tradition as "the pure doctrine of God." ...

The disciples were instructed by Christ to conform to God rather than to man's authority. Yet even in Christ's day the authorities resisted Christ Himself and demanded that He conform to their religion.

...

When doctrine is carved in stone, as is a confession or doctrinal statement, we merely promote another man-made tradition, no matter how close it is to the truth; because if it is possible to get closer to the truth, we find out that we are tethered to someone else's understanding by a leash of authority and can proceed no closer. If we dare to break the tether, we threaten all our relationships that are still tied to it and face the trauma of breaking the communion of saints built over a lifetime. Thus one might more readily be inclined as well to stick with mind-numbing tradition rather than suffer the consequences. ...

We ought not to set up false and invalid authority structures to force conformity to some uniform human religious standard. We can't force what we believe on someone else. They must accept it and own it for themselves. Legislation of doctrine will not result in ownership. They are God's servant like we all are, and we all answer to God and not to ordinary men no matter what titles or gifts they claim. Christ alone is our authority to Whom we shall answer and He is our standard. Christ ought to be our exclusive polity.

You are only fooling yourself in thinking that there must be some kind of human intermediary authority! If we think we can become something more, it can only be ministers, *i.e.*, servants and not rulers.

Ross Purdy
I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline
Bible Student's Press (2008)

UNAUTHORIZED INTERMEDIARY AUTHORITY

"... The head of every man is Christ ..." (I Corinthians 11:3).

When someone else comes in between a man and his true Head (Christ the Lord) as some intermediary authority, that entity assumes portions of the roles belonging to each. Such an authority relieves a man of the responsibility God gave to the individual. In turn, such authority then denies God His direct authority over the man.

Ross Purdy
I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline
Bible Student's Press (2008)

WORSHIPPING CHRISTIAN WORK

Where would you be if God took away all your Christian work? Too often it is our Christian work that is worshiped and not God.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)
(unknown source)

“CHURCHINESS”

There are doubtless many reasons for the degeneration of Christianity into “churchiness,” and the narrowing of the Gospel for all mankind into a set of approved beliefs. But the chief cause must be the worship of an inadequate god, a cramped and regulated god who is “a good churchman,” according to the formulas of the worshipper.

J.B. Phillips (1906-1982)
For This Day (1975), page 201

REPUDIATE ORGANIZED CHRISTIANITY

“Wherefore, Christ also ... suffered without the camp. Let us therefore go to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”

The camp was Judaism, and He suffered without the camp because He repudiated Judaism and stood for the realization of all God’s thoughts as in Himself personally ... It is the Christ who is the full sum and embodiment of all God’s thoughts and ways, and that takes the place of Judaism, and He, therefore, repudiated Judaism and suffered without the camp. Let us go to Him without the camp.

If you are going to take this line you are going to repudiate organized Christianity, going to repudiate Christendom as a traditional system, going to repudiate that order of things which is made, and going, therefore, to suffer reproach and be outside of the camp suffering His reproach. In other words, in line with what we have said earlier, we are immediately going to come up against that force of antagonism to stop what has come in through the death and resurrection and exaltation of the Lord Jesus, the heavenly thing ...

Organized Christianity as it is today cannot understand anything that is not organized, that is not advertised, that is not run. It must have names that carry weight, that mean influence. If you can get people with some title you are going to have the guarantee of success for your Christian enterprise. And so the letters and the titles strung on are a necessary requisite for the success of the Lord’s work. You must write it up in the press, you must give a report of it, you must be able to make some kind of return that people can read, and say, “This is a successful thing.” If you cannot do that the whole thing is doomed to failure.

They say, you must advertise, you must have publicity, you must organize, you must bring in all these things to support it, to carry it on. If you did none of those; if you were never heard of in the press; if you never had a report; if you never had any names; if there was nothing at all that came out in a public way for people to take account of, what is the verdict of organized Christianity? Nothing is being done. You are doing nothing. It is a-hole-in-a-corner sort of thing. Is that true? What must we say about that? ...

That may leave you perhaps in a vague, perplexed position, not knowing where you are, but I have no doubt about the truth of the message. If you do not feel you can accept it; if you disagree; if you revolt; if you feel it cuts clean across all your training, all your acceptance; if you feel that it runs counter to all that you know, all I ask of you is honesty with God ... Have honest dealings with the Lord. Please do not go away hot in spirit, antagonistic; do not lay this at the door of any man. At least give God a chance. It may be costly, it may be that you will have to be prepared to accept the position that God’s greatest work through you is something hidden, something secret, something that no one can read about, perhaps no one can discern what is going on; and it is the mightiest work that God is doing.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)
The Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken,
Chapter 2

(see **BABYLON**, page 1708)

We're Blogging!

We have been encouraged on occasions to blog. So here we go.

What is a blog?

The word *blog* is short for *weblog*, and is defined as “a web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer; also, the contents of such a site” – *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition copyright © 2008

With the assistance of my dear friend and editor, André Sneidar, I have begun providing a number of themed blogs.

We have set up a blog where we will post the *Daily Email Goodies* – my own daily Bible study articles. You can visit this at:

<http://dailygoodies.wordpress.com>

We have also set up 12 themed blogs. These will allow us to post collections of “Goodies” based on common topics. You are welcome to subscribe to as many of these particular blogs as you have interest in. We have blogs for the following themes:

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Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.'s Personal Blog

Clyde also has a blog where he shares personal thoughts, information, updates, etc.:

<http://thegreatadventureoffaith.wordpress.com>

Why Are We Blogging?

- (1) It gives us the opportunity to specialize and personalize our message.
- (2) It allows interaction; as readers can post their own comments.
- (3) It increases results on search engines.

Online Articles

We have also set up past articles from the Bible Student's Notebook online. We currently have over 100 full-length studies available. You can read our online articles at:

<http://www.pilkingtonandsons.com/Articles.htm>

James Shrigley

(April 5, 1813 – July 24, 1905)

James Shrigley was a Universalist minister, a United States Army chaplain during the Civil War, a leader in the *Pennsylvania Universalist Convention*; a supporter of *Murray Grove*,¹ a librarian, and a historian.



faithful to the trust.”

He studied in Dana, Massachusetts, and later under John H. Willis at Stafford, Connecticut. He was ordained in 1835 at his first church settlement in North Granby, Connecticut.

He was born in Delph, Yorkshire, England, the fifth of nine children born to John and Mary (Shaw) Shrigley. In 1821 the family moved to the United States and settled in Putney, Vermont. James’s parents had belonged to the Church of England and he had been christened in the Anglican Church outside of Delph.

Because of the excesses and abuses they perceived in the Anglican Church, the family had soon after joined the reformist Methodists in Delph.

James’s writings indicate that even as a young boy he was troubled by the church’s belief that salvation was not available to all people. He begged his mother to go with him to hear a Universalist minister when he came to Putney.

James, who had shown the most academic promise of the Shrigley children, was sent to an academy in nearby Brattleboro. When the family’s fortune turned, however, he was called home and apprenticed to a cabinetmaker. When he was free from his obligation, he decided to follow a career in the Universalist ministry. Years later he said, “This faith came to me in my earliest years intuitively. I did not inherit it, nor did I receive it from the writings of men – God must have given it to me, and I have tried to be

Shrigley served churches: Exeter, New Hampshire, 1838-39; Baltimore, Maryland, 1841-48; Reading, Pennsylvania, 1850-54 and 1856-58; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1854-56; and Richmond, Virginia, 1858-61. While he served in Baltimore he met and in 1842 married Mary Elizabeth Myers. The Shrigleys had four sons, one of whom died young.

In Philadelphia Shrigley served local churches and ministered to war wounded. After he had applied for Chaplaincy in the United States Army, a group of Protestant ministers traveled to Washington hoping to dissuade President Abraham Lincoln from making the appointment. The President asked on what grounds they were opposed to Shrigley. They replied that Shrigley believed in the salvation of all souls, and that even the rebels would be saved! Lincoln’s response was that, if that be so, then Shrigley deserved to be a Chaplain in the U.S. Army. Shrigley served at the McClellan Army Hospital in Philadelphia until 1865.

Following the war Shrigley was a supply pastor in and around Philadelphia. He held various offices with the Pennsylvania Universalist Convention, including secretary and historian. He was Librarian of the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Nelson C. Simonson

1. Murray Grove, a Universalist retreat and conference center in Good Luck, NJ [now Lanoka Harbor], has been traditionally considered the site where Universalism in America began. Its roots go back to landowner Thomas Potter in 1760, where John Murray, in 1770, preached the gospel of universal love there.

THE APOSTASY OF CHRISTENDOM

For many centuries the hireling shepherds of the religious world have fed their followers upon a steady diet of something called "Christianity," but which, when it is analyzed bears little relationship to the blessed Son of God. What we see on every hand is only the apostasy of Christendom, the popular religion of the western world, centering in institutions called the church. In order to give it importance, its leaders and teachers have not hesitated to give it a place of essentiality along with the Lord Jesus and a place of supremacy over the Word of God.

However, it is my conviction that if the Lord Jesus were to appear upon the earth, He would disown and denounce the professing church and enter into fellowship with those individual believers who gave Him and Him alone the place of preeminence and all-sufficiency. The majority give Christ NO place, the professing church give Him A place, a very few give Him THE place of preeminence and all-sufficiency. I take my place and cast my lot with the few.

Otis Q. Sellers
The Word of Truth; Vol. 8, No. 2, 1945

IMITATING PAGANS

A preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have towards a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all combined to establish the reign of superstition on the ruins of Christianity.

John Dowling
The History of Romanism (1845), page 99



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