



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume VIII
Issue 176

Participation in Divine Life

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ...” (I John 3:2).

The Lord Jesus Christ is our means of participation in divine life. We join in the life of God through our union with the Son. “In Christ” we share the very life the Son has with the Father.

The Son of God “... proceeded forth and came **from God** ...” (John 8:42). “He liveth by the power of God” (II Corinthians 13:4); and, “In that He liveth, He liveth unto God” (Romans 6:10). He is the beloved of the Father (Matthew 3:17; 17:5) Whose sure testimony is, “I do always those things that please **Him** [the Father]” (John 8:29).

JESUS CHRIST: THE DIVINE PROTOTYPE

Paul Billheimer has written wonderfully about our place in the Lord Jesus Christ:

Created originally in the image of God, redeemed humanity has been elevated by means of a divinely conceived genetic process ... to the highest rank of all created beings ... This union goes beyond a mere formal, functional, or idealistic harmony or rapport. It is an organic unity ... We become ... actual generated sons of God (I John 3:2), “partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4) ... generated by His own life ...

From all eternity God purposed to have a family

circle of His very own, not only created but also generated by His own life, incorporating His own seed, “sperma,” “genes,” or heredity. Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own, through what Christ would do for us (Ephesians 1:4; also 5:25-27, 32). In order to obtain this personal, organic family relationship, God conceived the infinitely vast and infinitely wise plan of creation plus redemption ... in order to bring “many sons into glory” (Hebrews 2:10) ...

Christ is the Prototype after which all other sons are being fashioned ... God’s purpose in the plan of redemption – to produce ... an entirely new and unique species, exact replicas of His Son with whom He will share His glory and His dominion, and who will constitute a royal progeny and form the governing and administrative staff of His eternal kingdom.

While we recognize the infinite distinction between the “Son” and the “many sons” born into the family, yet such is their heredity ... that He recognizes them as bona fide blood-brothers ...

Participation in Divine Life.....	1733
God’s Forgotten Gift: Select Readings on Trials and Sufferings (Part 3).....	1737

Christ is the divine Prototype after which this new species is being made. They are to be exact copies of Him, true genotypes ... As sons of God, begotten by Him, incorporating into their fundamental being and nature the very genes of God, they rank above all other created beings and are elevated to the most sublime height possible ...¹

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S LIFE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the very life of the Father Himself. "In Him" we participate in His life – in divine life.

Christ has the life of the Father in Him.

For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26).

... I live by the Father ... (John 6:57).

... He liveth by the power of God (II Corinthians 13:4).

We have the life of the Son in us.

... Christ ... is our life (Colossians 3:4).

... God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son (I John 5:11).

... The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 1:1).

... Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Galatians 2:20).

Our being "in Christ" is a strongly emphasized Pauline revelation. It will have great impact if we realize our genuine participation in His divine life.

*For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. **And ye are complete in Him**, which is the head of all principality and power (Colossians 2:9-10).*

1. Paul Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne* (First Edition, 1975) pp. 33-37.

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume VIII, No. 176 – February 17, 2009

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."

Subscription

Electronic Version (e-mailed to you)

1 Year (52 issues) – \$10; 2 Years (104 issues) – \$20

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.

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

Visit our online bookstore at: www.StudyShelf.com

Copyright © 1989-2009 Pilkington & Sons

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S NATURE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the nature of the Father Himself. We often hear of the believer having a new nature. This new nature is not a new nature of our own; it is the very nature of God.

*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (II Peter 1:4).*

The idea is *not* that we somehow will become God; but that we are partakers of His nature – growing into the likeness and character of the Father.

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST'S SONSHIP

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with His Sonship. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, *“the **firstborn among many brethren**”* (Romans 8:29). We are Christ's brethren, and too are God's sons.

We are not just the *“children of God,”* wonderful enough as that is; we are more than that – through our union with Christ, as members of His body, we're the *“sons of God.”* We are not minor² *“children”*; rather, we have the divine position of full-grown sons.³ This is the position of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We have been placed into union with His full adult sonship. This is the glorious principle known as *“adoption.”*

2. The word “minor” is defined as “while in a state of infancy; one who has not attained the age of a major.” The word “minor” is in contrast with the word “major.” Major is defined as “one who has attained his full age, and has acquired all his civil rights; one who is no longer a minor; an adult.” This is a concept known as “majority” – “The state or condition of a person who has arrived at full age. He is then said to be a major, in opposition to minor, which is his condition during infancy.” (Definitions are from *Bouvier's Law Dictionary*, 1856 Edition).
3. “In the Scriptures those who are too young to have a voice in affairs, who need a guardian, are minors ... The *Authorized Version* renders this “babe,” “child,” and “childish,” ... It is in contrast to the wise and intelligent ... mature man (I Corinthians 13:10-11) ... In Israel a male was mature physically when he arrived at the age of twenty (Leviticus 27:3, 5). Then he was drafted into the host, or army, and was liable to military service, being considered a mature member of the nation ...” A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Babe, Child, Sonship, and Firstborn*

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:5).

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (Romans 8:15).

This wonderful reality is often missed because of the more modern usage of the word “adoption.” We think of taking someone from outside the family and making them a member. This is not the Scriptural concept; instead it is that of placement of one into a full-adult sonship position.

The word translated as “adoption” is the Greek word *huiothesia*. This is *Strong's Greek Lexicon #5206* meaning the “placing as a son,” i.e., “sonship,” or son-placing.

It is defined by A.E. Knoch as:

Sonship, literally son-placing, the station in life accorded a son ...⁴

C.I. Scofield says regarding this:

Adoption is the act of God whereby children of God redeemed by Christ are made adult sons, whose full manifestations as such awaits the resurrection.⁵

Of course the world does not yet know who we are. Our sonship has been completely hidden from them at this time, but one day we will be made manifest. In the resurrection God will reveal to all of creation who His sons are. This will be my glorious coronation day.

*For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the **manifestation**⁶ of the sons of God (Romans 8:19).*

Until our manifestation as *“the sons of God,”* the rest of God's creation doesn't know who we are. As ►

4. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Babe, Child, Sonship, and Firstborn*
5. C.I. Scofield, *The Scofield Bible Correspondence Course* (1907), Vol. III, page 412.
6. *Strong's Greek Lexicon #602* “apokalupsis” – defined as “disclosure” and translated elsewhere in the *King James Version* as – “appearing” and “revelation.”

we walk through our life, the circumstances will not reflect our true identity. In fact, we are not exempt from all the apparent vanities of this *darkland*. We have our share of the *darkside* – suffering, pain, discouragement, difficulties, weariness, pressure, and the like – but we are not defined by their details. Although we’re beckoned to the contrary on every side, we have a higher life – the *high-life* from above, from the *lightland*, the *lightside* of divine life – in which we are called to walk within this radiant light as our Father’s full-grown, adult sons.

As we go through the various details of our earthly lives, let’s not forget who we really are. Remember our divine calling and position as God’s full-grown sons. Let’s live in this as our day-by-day, moment-by-moment focus; for that

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST’S INHERITANCE

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the inheritance of the Father.

... Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ...
(Romans 8:17).

What an amazing thing it is being God’s heirs. We could never have dreamed up such a thing in our wildest imaginations. As with all that we have through our union with Christ, if it were not the record of Scripture itself we must surely oppose it as pure blasphemy.

Yet it is true. We are the heirs of God. With Christ we are inheritors to all that God possesses – and He owns it all!

For the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof (I Corinthians 10:26).

We will not take full possession of all of our inheritance until the resurrection. The earth and its fullness are currently sublet to the sons of Adam. God has placed Himself in Royal Exile, but this will all change one day.

We often forget as we labor through our days that we are sons of the Father, and heirs of all things. We sometimes live in the circumstances as defeated sons of Adam. This is a denial of our true identity, and when we do so, we live in falsehood and hypocrisy.

We deny in the daily details of our lives, who God has actually made us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We currently live in “*this present evil world*,” but we have a divine calling upon our lives. We are to walk here as God’s own sons – shining as lights – and doing so changes our approach and outlook upon the many diverse details of our earthly lives.

PARTICIPATION IN CHRIST’S GLORY

Think of it! Through the Son, we have been brought into union with the very life of God Himself. Not only in the Son do we have forgiveness, redemption, justification and sanctification, we also have glorification.

Christ is the “*image of God*” (II Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15), “*and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*” (I Corinthians 15:49).

*We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, **are changed into the same image from glory to glory**, even as by the Spirit of the Lord* (II Corinthians 3:18).

*... We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world **unto our glory*** (I Corinthians 2:7).

*... The salvation which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory*** (II Timothy 2:10).

PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

How blessed we are that the plan of the Father is that the Lord Jesus Christ is our means of participating in His life. Truly amazing grace!

The Father has brought us into living union with Himself through our oneness with His Son. “*In Christ*” we have been made participants in the very life that the Son of God shares with His Father.

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him** ...* (I John 3:2). ■



God's Forgotten Gift

Select Readings on Trials and Suffering

(Part 3)

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

THIS TEMPORARY LIFE

All that we enjoy, and all that we suffer here, must soon vanish and disappear. The most splendid palace will decay; the most costly pile will molder to dust; the most magnificent city will fall to ruins; the most exquisite earthly pleasures will soon come to an end; and the most extended possessions can be enjoyed but a little time. So too the acutest pain will soon be over; the most lingering disease will soon cease; the evils of the deepest poverty, want and suffering will soon be passed. There is nothing on which the eye can fix, nothing that the heart can desire here, which will not soon fade away; or, if it survives, it is temporary in regard to us. We must soon leave it to others; and if enjoyed, it will be enjoyed while our bodies are slumbering in the grave ... How foolish, then, to make these our portion, and to fix our affections supremely on the things of this life! How foolish also to be very deeply affected by the trials of this life, which at the furthest CAN be endured but a little longer before we shall be forever beyond their reach!

Albert Barnes
Barnes' Notes on the Bible
II Corinthians 4:18

WE MAY EXPECT TROUBLES

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

We are all idealists. We picture to ourselves a life on earth completely free from every hindrance, a kind of spiritual Utopia where we can always control

events, where we can move about as favorites of heaven, adjusting circumstances to suit ourselves. This we feel would be quite compatible with the life of faith and in keeping with the privileged place we hold as children of God.

In thinking thus we simply misplace ourselves; we mistake earth for heaven and expect conditions here below which can never be realized till we reach the better world above. While we live we may expect troubles, and plenty of them...

What then are we to do about our problems? We must learn to live with them until such time as God delivers us from them. If we cannot remove them, then we must pray for grace to endure them without murmuring. Problems patiently endured will work for our spiritual perfecting.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Of God and Men, pp. 121-122

GOD'S PATTERN IN OUR LIVES

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

Yes, God is working out a pattern in our lives. We see only the present and the immediate, but God sees the whole picture of one's life as it will appear when the last stroke of the brush has completed the picture. In this pattern of our lives there are bright spots and dark backgrounds, all of them ►

necessary for the complete portrait. As we pass through the dark experiences of life, we see only that dark piece.

Our experiences resemble a jigsaw puzzle. Here is a black piece that seems to fit nowhere at all. It does not make sense. Here is a little brighter piece. Other sections of the jigsaw puzzle are dark, and some pitch black, and we cry and moan in these black moments; but by-and-by the Master will take all the pieces that look so disconnected to us now and will carefully arrange each piece in its proper place. Then we shall see His completed work – the work of a Master who makes no mistakes.

Listen, when it is all ready, we shall find that the dark pieces of the puzzle were as important to the completion of the full beauty of the pattern as the bright sections.

Take heart, dear child of God. *Father makes no mistakes.* He loves you more than you love Him, and even as the child cannot understand ... an earthly father until he reaches maturity, so, too, we cannot understand all now; but someday we shall understand.

“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12).

M.R. De Haan, M.D (1891-1965)
Broken Things – Why We Suffer, pp. 104-105

FLAWED HUMAN AGENTS

I think many find it too hard to understand that God has found pleasure in working through very flawed human agents ... without removing their flaws or imposing Himself on them. Yet, He is perfectly sovereign! God in His perfect love has condescended to pour out His super-abounding grace on us and by some unfathomable miracle, He accomplishes His purposes!

Ross Purdy
Personal Correspondence, 2007

CONTINUANCE OF CHRIST’S MINISTRY

As God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, it is given to us to share in the continuance of that ministry, “*filling up that which is behind in the afflictions of Christ*” as Paul says in Colossians 1:24 – a most striking statement.

But in all this it is imperative to see that we are not dealing with ideas, but we are in truth and experience being handled by a Person. One might say we have escaped into God in the redemption, but have found that God lives and loves through us in the costly way He did in Christ; we are His body. Beauty, joy, peace, answers to prayer and such daily deliverances that are given, are to be balanced with the darker side which brings us into the “*fellowship of His sufferings.*”

Therefore all that happens to us is God in action, affecting sometimes known and many times unknown and hidden purposes. In the matter of our Union in Christ, it is clear that it is all He in us and not we working out something by our own understanding and wisdom. Thus we are called to “*give thanks in all things.*” This cannot mean that we are to give thanks for evil as such, but that God is in charge of even the darkest scenario that we call evil, as He was in the ministry of Christ’s life and death. The resurrection is the light side of God and His unfailing dealings, but that for us comes later when we shall dwell in the light with Him.

Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)
Confusion to Clarity

THIS I KNOW

I do not know what next may come
Across my pilgrim way;
I do not know tomorrow’s road,
Nor see beyond today.
BUT THIS I KNOW – My Savior knows
the Path I cannot see;
And I can trust His wounded hand
To guide and care for me

I do not know what may befall,
Of sunshine or of rain.
I do not know what may be mine,
Of pleasure or of pain.

BUT THIS I KNOW – My Savior knows
And whatsoe'er it be,
Still I can trust His love to give
What will be best for me.

I do not know what still awaits
Or what the morrow brings:
But with the glad salute of faith,
I hail its opening wings!
FOR THIS I KNOW – that in My Lord
Shall all my needs be met,
And I can trust the Heart of Him
Who has not failed me yet.

E.M. Clarkson
Dark Threads the Weaver Needs (1979), p. 51

THE SYMPHONY OF SYMPATHY

There is a world of difference between *sympathy* and *sorrow*. We can have a genuine sorrow for a friend facing heartbreak over some crushing trial or disappointment without the personal experience of what such a friend may be passing through, but we cannot have *sympathy* for him unless we have sat where he is sitting. [“...I sat where they sat ...” (Ezekiel 3:15)]

Sym means “with,” and *pathy* is from *pathos*, meaning “pain” or “sufferings.” Thus the word implies suffering with another, or the capacity of entering into the feelings or experiences of a sufferer.

Sympathy is born in the womb of experience. Much comfort often comes to a sufferer from the touch of a friendly hand and a few simple words, quietly and kindly spoken ...

There is a close relationship between *symphony* and *sympathy*. The former speaks of the harmony of instrumental sounds; the latter speaks of that harmony which makes suffering hearts one ... The song born of suffering is the only one we can sing for the comfort of others.

Herbert Lockyer (1886-1984)
Dark Threads the Weaver Needs (1979), pp. 18-19, 22

THE BLESSINGS OF CRISIS

The Apostle Paul, who had been through one desperate crisis after another, wrote as follows:

And we know 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).

How many people have found life going along smoothly for years when, all of a sudden, they have found themselves in the middle of some serious crisis!

Perhaps the sudden death of a loved one changed life completely and presented serious problems wholly unanticipated. Perhaps it was the sudden loss of wealth, so that life had to be completely readjusted. There are hundreds of unexpected incidents that can suddenly bring one face to face with stark and stern realities completely unforeseen.

For believers in the Lord Jesus Christ such crises can prove great spiritual blessings. They tend to draw us closer to our heavenly Father, to cause us to pray more and to lean harder upon Him. They show us the insecurity of all that is temporal and give us a greater appreciation of our eternal security in Christ. They give deeper meaning to the Scriptures we study and even to the hymns we sing. They sanctify and enrich our fellowships.

To those – and only those – who truly love God and are “*the called according to His purpose*,” all things do indeed “*work together for good*” – caused by God, of course, to “*work together for good*.”

This is why God’s Word to the Christian is:

Be careful [care full] for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

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

TROUBLES TEND TOWARD EDIFICATION

The many troubles in your household will tend to your edification, if you strive to bear them all in gentleness, patience, and kindness. Keep this ever before you, and remember constantly that God's loving eyes are upon you amid all these little worries and vexations, watching whether you take them as He would desire. Offer up all such occasions to Him, and if sometimes you are put out, and give way to impatience, do not be discouraged, but make haste to regain your lost composure.

Francis De Sales
(1567-1622)

PHILIP THE CALCULATOR

Philip answered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little (John 6:7).

Here in the New Testament was Philip the Calculator – Philip the Mathematician, Philip the Clerk. There was need for a miracle, and Philip set out to calculate the odds ...

The people with the calculators have seen the problem, but they have not seen God. They have figured things out, but they have not figured God in.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
Faith Beyond Reason, p. 137-139

TOUGH SPOTS ... DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Thank God for the tough spots He put you in. That is where He is getting His love through you to the unlovely, and to people who harm you. That is how Jesus lived on earth, expressing the love of God to those who criticized and hated Him; and that is how Jesus now lives in us, expressing the same love through us. He has put us among difficult people, so that His supernatural love may be seen by them. So praise the Lord for every tough spot you are in. It is not God's will to deliver us from tough spots, but in them. There is no other way of getting at those who do not know Him except by those who do living among them.

Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)
Knight of Faith, Volume I



Our Mailbag

Thanks for your ministry and the time you put into your *Daily Email Goodies*. – **TX**

I thank you very much and God bless you and your family and the ministry you have. I enjoy all of your web site material. I read it every day ... I am not a writer or poet but the Great Writer and Great Poet lives in me ... You folks are always in our prayers. – **SC**

Your new [*Daily Email Goodies* / Blogs] format is great! I surely hope to be doing more reading at your site. I think that your approach is spot on. Many of us who enjoy the private study and insights from our Lord's Word and rely solely therein for our strength, truth and nourishment, have very little or no support from sources inside the religious establishment. I suppose that it is inevitably so. It's nice to have some reference to some likeminded brother. All the best in your work and walk. – **Email**

I am so excited I can hardly regulate my breathing right now. God has slowly been raising questions in my mind about this subject [the salvation of all] ...

I guessed my way to your site ... I am actually really just beginning to see the fullness of that beautiful Gospel message. I feel like an onion, God has been tenderly removing the layers, carefully protecting the fine film between each piece. Wow, awesome, beyond the wonder at each layer, He is revealing to me the true depth of His Love and Glory. His truth about Himself just keeps getting more glorious and more glorious. I am truly prostrate at His feet, at the foot of His cross. Thank you for this site, may everyone who comes be as blessed as I am. – **Blog** (www.salvationofall.wordpress.com)