



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume X
Issue 241

Exhortation to Vigilance

by – A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

God's complement is Christ ~ We are complete in Christ.

In Christ God is fully furnished for every phase of His purpose to reconcile the universe. In Him we, too, are fully furnished from our first faint spark of faith until we are found perfected in His presence.



present estimate of the Divine ritual which He once gave to His people Israel. The passage, it will be seen, alternates between philosophy and religion, between rationalism and ritual.

Rationalism and Ritualism are the two enemies of this great truth. Rationalism repudiates Him as God's Complement. Ritualism refuses Him as our Complement. Philosophy robs God of His Christ. Ritual robs us of our Christ. Reason deems Him incompetent to cope with the "problems" of the universe. Religion regards Him as insufficient to care for the case of the individual.

Rationalism employs unaided human reason, but Ritual is based upon divine revelation. Hence, the greatest danger with the believer lies in the latter. Philosophy may be fought from the standpoint of the Word of God, and at the same time ritualistic error may be founded upon that same Word, as a result of failure to cut or partition it properly. It is exceedingly difficult for some of God's dear children to see that Christ Himself is the Substance of which all ritual was but the shadow, and that, divine as these shadows were, they must not fall athwart Himself and darken His effulgence.

So difficult is it for His saints to see this, and such a hold has divine ritual, that some special means are needed to impress us with the dangers of its infatuations.

The following skeleton outline displays the method God has used in order to impress us with His

Skeleton Outline of Colossians 2:8-23

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Bible Student's Notebook™

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 (1 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 law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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; 1 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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VIGILANCE (continued from page 2269)

This, indeed, seems to make it difficult to follow. If philosophy had been dealt with separately, and then the subject of ritual given a distinct section in the apostle's warning, it might possibly have been easier for our dull minds to apprehend. But then we would have missed a lesson quite as important as the warning itself and indeed, vital to it. It is this: **Truth misplaced is more dangerous than error.** Its seeming support in "the Bible" gives it far greater weight with spiritual minds than human philosophy can ever hope to gain. Witness the state of Christendom today. Strong as is the hold of rationalism upon the pulpit, the pews are even more distressed by rites and ceremonies; the ghosts of truth designed for other days and for those who could not know the fullness there is for us in Christ. Baptism and Sabbath keeping and the observance of human commandments – these are the essence of the religion of today.

Not only do the two themes alternate, but the whole passage is a "reversal" in which each subject is explained in the reverse order to that in which it is first mentioned. Yet, at the very heart of all is CHRIST, Who, as the Complement of the Deity, is the answer to all philosophy, and as our Complement is the answer to all ritual.

God Himself is the Guard of reconciliation. No sooner was this precious truth revealed than it was attacked from both front and rear. A sham philosophy withstands it to the face. A divine religion stabs it in the back. Gnosticism and Judaism, enemies themselves, clasp hands in their common cause against the reconciliation.

We are prone to handle religion with gloves and class it by itself, but God knows its subtlety and puts it on a par with human tradition.

Reconciliation is not a religion. Indeed, they are sworn enemies. Religion, as God knows it, is a system of divine ritual. The tabernacle and temple were the divinely appointed places for its ceremonies. But when every form had been duly observed and the last letter of the liturgy fulfilled, it led only to the thick veil which barred all access to the shekinah glory. Circumcision is

but a shadow. The substance is Christ. It figured death; He fulfilled it. Baptism, too was but a type, telling of His burial. But the circumcised Israelite is kept without the curtains, and the baptized priest is shut out of the presence of God in spite of those physical rites and ceremonies. But **the death of Christ leads to no veiled Deity!** Even in that dim ritual the curtain yielded once a year when Yahweh's goat was slain (Leviticus 16:7-9). Though its body was burned outside the camp, its blood provided for a passage to the glorious "mercy seat" (propitiatory shelter) (Leviticus 16:15, 27).

And what is it that veiled God from mankind? Christ's flesh.

When He expired, the curtain of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. It may be hard for many of us who have been taught that He was "*God manifest in flesh*," to receive this illuminating truth. But in the passage from which this is quoted, it is not God Who is manifested in flesh (I Timothy 3:16). The one clause "*heralded among the nations*," coming before "*taken up in glory*" (which cannot be true of Christ in the flesh) ought to be sufficient, apart from the evidence of the ancient manuscripts, to show that it is not God Who is referred to here. We are distinctly told that the curtain was a figure of His flesh (Hebrews 10:20), and that access is through the rent curtain. But if that flesh manifested God, it could be no curtain to hide God.

His whole earthly ministry was "*straightened*" (Luke 12:50, A.V.). He spoke to them in proverbs, but rejoiced in the hour when He might report boldly to them concerning the Father (John 16:25). His flesh was rent on Golgotha, *then* God was first revealed. This is the true, the genuine, the real circumcision.

And this is all ours as well as His. His, in fact; ours, in faith. If we apprehend its true import we have laid aside our physical frame and its rites and religious duties, and base our relationship with God solely on the ground of spirit. Then shall we have access unhindered and unafraid into the glorious presence of a manifested God ►

(Ephesians 3:12). If the “*body of flesh*,” that is, our physical frame, has been stripped off, what place is there for the baptism of that physical body in water? Here, too, the figure has been displaced by the substance of the burial of Christ.

Thus are the saints “*complete in Him*.” They are fully outfitted for access into the Divine presence altogether apart from the “*weak and beggarly*” elementary observances which led only to the antechamber of His holy place (Galatians 4:9-10). There is a threefold warning here which often remains unheeded by God’s Own. They are in the toils of philosophy. **Plato preaches more than Paul.** They are in the toils of ritual. **Moses binds more than Paul frees.** And when men preach philosophy and practice ritual they are preying on those whose ears have never heeded God’s warning and who have never heard of the completeness that there is in Christ.

The next warning, as well, is quite unknown. Sunday, a heathen holiday, has become a spurious Sabbath, the observance of which has become the badge of apostate Christendom. On every hand God’s saints are being “judged” and told to observe days and abstain from foods as a part of their religion. The days observed by Israel were designed by God to shadow the day of “*His stopping*” which He had in store (Hebrews 4:9-10). No such significance can be attached to our Sunday.

Why, then, should we allow anyone to dictate to us concerning the ceremonial observances of Judaism? They are but shadows at best, of things impending. They all foreshadow Israel’s future earthly blessedness and can only be realized by the people to whom they were given.

But our blessing, also, has its material expression and embodiment. At the right hand of the Heavenly Majesty clothed with a real human form, sits the Man, Christ Jesus. That glorified body of His is the material expression of all our blessings. It is a picture of that spiritual Christ; “*the ecclesia which is His body*.”

It is vitally one with Him; we are His members (Ephesians 5:30).

It is among the celestials; so are we (Ephesians 1:20, 2:6).

It is seated; we too, are at rest (Ephesians 2:6, Colossian 3:1).

He is its Head; He is ours (Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 1:18).

But let each heart trace for itself the transcendent glories which are the portion of His body both physical and spiritual. That any part of earth’s substance should ascend to such supernal glory seems incredible. But no less difficult is it for us to entertain a fraction of the blessing which is ours as His spiritual complement.

Earthly shadows may suffice to show earthly bliss but celestial honors demand a celestial parallel. Israel may be His bride, for marriage is the lot of mankind upon the earth. So, too, with His relationship to Israel as the Lamb. Earth alone can furnish the figure, and earth alone can be the scene of its fulfillment.

Is it not ineffably sweet to know that, though all earthly figures fail to picture our place and portion, He Himself – enthroned at the right hand of God – He Himself embodies all that we have and are! And what of all the high honors and loyal love which that body shares as joined to its glorious Head do not these portray our eonian portion?

The first warning refers us to the past and all we have in Christ by virtue of His sacrifice on Golgotha and the resurrection from among the dead. His circumcision and His baptism the realities of which the ritual was but a type, His death and burial and resurrection, all are ours. He was our Complement in the past. And now, at God’s right hand, He is still our Complement for the present. **We are complete in Him.**

But still another warning rings in our ears. Not only may we look back and find all in Him, but we may look forward and still find Him our Complement. He is our Prize. Human infirmity and failure and offense – these are fit fields for His favor, forms from which to fashion a new creation, and one

through which He can unfold His fathomless affection, and which would respond in all the fervency of love.

And if those who are thus drawn to Himself fail to respond; if they hide behind the ritual of the messengers, with fearful reverence, they rob God of the choicest fruit of reconciliation, and themselves of the highest prize in all the universe, the supremacy and esteem which flow from the nearness and dearness God bestows only upon His favorites.

Let us grasp the Head! Is He near to God? Is He dear to God? Is He the highest? Then so are we, for we are His body. Can we imagine Him, like the seraphim veiling His face in the presence of the Divine Majesty? Would it please the Father that He approach through various spectacular forms, with a tardy faltering step? Never! Away then, with all ritual! It merely denies His acceptance. Away with all mock humility! He is worthy! The angelic messengers who may approach only through ritual proclaim that He is worthy (Revelation 5:12). And we, too, in Him our Head, are worthy!

O, to be found in Him! And thus to gain the prize which Christ alone can win, the exultation of the universal conquest, the place supreme, the reward of closest intimacy and love! This was the goal Paul had before him, for which he pressed forward, forgetting earthly hopes he left behind (Philippians 3:13, 14).

And this should be our goal, as well. But on every hand we encounter that which would rob us of this prize and fill His place with forms and ceremonies, which estrange, instead of reconcile, and put God at a distance, instead of putting us at ease in His presence. May we never allow that this supernal prize be snatched from our hearts! With Paul let us be pursuing that we may be grasping that for which we have been grasped by Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:12).

Death and resurrection do not sever us from this earth. Christ Himself, during the forty days after His resurrection, was occupied with the affairs of the earthly Kingdom. But this is no cue for us.

We are not like the disciples who were left behind when He arose from Olivet. We went with Him.

How unutterably grand was His ascension! Not even creation's birth gave the sons of God so much cause to shout for joy, for now He has re-laid the foundations of the moral universe, and a new creation has been inaugurated far grander than the first with its foundations firmly fixed in God's deepest affections. His lowly descent to Bethlehem had tuned their hearts to sing of glory to God among the highest. But now that glory has been gained. The battle with the hosts of darkness has been fought and won. The flood tide of evil has been turned. The crisis of the eons has been triumphantly passed. **The Victor has vanquished every foe.** God's great name has not only been vindicated but gloriously glorified.

Heaven welcomes the return of a Conqueror, the very King of glory. Could bounds be set upon the bursting joy of the heavenly elders and messengers as they behold their Lord awarded the place of honor and power supreme at God's right hand? Let us not attempt to tell of such a triumph.

But He was not alone! In spirit we share this greatest of all glories with Him, and thus He weans our hearts from matters mundane which once engrossed us. Satan is enthroned here below. How can we find any satisfaction in his abortive attempts to satisfy men's hearts? But in the place supreme in Christ there is more by far than heart could wish to engage, to satisfy, to entrance (Ephesians 2:6).

After He was roused He did not appear except to a few chosen witnesses. Though still on earth His life was hid from the mass of mankind. And doubly so now that He has ascended. And this is true of us as well. Our life has never yet been seen by mortal man. It is hidden together with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3).

But our life shall not always be hidden. He Who is our Life shall be manifested. Why should we want to be known in this day of His rejection? Let us rest with Him at God's right hand and wait until His time has come. But when His hour strikes, ►

then our time will have come and He will not be glorified apart from us.

Meanwhile let us fix our hearts upon the celestial expectation we have in Him. This alone will enable us to give our earthly interests their true place. This alone will give rest and refreshment in the midst of the rush and exhaustion of these strenuous times. But above all, let us explore the "fullness" the completeness there is in Christ. Let us beware of aught that seems to take His place. What do we lack in Christ? Or what can we add? In Him we are complete. The very thought that aught is lacking there, of means of grace, or access to the throne of God, or anything that man or God can give, is in itself a slander on His Name!

Are we not circumcised in Him? Is not His Word and spirit all to us that any covenant ever was? His spirit is our pledge, the earnest of all He will bestow (Ephesians 1:14). They mutilated the flesh. But we strip off the entire body of flesh and acknowledge and confess that when He was cut off and died for us, then we, in Him, were circumcised. And as Abraham of old (to whom the rite was given) buried Sarah out of sight in hope of resurrection, so we also have been buried out of sight by that baptism which Christ knew, which He endured for us and we in Him. And when He arose we arose. And when He ascended we left the earth behind for a seat at God's right hand.

How blessed is all this! At the altar we die in Him, a sweet savor unto God. And this was once for all. Not as the oft repeated type, but once for all time. And at the laver we are baptized in Him. All defilement which disqualified us for God's presence is removed. In Him we tread the courts of God in conscious and unclouded peace. How few have found their "fullness" in Christ! And the reason is not far to seek. Instead of heeding the three-fold warning God graciously gave, **Christendom has courted philosophy and married ritual.**

In its attempt to explain the origin and object of all things, it follows human philosophy and

ignores Christ. The origin of evil is the greatest of all its problems. As the Gnostics of old it still seeks to exonerate God from the creation of evil even though God Himself said He creates evil (Isaiah 45:7). Instead, however, of shifting this to a mythical "fullness," it is now shouldered by a mythical "devil," a grotesque caricature of the Adversary as revealed in the Scriptures.

The toils of human tradition keep them from Christ. The observance of days is rigidly prescribed in spite of this warning. Asceticism, directions and teachings of men are often used as a test of "Christianity." "*Touch not, taste not, handle not,*" is openly palmed off as God's exhortation, when the opposite is the fact. We are not to be subject to such human injunctions. Nothing is more evident than that our God knew the dangers which would confront us and has made provision for our escape. **Christ is our Refuge from them all.**

Christ, as God's Complement, assures us that, on God's side every provision has been made to reconcile the universe. And Christ, as our Complement, removing as it does every human pretension to fitness for the Father's presence, dispels every difficulty in the way of reconciliation. Human failure or fitness would be an element which would forever preclude perfection and thwart God's purpose. But if God is pleased to put all upon Christ, why should we hesitate? If Christ is all God needs to reconcile us to Himself, why should we not give Christ the same honor?

May all who read these lines realize and revel in the transcendent truth of:

CHRIST: GOD'S COMPLEMENT
CHRIST: OUR COMPLEMENT

Unsearchable Riches
Volume 58, pages 181-190
The Mystery of the Gospel, chapter 8





Clyde brother, I love this article [*Do It Yourself*]. It speaks to our unique purpose and ability to make a difference by carrying out God's Micro and Macro Plan for the Eons. From our most impressive world-shaking deeds to our littlest mundane tasks; all aspects of our lives are precious and meaningful. I am learning to push away the "feeling" that most of life is unnecessary or tedious. God is replacing that "feeling" with the "faith" in the "fact" that every instant of life is important. I'll think about your article every time I carry a bag of garbage out of my house or out of one of our client's office buildings. God has delegated my life and everything in it to me. That's a wonderful privilege and responsibility. Thanks Brother. – **PA**

Thank YOU for being faithful to put all this out for our benefit. God is truly using you and you are blessing many! – **TX**

I wanted you to know that your *Daily Email Goodie, The Myth of Free Will*, was a direct answer to a prayer I prayed yesterday asking God to clarify some things for me. I asked very specific questions and they were answered in your article. I believe with all my heart that God answered through you. Thank you so much. – **OR**

I just wanted to tell you that I LOVE your *Daily Email Goodies* ... they touch my heart and INSPIRE ME constantly ... granted, I am not quite as articulate as

you are, so sometimes I do have to re-read them 'til it all sinks in ... but I ALWAYS take something Positive and Wonderful away from what you share everyday ... THANK YOU SO MUCH for sharing your knowledge of Gods Word the way that you do. – **PA**

I am so glad a friend sent me one of Clyde's email goodies. I read them daily, and find them to be refreshing. So many things I was taught in traditional churches such as "free will" I no longer believe. I have opened my heart and ears to what God's Word is speaking to me, and not just going on what I was taught in church growing up. I feel I have been enlightened in a way that gives me much peace and comfort. I believe when reading a lot of these emails and posts that I'm not alone. My friend shared this with me because God guided her to do so. – **NC**

When I worked as a hospice chaplain, there were some Christians who questioned how I could minister to "non Christians," knowing that according to our beliefs, what comfort could I bring a person who was soon to be facing judgment and hell? And some questioned, should I even be in this job unless I did all I could to bring that person to "a saving knowledge of Christ"? Your statement here that we bring joy by bringing God into the situation, not religion, resonates. Whether I was praying with a Buddhist, anointing a Catholic, listening to a Mormon or hearing the last confession of an agnostic or atheist, God was there and it was God I was bringing, not religion. – **PA**

I just want to say how much we appreciate your loving attitude while dispensing these great truths. Your love shines through all that you say and do, and it is very appreciated here. That element is missing with so many teachers. – **TX**

Believing

If the natural man cannot receive the things of God (I Corinthians 2:14) and is in fact hostile towards Father (Romans 8:7), and if the believing of Spiritual truth requires the Spirit of God (I Corinthians 2:14), does it not follow that the gift of the Spirit must PRECEDE believing and does in fact facilitate believing? Is it not then true that Father grants the Spirit to ENABLE believing rather than rewarding belief with

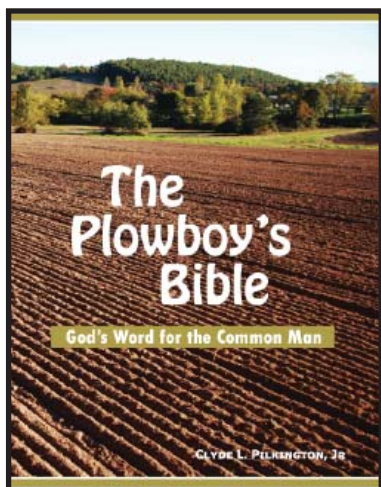
the gift of the Spirit? Is it not impossible for man to believe unless Father enables by a prior giving of the Spirit? So then, it is not the choice of man, but rather Father's will, that determines who believes and when (Romans 9:16).

Joel Olson
Amarillo, TX

The Plowboy's Bible

God's Word for the Common Man

by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.



20 chapters; 16 Appendices
254 pages, Paperback
(#4425) \$19.⁹⁵

This book represents years of study and a significant change in understanding. Raised on and trained in a "King James Only" position, most of the author's teaching ministry was centered on the defense of the *King James Version* of the Bible. He had early associations with major proponents of this position and their followers. He actively taught classes and seminars on the subject of Bible versions. For many years he distributed thousands of books from a collection of over 100 different titles in support of the KJV position.

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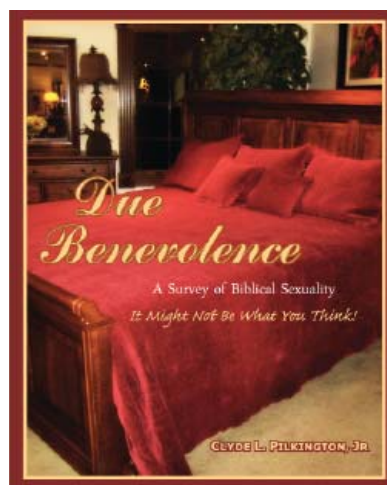
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