



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XI  
Issue 274

# The Nature of Grace

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

Christianity, by placing emphasis on the wrong things, is little more than an ethical or moral system.



No service is to be given, on the part of the believer, with the thought of repayment. Any such attitude would only cause “distress” to the giver. These attempts only “frustrate” His grace (Galatians 2:21). How faithfully we should serve Him as an expression of love, but never as a repayment.

### GRACE IS UNDESERVED

Salvation is the transforming work of God for man, not man’s work for God. Grace is the undeserved and unrecompensed favor of God. Grace cannot be withheld because of unworthiness (Romans 4:5-8). Grace ceases to be grace if God has to withdraw it due to man’s sin. Pure grace cannot be exercised where the slightest degree of human merit or goodness is recognized.

Christ died for sin; all questions of unworthiness have been banished (Ephesians 1:6). Salvation is by grace alone. Grace cannot be lessened because of unworthiness. Much sinfulness calls for much grace (Romans 5:20-21).

The sin question has been set aside permanently. God’s saving grace is without measure. This is not to say that God has ignored the fact of sin, but He has met this issue perfectly and finally, once and for all, at Calvary.

### DEBT FREE GRACE

Grace cannot incur a debt. An act is not gracious if it, under any circumstances, incurs a debt. Grace is the unrecompensed favor of God. That includes any past, present or future repayment. Salvation is a gift, and a benefit cannot rightfully be called a gift if it must be paid for before, at the time of, or after (Romans 6:23).

Grace is not exercised as a payment of a debt (Romans 4:4; 11:6). Grace could never be the payment of a debt (*i.e.*, deserving). All worthiness on man’s part has been disposed of absolutely and permanently (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). Pure grace is neither treating a person as he deserves, nor treating a person better than he deserves, but treating a person without the slightest reference to what he deserves.

*To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved (Ephesians 1:6).*

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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 (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 law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I 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; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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# The Greatest Story Never Told

by – Daniel Sheridan

I want to tell you this day about the greatest story never told. That was the coming of Christ not to a stable, but on a road north of Bethlehem. The Apostle Paul said that:

*Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I.*

In the Scriptures, the term “Christ Jesus” is not a reference to the baby Jesus, or the miracle working Jesus who went around doing good to Israel. The term “Christ Jesus” belongs to Christ when He rose from the dead and ascended to the highest place in the universe. This surely is not a reference to the stable! So, when did this awesome Lord “come into the world to save sinners?”

Acts 9:1-6 tells us about this great event:

*Now Saul, still breathing out threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord, approaching the chief priest, requests from him letters for Damascus to the synagogues, so that, if he should be finding any who are of the way, both men and women, he may be leading them bound to Jerusalem. Now in his going he came to be nearing Damascus. Suddenly a light out of heaven flashes about him. And falling on the earth, he hears a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” Yet he said, “Who art Thou, Lord?” Yet He said, “I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting. Nevertheless, rise and enter the city, and it will be spoken to you what you must be doing.”*

The greatest story NEVER told is not about the babe in a manger, but about the risen Christ coming into the world to save Saul, the foremost of sinners.

The greatest sin ever committed was not the crucifixion of Christ, but the persecution of the Apostles by Saul! When Christ came down, He did not come down to judge, but to save Saul!

The call of Saul is the most marvelous of all the manifestations of God's grace. It is a pattern for us who believe in this day of grace. He was the foremost of sinners, yet God made him the foremost of His saints. The grace of



the Lord overwhelmed Him, with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 1:12-16).

The twelve apostles were called by the Lord on earth, before His ascension. Saul was called by the ascended glorified Lord from heaven. They were called in the land. He was called outside the land. Their ministry was confined to the land and the Hebrews of the dispersion. Paul's service was outside the land among the Hellenists and aliens. They were concerned with the earthly life of our Lord before His ascension. Paul begins with the Lord in glory. The call of Saul is an entirely novel departure in the Scriptures. It is the first exhibition of pure grace – favor shown to one who deserves punishment – and is the key to the character of the ministries of the apostle Paul. It was through Saul/Paul that God had a message for all mankind.

Paul was told by the Lord Jesus:

*It will be spoken to you what you must be doing.*

What did Paul do? He did something no one else did. He proclaimed things no one else did. Here are a few:

1. Justification by faith – Romans 3
2. The Conciliation – Romans 5-8
3. The Body of Christ: Which never existed until Paul – Ephesians
4. The Secret Resurrection of the Body of Christ – I Thessalonians 4
5. The Celestial Allotment of the Body of Christ – Ephesians
6. The Salvation of All Mankind at the Consummation – I Corinthians 15:20-28

It is the Apostle Paul who was sent by God to us with this great message. The greatest story never told is what God did in Acts 9. Read the letters of Paul. Paul's conversion and his message is THE GREATEST STORY NEVER TOLD!

# Seeing People as the Father Does

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*I see men as trees, walking* (Mark 8:24).

**I**n Mark's Gospel we read an interesting encounter that our Lord Jesus Christ had with a blind man. Jesus healed him, but Jesus's first touch was only for partial sight. He could only see men as walking trees. That is, his sight was such that the only way he could distinguish between men and trees was by the fact that the men were moving about, or walking. After a *second* touch of the Savior's hand, he then "saw every man clearly."

*And He comes to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up, and said, "I see men as trees, walking." After that He put his hands again on his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly* (Mark 8:22-25).

## A DISPENSATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

A.E. Knoch shows us the dispensational application of this miracle to the Nation of Israel.

The Lord could have healed him completely in an instant, but He did not choose to do so. It is evidently another sign, and we will find its meaning in the restoration of Israel's spiritual sight ... At first the blind man's sight was blurred. Later he saw clearly. So it was with Israel. In the past they saw that there would be a gradual growth, like a tree, until the kingdom. But it will take another application of His hands in the future to restore them. Then they will no longer be puzzled by the course of events. Throughout the past proclamation of the kingdom, especially in the Pentecostal era, the prospect of the kingdom was vague. It will not be so at the time of the end. – *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*, 1968, page 71

## A PERSONAL APPLICATION

This is not only true of God's dealing with Israel, but it is often His method of dealing with us as well. Paul prays for those *already* saved, that the eyes of their understanding might be enlightened (Ephesians 1:18). Spiritually this has been the experience of many of us. It was not until God had done a *greater* work in our own hearts that we had our spiritual eyes fully opened so that we could see "every man clearly" for who they really are: loved of the Father.

The far-reaching, triumphant cross-work of Jesus Christ was not limited to us. He was not partial in His work and accomplishments – He was all-inclusive. Christ did His wonderful work not just for us, but for all of those around us as well.

*God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them ...* (II Corinthians 5:19).

*And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they are things in earth, or things in heaven* (Colossians 1:20).

*And when all things shall be subjected unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him Who put all things under Him, that God may be All in all* (I Corinthians 15:28).

We now see "every man clearly" in their relationship to the all-inclusive Father of reconciliation. The more we learn of Him, the more we will see things and people as He sees them.

# The Ministry of a Loving Smile

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance ... (Proverbs 15:13).*

**T**he attitude of the heart can have an effect on one's facial expressions. In the case of our passage, a "merry heart" makes for a "cheerful countenance." Has the impact of the fullness of God's good news in our Lord Jesus Christ, of His un-failing love to us, reached our hearts to make them "merry"? If so, have they then made their way from our hearts to our faces?

We live in a world that has much pain and sorrow, heaviness and loss, with mounting burdens and cares. Many are discouraged, depressed, aggravated, annoyed, upset, frustrated, defeated, irritated, disheartened, dejected, saddened, disturbed, gloomy, pessimistic, troubled, perturbed, agitated and cynical in their hearts; and it shows all over their faces.

Such needs not to be the case for those who know the Father, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Romans 5:5). Such a divine operation is even better than a "merry heart"; we have divine love shed abroad in our hearts!

These words "shed abroad" are but one single word in the Greek, *ekcheō*, meaning "to pour forth," and is translated elsewhere in the *King James Version* as "poured out" (John 2:15; Acts 10:45; Revelation 16:2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 17), and even "gushed out" (Acts 1:18). Think of it! Our Father's Own love is "poured out in our hearts" (as the *Concordant Literal New Testament* has it), even "gushing out in our hearts." We should bask in the richness of His love in our hearts, and let it make its way to our countenance!

Could one truly estimate the value of a loving smile? There is a world all around us in need of such a countenance. What an affect such a divine ministry of a loving smile could have on the weary souls that we encounter. What a difference in the lives of our family, friends and acquaintances God could make in the simple expression of His love on our faces.

What a difference a loving smile could make!

# Pauls Says, "God Is Able!"

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

**M**any Christians seem to believe in an incapable God, as strange of a contradiction as that is. Paul communicated the truth of an *Able God!*

**God Is Able to Do What He Has Promised He Would Do**

*... What He has promised He is able also to do (Romans 4:21).*

**God Is Able to Establish You**

*Now to Him Who is able to establish you*

*according to my gospel ... (Romans 16:25).*

**God Is Able to Make You Stand**

*... To his own master he stands or falls. Yes, he shall be held up: for God is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).*

**God Is Able to Keep What You Have Committed to Him**

*... I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that (see **ABLE**, last page)*

# God's Sovereignty and Our Response to Daily Disappointments

by – Arthur C. Custance (1910-1985)

It is a great comfort for the child of God to be assured that the man of the world who opposes him in his business life, or rewards him with evil in his social life, or prevents his worship or disrupts his study, or intrudes into his time of meditation in his spiritual life, is a servant of God – while he himself is a child of the King! Suppose that, in all of our daily relations with men of the world, we were to walk always in the light of this knowledge? What a difference it would make!



the one word “Almost.”

For the Lord's child, the worker is more important than the work, the effect is more important than the event, the objective than the means, the motive than the deed. If only we could trust our sovereign Father and His grace, we would allow Him to mold our character without so much disappointment and rebellion on our part. In the rat race of life, what a marvelous thing to live daily secure in the knowledge that,

*Promotion comes neither from the east, nor the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: He puts down one, and sets up another (Psalm 75:6-7).*

This fact gives force to I Peter 5:6-7,

*Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may advance you in due time: casting all your anxiety upon Him; for He is concerned about you.*

*The Sovereignty of God, chapter 13*

When we hope to find a parking place and somebody gets there first, when we rush to get in line for some bargains in the world's market place and they are all sold out just before our part of the queue reaches the counter, when the piece of cake on the plate we had our eye on as we moved along the line is taken by the diner just ahead of us, when we are bypassed for a position we felt so important to us and so right for us, when a house we longed to own is sold only a few days before we can meet the financial or other requirement, when a person we don't respect is credited by others for a work we did at some cost to ourselves, when ... We could go on indefinitely. Life seems so full of daily disappointments and little injustices. The epitaph of life for so many is summed up in

# God's Purpose Cannot Fail

by – Arthur C. Lamb

In Romans 16:25-27 Paul speaks of a secret which was hushed for long ages, yet manifested now. This secret concerns the removal of the barriers of enmity between mankind and God (Romans 5:2). The key word is conciliation (Romans 5:10-11; II Corinthians 5:18-21), which refers to the change from estrangement to peace.

“All is of God” (II Corinthians 5:18); man had no part in the opening of the approach. It was all of God, through Christ. The work of Adam had closed the approach. The work of God's Son on the cross opened the gates of peace.

Since the evangel which we receive centers on God's achievement and not man's, it leads to His glory. “The

evangel of the glory of the happy God” (I Timothy 1:11) is a message that tells us that God will not be frustrated in His will to save all mankind (I Timothy 2:4). Man cannot eternally oppose his Creator's will, especially when this will is based on the blood of the cross of God's beloved Son (Colossians 1:20).

God has a secret of His will which gives Him delight (Ephesians 1:9), and that is to head up the universe in the Christ (Ephesians 1:10). He cannot be defeated in this happy purpose.

## Leave Church!

Dear Brother \_\_\_\_\_,

So, let me get this straight. Your pastor says that the glorious work of Christ in undoing the work of Adam was to raise people from death to torment them forever? THAT is what he says the “nullifying” work of Christ is? My brother, instead of answering his arguments, I am going to encourage you.

If I may ask you some questions, and please understand my intention. I say what I am about to say almost with tears. I really desire your maturity in Christ. So here it goes dear brother:

Why do you “go to Church?” Why would you put yourself and your family under the authority of a single man who goes by the name “pastor?” Why would you be part of the very thing that promotes the teaching of demons? (I Timothy 4:1-3). My dear brother, we are not to try to win the establishment, but we are to shun it! Avoid it! Do not let them “Pastor” you or your wife. The very set up of a modern Church is opposed to the Scriptures, and, it can’t embrace Scripture without destroying itself. And self-preservation is the goal of all religious establishments. That is why it is important that we avoid such things. Brother, you will not change them, but, they will change you! If I may be so bold my dear brother, the very attendance in a Church

with a Pastor is already a departure from truth. The slide only goes down from there. We can love them, but love them on your terms, not theirs.

I do not want to offend you, but, I want to warn and encourage you. I know you believe the Scriptures and the Evangel of Paul. So why would you join something that is opposed to truth? Or go to it? The very fact that you have conversations with a Pastor gives him the upper hand in his mind. He already thinks that he has an advantage over you, because of his training, and when you seek out his opinion, it only confirms that to himself. I know this for a fact. I dealt with Pastors for years, but, I learned not to. I know you have good intentions, but again, the way to herald the truth is outside the establishment, not in it. Truth is not welcome there. It can’t be welcomed. Paul would not allow a woman with an evil spirit to promote the truth, and neither would we want the establishment promoting it when it contains some of those same demons (I Timothy 4:1-3).

I wish you the best, and that is only found in Christ, outside of the establishment, in the Scriptures.

Your brother,

Daniel Sheridan

## The History of Human “Failure and “Success”

*From God’s Point of View*

by – Arthur C. Custance (1910-1985)

God is just as sovereign in times of failure as in times of success, in defeat as in victory. This is a really important lesson to learn. It is not surprising that the Lord has seen fit to emphasize it in the Old Testament, especially at certain crucial periods of Israel’s history.

We are so accustomed to reading success stories, and even Christian success stories, that we imagine God’s purposes are fulfilled only, or at least best, during those times when our lives are “successful.” Yet for most of us

such successes are few and far between. We may have a measure of peace about our failures, but it is not likely we shall derive any comfort from them; and it is almost certain that as soon as the Lord takes occasion to allow certain consequences in order that He may perfect in us that which He has begun (Philippians 1:6), we shall be tempted to view them as punishment and others will be quick to confirm our worst fears.

Frankly, I find it almost impossible not to make this false  
(see **HISTORY** last page)

*HISTORY (continued from previous page)*

estimate of what is happening. Yet in my mind I know that the dangers to our spiritual welfare from success are far greater than the dangers from failure.

If God is concerned with the making of saints rather than the production of *executives*, then obviously He must ordain or allow far more failures than successes. Logically a highly "successful" Christian life may very well be a failure from God's point of view. We know this. We recognize it in others. We see it again and again, yet we desire "success." This is another way of saying we have more desire for the wrong kind of success, the kind of success which in God's view is failure, than we do for the kind of failure which in God's view is truly success. The secret of thus entering into God's thoughts is surely to realize very clearly why He has chosen us, and the extent to which He is sovereign over all of the circumstances of our lives, both the happy and the unhappy ones. We have

not yet learned the real meaning of the Lord's words in Isaiah 55:8,

*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, says the Lord.*

Perhaps it is for this reason that Paul wrote to the Corinthians,

*But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence (I Corinthians 1:27-29).*

*The Sovereignty of Grace*, chapter 11

*ABLE (continued from page 2537)*

*day (II Timothy 1:12).*

**God Is Able to Make ALL Grace Abound Toward You**

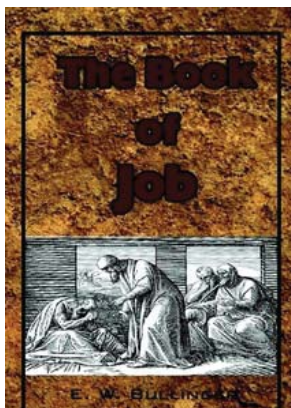
*... And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (II Corinthians 9:8).*

**God Is Able to Do More than You Ask or Think**

*Now to Him Who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us (Ephesians 3:20).*

**God Is Able to Subdue ALL Things unto Himself**

*... According to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself (Philippians 3:21).*



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*by – E.W. Bullinger*

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